

Barre Congregational Church

July 11, 2021: A Pastoral Message by Pastor Margaret Keyser

~ **Seventh Sunday after Pentecost** ~

“We are blessed.”

Our services can be found on our website at www.barrechurch.com and Facebook page.

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 1 v 3-14

I. Introduction:

It is our custom or habit maybe, to wish our loved ones and friends good wishes for their birthdays, anniversaries and other special days or accomplishments. We may say many blessings to you, or may God bless you, or congratulations and all the best to you. We do that because we care for them and want only good to be bestowed upon their lives.

II. We are blessed:

The letter of Paul to the Ephesians is called by some the treasure house of the Bible. It gives information to all Christians about the great riches that is theirs, and the fullness of life in Jesus Christ. It is a letter that makes one feel good, because it talks about God’s goodness and purpose for us and the church in the past, the present and the future. It is written by Paul while he was in prison, but despite his imprisonment, he was filled with an inner peace and joy over the goodness of God through Jesus Christ. God’s goodness and blessings kept him strong amidst all the struggles he was going through.

In verse 3 he talks about how God has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. To be in relationship with God through Christ, means that we have access to the greatest blessings coming from God, the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ. We do not have to wonder about the nature of God and the nature of God’s spiritual gifts. They are all there, available to us, because our names are known in the heavenly realm. God knows our names, and God understands what each one of us and our needs.

III. God's spiritual gifts through Jesus Christ

We recognize these gifts Paul is talking about, through the life and heart and ministry of Jesus Christ. When I read the Gospels, or the letters to the various churches by the Apostles, it gives me such great insight into Christ's desire, His willingness and ability to be present with those who needed Him, and His understanding of their lives, no matter which culture they came from or persuasion they had, or which struggles they went through. He had a presence that was comforting, and healing. He had a deep feeling of love for those around Him. He demonstrated the way of love, and that was the message to the early church, to be in a loving and compassionate community with one another, and the way they could do it, was through the embrace and inner dwelling of Christ in them, so they would be channels of peace and love and joy. The Ephesian church needed to know that they are blessed with those spiritual gifts, so they could live their lives to the fullest. They received those gifts and therefore as a community of faith they can now experience that deep joy and love that Christ demonstrated to them, among one another.

IV. Conclusion:

The church is the place where Christ is, and where we can experience what the Ephesians had received by God through Christ. It is the place where we come to find peace, love, and comfort. The Call to worship and our opening hymns are wonderful opportunities for us to call upon God's Name, and to thank God for all the good things we are blessed with. In our activities, business decisions, mission work and worship services, we see and experience the gifts and blessings from God in our lives, and the church becomes the place of a spiritual deepening of who we are and being of service to those who are in need, as Christ was to those who needed Him. It is a place where we get to know one another, where we share together in the blessings of God, whatever that might be, and where we care for one another while we serve and lead. With Christ at the Head and the Holy Spirit within and among us, we can only go from strength to strength as a congregation here in Barre. May God bless and guide us as we continue to seek ways to love and be of service to others. Amen