

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Letter of St Paul to the Ephesians (*Ephesians 1:3-6*)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, as He chose us in Him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before Him. In love He destined us for adoption to Himself through Jesus Christ, in accord with the favor of His will, for the praise of the glory of His grace that He granted us in the Beloved. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection – Heavenly Father, what a Comfort You are!

Heavenly Father was not afraid to send His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ to be the perfect sacrificial offering for the sinful world. *For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but might have eternal life (John 3:16).* Words cannot describe what an act can reveal with clarity. Through what our Heavenly Father has done for us, we have a good idea of His character, though we cannot see Him. We know without a shadow of doubt how precious and important we are to Him. Jesus teaches us that there is no greater love than in dying for the loved one. *No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends (John 15:13).* Heavenly Father was not afraid to let His Son take on lowly human form, live amongst us sinners, identify with us and die for us.

Heavenly Father was not ashamed to call us His children and to share His glory with us. *In love He destined us for adoption to Himself through Jesus Christ in accord with the favour of His will (Ephesians 1:5).* Of all the gifts and wonderful things God plans for us in eternity, the most wondrous must be the conferment on us His creatures the great dignity of being His children. Once a poor orphan gets adopted into a good family, everything fundamentally changes for his/her good. There are many wonderful implications of being sons and daughters of God. First and foremost, it means we are co-heirs with Jesus Christ of the Kingdom of God (cf. Romans 8:17). Secondly, it means we have a good share in the glory of Christ. *I consider that the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us. For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God (Romans 8:18-19).* Such glory awaits us!

Heavenly Father did such a perfect job in bringing about the redemption of the world because His personal sacrifice was so broad and deep. No human mind can ever understand how great a personal sacrifice God the Father made when He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus into the world. For the Word of God to become human flesh, Jesus has to allow a total divestment of His divine glory and majesty to take on the frailty and weakness of the human condition. It was a huge stepping down for Jesus and an immense sacrifice for God the Father. Thus, our redemption was made so perfect. *For our sake He (God the Father) made Him (Jesus) to be sin Who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).* Jesus takes from us our sins and gives us, in return, God's righteousness! It means that our redemption by Christ's Blood is so perfect that with our true repentance and the power of Christ's grace, we can stand before God in heaven as if we had never sinned! In heaven, there won't be bitter memories or regret.

Heavenly Father was not afraid to trust us. He made us like Himself to last forever, with an intellect to reason, a heart to receive and give love and a free will to seek God and to attain the glorious eternal inheritance He has prepared for every one of His children. He does not force His love on us but clearly proved His love for us. He tells us that He has prepared a bright future for us (cf. Jeremiah 29:11, 1 Corinthians 2:9, John 14:2) and gives us His commandments to point the way to our glorious destination. Not only does He expect us to attain our crown of glory but He also expects us to bring along with us many of His other children who may not know Him. For this, He made of us priests for His Kingdom, a holy nation, a people set apart to sing His high praises (cf. 1 Peter 2:9), most of all by bringing His redemption to many people. Thus, Heavenly Father gives to each of His human children a share in Christ's mission to save the world.

Conversation with Heavenly Father: Sweetest Heavenly Father, thank You for making me Your child! This is my identity for eternity! This is Your wondrous gift to me. You are concerned with every aspect of my life which You gave me. You keep track of all my sorrows, collected all my tears in Your bottle and recorded each one in Your book (cf. Psalm 56:8). Even the number of hairs on my head is known to You (cf. Matthew 10:30). Though I hardly thought about You, You are thinking about me all the time (cf. Psalm 139:17-18). I am so precious to You that You did not hesitate to send Your only begotten Son, Jesus Christ to die a painful and shameful death on the Cross for me so that I can be with You for eternity. Through my walking in the footsteps of Christ, give me all the graces to love You as You love me, and to fulfill Your will every day. In the Name of Jesus, I pray. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. www.twohearts.hk