

## Scripture Reading

### **A Reading from the Letter of St Paul to the Ephesians** (*Ephesians 1:3-8*)

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. For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will - to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that He lavished on us. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

### Reflection – Our Heavenly Father's Extravagant love for His Children

**We thank God for making us His children through adoption in Christ** (cf. **Ephesians 1:5-6**). From the beginning, God the Father has decided in advance with pleasure to make us nothing less than His children. This is our inalienable right that no one can take away from us. God is our Father, and we are His children! May we never take this great gift for granted and fail to attain all of God's promises to His Children. In our earthly life, we assume several roles and take on the corresponding responsibilities and identities e.g. child, spouse, parent, friend, relative, salary earner, etc. These are earthly roles and identities which will pass away but our identity as children of God lasts for eternity. God is our Eternal Father.

**We are bought at great price through the Precious Blood of His Son, Jesus** (cf. **Ephesians 1:7**). When our first parents Adam and Eve fell from grace through their rebellion against God, bringing into downfall the whole human race, God decided to send none other than His only begotten Son, Jesus as an atoning sacrifice for all the sins of humankind. It is God's will that Jesus saves the world not by coming as a military powerful conqueror but through His own personal sufferings. *But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed (Isaiah 53:5)*. For the love of all His human children, God the Father did not spare Jesus from a terrible and shameful death on the Cross. God the Father places the sins of His sinful children on the sacrificial Body of Jesus. *The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6)*.

**Through Jesus we have righteousness in place of sin.** *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23)*. Unrepented sins destine us to eternal death. By dying on the Cross, Jesus takes away the curse due to our sins. *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole." (Galatians 3:13)*. We can see how cursed Jesus was for our sakes when He was hanging on the Cross. He was naked, hungry, thirsty, rejected and in abject poverty though as Son of God He is rich beyond all measure. On the Cross, He was in great sorrow, pain and shame though He is the eternal Lord of Joy and Glory. Jesus came so that we can have abundant lives that God the Father wants us to have. A life that will empower us to rise above our sinfulness and weaknesses, and to be made worthy of all the wondrous promises God has made to His children. *I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full (John 10:10)*.

**Standing in the righteousness of Jesus we will finally have glory instead of shame.** *When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory (Colossians 3:4)*. For this reason, creation await in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed (cf. *Romans 8:19*). God made us to share His love and glory. He made us members of His own family. To make all this possible, Christ has to ascend Calvary and through His Blood on the Cross gains for us eternal glory. To partake of His glory, we too have to pick up our own crosses (cf. *Luke 9:23*) and together with Jesus ascend Calvary so as to step into the glory that Jesus has won for us through the generosity of our most loveable Heavenly Father.

**Conversation with God the Father:** Heavenly Father, together with Jesus and Mary, we love You, adore You, praise You and put all our hope and trust in You. Thank You for making us Your children and redeeming us through the Precious Blood of Jesus. We really appreciate the great Sacrifice You made when You sent Jesus to redeem the world. Help us love You more and more. Through Jesus, give us all the graces we need in order that we become holy and blameless in Your sight. We await with joy and longing the wonderful things St Paul tells us that You have prepared for us in our home in heaven (cf. *1 Corinthians 2:9*). Please help every one of Your children to attain the glorious eternal inheritance that You have prepared for us. Thank You, Father. Praise You, Father. [www.twohearts.hk](http://www.twohearts.hk)