

The Blessings of Salvation

By: Pastor David Holt

“Bless the LORD, O my soul,
And all that is within me, bless His holy name.

Bless the LORD, O my soul,
And forget none of His benefits;

Who pardons all your iniquities,

Who heals all your diseases;

Who redeems your life from the pit,

Who crowns you with loving kindness and
compassion;

Who satisfies your years with good things,
So that your youth is renewed like the eagle.”

Psalm 103:1-5 (NASB)

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus
Christ, who has **blesed us in the heavenly realms
with every spiritual blessing in Christ.**”

Ephesians 1:3

The purpose of this tract is to give you some of the many benefits of being a follower of Jesus. We need to rejoice in what we have in Christ. Life can be very difficult at times (see my tract “Life is Tough, But God is Good”). Life can be even more difficult for the serious follower of Jesus. And yet, through all the difficulties and challenges, we can rejoice in the many benefits we have in Christ.

During one particularly difficult time in my life a few years ago, my wonderful wife said to me: “David, I think you need to take some time to just focus on the many things you have to be thankful for.” She was absolutely right, and it did help me with my attitude. At that time I focused a lot on the physical and material things I had to be thankful for (i.e. home, food, clothes, job, children, and so on). There is some value in this. However, there is far more value in focusing on what is eternal and spiritual. The blessings of our salvation are just that – spiritual and eternal.

In this tract, I hope to remind us all (me included!) of what the Bible says is true for every child of God. It will do us all good to regularly meditate on these powerful truths. These truths cannot change because God never changes (Heb. 13:8). They are true for every follower of Christ the moment we receive Christ. Therefore, “forget none of His benefits” (Psalm 103:2).

In the 1930’s, during the Great Depression, there was a man named Mr. Yates. He lived in Texas. Though he owned a lot of land, he was living in poverty. He was barely making ends meet. One day a representative from an oil company knocked on Mr. Yates’ door. He said, “Mr. Yates, we have reason to believe that there could be oil on your property. With your permission, we would like to drill. If we hit oil, you get half the profit.” That was enough for Mr. Yates to give his permission. They drilled and sure enough oil was found, and lots of it. I have heard that to this day, that is still one of the most active oil wells in all of Texas. Mr. Yates became a millionaire overnight. However, the moment he purchased the land he acquired all the property and mineral rights to that land. The only problem was that he did not know how to tap into that oil reserve. He was living in poverty with a wealth of possessions right below him.

Many Christians are just like Mr. Yates. We have an oil well of riches in Christ that we acquired the moment we accepted Jesus. However, we are either ignorant of them or don’t know how to tap into them, and thus we live in spiritual poverty even when we have this spiritual wealth within us. We have “everything we need for life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3), but we live as though we had nothing. This needs to change. This can change. This tract can help bring about that change, if you learn and apply what is in this tract. Christian, you already have “**everything** you need for life and godliness **through the knowledge** of Him who called us” (2 Peter 1:3; emphasis mine). Notice that we need to be aware of the knowledge of what we have. This tract will attempt to give you some of that knowledge.

I have been emphasizing that these truths are for those who are followers of Jesus (see my tract “Are You a Follower of Jesus?”). This is true. These truths are only for those who have received Christ. So, if you have not received Christ, you can do so now by:

- a. **Admitting** that you are a sinner and in need of God’s forgiveness (Romans 3:23).

- b. **Realizing** that Jesus Christ died for your sins (Romans 5:8).
- c. **Repenting** (i.e. turning away from) of your sins and turning your life over to God's control (Acts 20:21).
- d. **Receiving** Jesus as the Forgiver and Leader of your life (John 1:12).

Here is a suggested prayer you can pray to become a follower of Jesus:

“Lord Jesus, I need You. I admit that I have been living for me and not for You. Thank You that You love me. I admit that I have sinned and violated Your Holy standards. Thank You for dying for my sin so that I can be forgiven. I receive Your payment for my sin. I exchange my sin for Your righteousness. I invite You to come into my life to forgive me of my sin and to take control of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be. Fill me with the Holy Spirit and help me to live for You. Thank You for doing this right now, because You promised You would. Amen”

For everyone who is a true follower of Jesus, the following benefits are yours. Let's go through them one by one and rejoice as we do:

1. A Relationship with God.

When you received Christ, you began a relationship with the living God. Christianity is not a religion as much as it is a relationship. Religion is man's attempt to reach God through works and ritual. Christianity is God's attempt to reach us through Jesus. God wants a living, dynamic, and daily relationship with each of us. This is why He sent Jesus – to remove the sin barrier that keeps us from having that relationship.

