Transcending the Natural

Ephesians 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace 8 that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, 9 he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

The book of Ephesians is one of the most beautiful and inspiring of all bible books. The problem is - it is difficult for we who live in the world of natural things and human failure to grasp its glory. While we live in the struggles of life, Paul writes of the transcendence of God's purpose and of the glory He has shared with us and in us. It is a book that contrasts the human experience and calls us upward into a new dimension of reality and faith.

He speaks of the heavenly realms and spiritual blessings, while we seem eternally bound to the natural realms and the curse. He speaks of God's determination to bring us into sonship and a position of transcendence over the natural, while we struggle to get along with are children and pay the bills. He speaks of a reality that we see through dim eyes of hope, yet through a faith that his perspective is real and our world is more than the natural pressures we experience. He speaks of glory, forgiveness, the riches of God's grace and of bringing all things into unity under Christ.

Our popular philosophies bring us a world view of the pain of existence and the futility of thinking beyond the natural. We are conditioned to accept the godless dogma of a world in which humanism and socialism are our only hope. We listen to the shout of the pundit, clamoring from his/her stage, proclaiming the evils of life and the failure of our best efforts.

Yet the words of Paul are as real and applicable today as ever. He is speaking in contrast to our natural world view and pointing to something above and beyond the reality of his day and our day. He is proclaiming a position of a world view that is locked in a spiritual reality that transcends our fallen world. He is declaring that God is good, all the time and that His purpose in humanity is glorious and filled with glory.

It may seem hard to understand. It is such a clear and black & white contrast. It is in counter-distinction to all that we experience in our natural reality. But it is the answer to everything of evil and of the fall and of the satanic plot to destroy. It is victory, wonder, glory and transcendent grace. It is never found in the natural. It is only realized in the faith that reaches beyond the immediate and the damning to see the spiritual world from which we came and to which we are destined to return. It is a reality, more real than the physical reality we seem bound to. It is a reality that is eternal, present, pervasive, available and free. It is around us and in us and we are destined to be recipients of its fulfillment.

The purposes of God are ours. They are purposed in Christ to be put into effect. That is, they are present and they are working and they will ultimately prevail, not in some ethereal and magical sense, not in the far away future or in some twist of logic that applies victory to a position rather than a posture. What He has provided is ours to enter into and live in and bring into the reality of our earth.

The promise and possibility is here and now - to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

Praise be to the glory of His grace.

Pastor Dave