This relationship can never be taken away. Like any relationship, there will be times when you feel close to God and times when you don't feel as close to God. But the relationship is still there no matter how you feel. God will never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).

God wants this relationship to grow each day. God wants us to get to know Him more each day. God wants us to become more like Jesus, and this takes time. God wants to use each and every situation in our life to draw us closer to Him. Our relationship

with God will not be perfect until we get to heaven, where we will be with Him forever.

Rejoice right now in the fact that you have a relationship with the Creator of the universe! Pledge to do everything you can to work on this relationship to keep it growing and growing.

2. The Forgiveness of Sins.

We have a relationship with God because our sins are forgiven. God is holy, and therefore we cannot approach Him in our sin. This is why it is so important that Jesus died for our sin. Through Jesus' death for us, we can be forgiven. When we receive Christ, God forgives all of our sins: past, present, and future. “When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. **He forgave us all our sins**” (Colossians 2:13-14; emphasis mine).

Because our sins are forgiven, we are called saints (Ephesians 1:1). A saint is a holy one. We are not holy in all of our behavior, but we are holy in our spirit because we are forgiven. God sees us in our spirit. He throws our sins as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103). This is an endless distance. He also says “He remembers our sins no more” (Jeremiah 31:34). It is not that God has a bad memory, but rather that He chooses to not remember our sins because they are covered with the blood of Jesus. He chooses to not hold our sins against us. We are now spiritually pure and can thus approach the throne of God boldly (Hebrews 4:16).

Rejoice right now that all of your sins are forgiven! You might feel really bad about some things you have done in your past. Satan is the one who seeks to condemn and accuse us (Revelation 12). When we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). If Satan reminds you of your past, respond by reminding him of his future (i.e. lake of fire forever). Remind yourself that God has forgiven your sin!

3. The Total Acceptance of God.

You are a child of God and thus have the total acceptance of God. “How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be **called children of God! And that is what we are**” (1 John 3:1; emphasis mine). I love the way the Apostle

John writes this: “that we should be **called** children of God! And that is **what we are.**” In other words, we are not only called children of God, we really are children of God. This is our fundamental identity! I am a child of the living God. I am more a child of God than I am a child of Joe and Melba Holt. Yes, I am a Holt. But for now and all eternity, I am a child of the Most High God. As God’s child, I am totally accepted by God. I don’t have to perform at a certain level or meet some external criteria to be accepted. I am accepted by God based on the performance of Jesus for me (see my tract “Liberating Grace and the Performance Treadmill”).

God wants us to rejoice in this truth. He wants us to rest in the fact that He accepts us in Christ. Just as I want my children to rest in my acceptance of them, so does God want this for us. I don’t want my children to feel that they have to perform at a certain level for me to love and accept them. I love and accept them just for who they are. I want my love for them to motivate them to live a holy life. In the same way, God wants His grace and love to motivate us to live for Him. “For the **grace of God** that brings salvation has appeared to all men. **It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions**, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good” (Titus 2:11-14; emphasis mine).

4. The Indwelling Holy Spirit.

Now this next truth might blow you away. You might find it difficult to receive. But please meditate carefully on the truths from God’s Word. It is not too good to be true. It really is a fact that you have the Holy Spirit living in you. “And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised **Holy Spirit, who is a deposit** guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of His glory” (Ephesians 1:13-14; emphasis mine). The Holy Spirit comes inside of us the moment we believe in Jesus for salvation. His presence is like a deposit, guaranteeing that we will have eternal life and all that comes with that.

Who is this Holy Spirit that comes to live inside of us? He is the third Person of the Holy Trinity (Matthew 28:18-20). He is the invisible presence and power of God. He is the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead! “And if the **Spirit of Him who raised Jesus** from the dead is **living in you**, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His **Spirit, who lives in you**” (Romans 8:11; emphasis mine). Notice two things in this verse. First, notice the Holy Spirit is the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead. We are talking about a pretty powerful Spirit, aren’t we?! Secondly, notice that this Holy Spirit is said to “live in us.” Wow! God’s Spirit living in us. The Holy Spirit lives in the spirit of every child of God.

It is God’s Holy Spirit living in us that makes us a temple of God. “Don’t you know that **you yourselves are God’s temple** and that God’s Spirit lives **in you?**” (1 Corinthians 3:16; emphasis mine). In the Old Testament, the temple was the physical place where God met with His people. It was the place where God’s presence dwelt in a powerful and real way. With the coming of Jesus and Pentecost (i.e. the Holy Spirit coming to indwell all Believers), the physical temple was no longer where God’s presence lived. Instead, God chose to live inside of His people. We are the temple of the living God! Everywhere we go, we have God not only with us but also in us. In our spirits we contain the very presence and power of God, the Holy Spirit. We “house” the God of the universe!

The Spirit of the living God, the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead, is living in you. It is the Holy Spirit that empowers you to live for Jesus. It is the Holy Spirit who gives you gifts to serve God. It is the Holy Spirit that enables you to handle any challenge that comes your way.

Now, this is something to really rejoice in! Thank God right now for this amazing truth. This means there is nothing you face that is bigger than the Holy Spirit who lives in you. “Greater is He that is in me, than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4). “I can do all things through Him who strengthen me” (Philippians 4:13). Whenever you feel down or defeated, just remind yourself of Who lives in you. Tap into this power like Mr. Yates tapped into that oil well. “His divine power has given us everything

we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness” (2 Peter 1:3).

5. **Victory Over Satan.**

The Bible makes it very clear to us that there is a literal Satan and demons. We are in a spiritual battle with the forces of darkness (Ephesians 6). However, Jesus defeated Satan at the cross (Colossians 2:13-15). Though the ultimate **war** has been won, we still fight **battles** along the way until we go to be with the Lord.

The key to our victory is **not** to try to overcome Satan by sheer human effort. Instead, the key to victory is to enforce against Satan the victory that Jesus won for us. We stand under the blood of Jesus. We proclaim the Name of Jesus. We declare the Word of God against the attacks of Satan. When we do these things, like Jesus when He was tempted by the Devil, we will be victorious. “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7)

“Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. **They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony;** they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death” (Revelation 12:10-11; emphasis mine). We have the “blood of the Lamb” and all its benefits that have already won the war. Now we must utilize the “word of our testimony” in order to win the battles. “Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might” (Ephesians 6:10).

6. **Membership in the Body of Christ.**

Notice here that I did not say membership in a local church, though this is important. I said you have membership in the body of Christ. In other words, the moment you received Christ, you become part of the body of Christ, the church of the Living God. This is an invisible truth, even though it should manifest itself in visible ways.

God established His church. He has always had a people, going all the way back to Adam and Eve and the nation of Israel. Now the people of God are His body, all the redeemed in Christ. “So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member

belongs to all the others” (Romans 12:5). Some are a hand while others are a foot, but we are all a significant part of God’s body. We are His hands and feet on earth. We are the means by which He accomplishes much of His will on earth. “And God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church, which is **His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way**” (Ephesians 1:22-23, emphasis mine).

One of the biggest blessings of being a part of the body of Christ is the love and support God wants to give us in our journey with Him. God did not make us to try and make it on our own. We need the help of others, and the sooner we realize this the better off we will be. Therefore, God wants us to be closely connected with other Christians in order to grow in our relationship with Him. In this manner, our membership in God’s invisible church should manifest itself by our being closely connected with a local, visible church.

I realize that many reading this tract have been hurt by Christians or by a local church. I know this can be painful and can cause you to become very “gun-shy” of close relationships with other Christians. However, God calls you to forgive those who have hurt you (Ephesians 4:32) and to “not forsake the assembling of yourselves together, as some are in the habit of doing” (Hebrews 10:25). You need the rest of the body, and the rest of the body needs you (1 Corinthians 12).

Rejoice that you are part of the body of Christ. You are an important part. God’s body is not complete without you. This is true, no matter how you feel. Picture God’s wonderful body, composed of persons of every tribe, nation, tongue and people (Revelation 5:9). Now picture yourself as the foot or leg or arm or whatever part you want to imagine being in His body. You are special.

7. **The Bible as God’s Word.**

What a privilege to have the Bible, the very Word of God. God loves and cares for us enough to have taken the time to inspire people to write His Word. “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

“For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21).

God has not left us in the dark. In the Bible He reveals to us who He is, what He has done, how we can know Him, and how we are to live. “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105). When we carefully follow God’s Word, we will be blessed (Psalm 1).

What a privilege to have God’s Word. This is indeed a huge blessing of our salvation. Yes, even non-Christians can have a Bible. However, one cannot really understand the Bible without having a relationship with the Author. One of the first changes I experienced in my life upon receiving Christ was the ability to read and understand the Bible. God began to personally speak to me through His Word in a manner I had not experienced before. “The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14).

If you have a Bible close by, take it in your hands, hold it up, and thank God sincerely for it. Meditate on how it has endured throughout many years. Think about the many people who have given their lives to translate it, defend it, preach it, and protect it. Most of us have several Bibles in our homes. However, there are many in parts of the world like China, that only have a few pages of the Holy Word of God. I just read the biography of a Chinese Christian who fasted for thirty days until God gave him a Bible.

8. The Promise of God’s Continual Presence.

When you became a child of God, God came to indwell you with His Holy Spirit. With His presence comes His promise that He will “never leave you nor forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5), that He “will be with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20), that “no one shall snatch you from Jesus’ hand” (John 10:28), and that “no one shall you snatch you from the Father’s hand” (John 10:29). These are some powerful promises!

No matter what you go through, you can be assured that God will never leave you. You have His

constant and abiding presence. When you are in pain, God is there. When you are going through great trials, God is there. When your marriage seems all but over, God is still with you, so don’t give up. When you are sick, God is present. When you feel like giving up on God, God does not give up on you. When you are faithless, God remains faithful. He will never leave you. He is always with you. He is with you when it is dark. He is with you when it is bright. He is with you during victory. He is with you during defeat. He is there when you obey. He is also there when you disobey.

“Where can I go from Your Spirit? Where can I flee from Your presence? If I go up to the heavens, You are there; if I make my bed in the depths, You are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there Your hand will guide me, Your right hand will hold me fast” (Psalm 139:7-10).

9. The Unconditional Love of God.

As His child, forever sealed with the Holy Spirit, you are unconditionally loved by God. Most of the love we experience from humans is an “I love you **because** you...” (you finish the sentence). It might be an “I love you because you are nice to me,” or “I love you because you are successful.” Another typical kind of human love is an “I love you **if**...” (you finish the sentence). This might be “I love you if you get good grades,” or “I love you if you love me back.” God’s love for us is not like this at all. His love is neither a “because of” love nor a “if you” love. Instead, God’s love is unconditional. He loves us with no strings attached. He loves us because He is a God of love (1 John 4:16). He loves us because of who He is and not because of who we are or what we do.

God’s unconditional love is something we should not abuse, but rather rejoice in. Thank God right now for His unconditional love. Rest in His love. Stop striving to get God to love you. He already loves you as much as He ever will. You cannot do anything good to make Him love you more, nor can you do anything bad to cause Him to love you less. “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness” (Jeremiah 31:3).

Does God’s unconditional love mean that He is always pleased with us? Not at all. God is not

pleased with us when we disobey, but He still loves us. Parents can relate to this. We love our children no matter what. However, when they misbehave, we are not pleased with them, but we still love them. God is this way with us. Rejoice and relax in God's unconditional and abiding love for you!

10. Eternal Life.

Perhaps the greatest blessing of all is eternal life. Being a child of God and having a relationship with God means that you have eternal life. When you die or Jesus returns (whichever comes first), you will go to be with the Lord in heaven forever. "God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him **might not perish but have eternal life**" (John 3:16; emphasis mine). This is perhaps the best-known and wonderful verse in all of God's Word.

Eternity is a long time. Eternity is forever. Therefore, what in all of life could possibly be better than the assurance that we will live forever with God in heaven? "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am" (John 14:1-3).

We can look forward to this Perfect Place. In heaven there will be no more tears. There will be no pain. There will be no sickness or disease. There will be no relational struggles. All of our questions will be answered. There will be perfect love and peace. Best of all, there will be God. And in Him we will have all of our longings fully met,

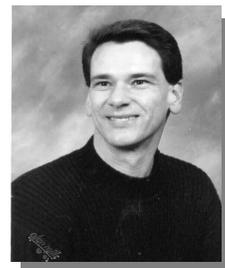
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First Evangelical Free Church
1950 Hwy 35
Onalaska, WI 54650
608-782-6022
E-mail: office@firstfree.org
Website: www.firstfree.org



Pastor David Holt has served as Senior Pastor of First Evangelical Free Church since 1990. He is a graduate of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School where he earned Master of Divinity, Master of Theology, and Doctor of Ministry degrees. He is married to Dede and they have four children.



forever!!!! Rejoice and never forget this wonderful blessing of salvation.

Conclusion

Christian, I don't know what you are going through right now, but if you are like most, there is probably some heaviness in your heart right now over something. I sincerely hope and pray that this tract has helped to lift some of that heaviness. We need to take time, often, to reflect and rejoice in what we have in Christ. Be not discouraged. God is on your side. You have these blessings and they are secure in Christ, forever.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits" (Psalm 103:2)!

If this tract have been helpful to you, I would love to hear from you. Please feel free to email me at davidholt@firstfree.org.