I don’t know about you, but I find it so easy to look at the things I don’t like and are unpleasant and to find myself, well, I hate to say it, but ... **complaining** or **grousing**! That is my new word – **grousing** - it means moaning or grumbling. Maybe you have found yourself doing something like that in our present situation, looking at your present circumstances and complaining.

 I find it interesting, in the light of that, that the last 5 Psalms in the book of Psalm, all begin with the same phrase “**Praise the Lord**” and they all end with the same statement “**Praise the Lord**.” So, God would have us praise Him and give Him gratitude. The Psalmist declared in Psalm 103:1 – “**Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name**.” The Psalmist recognized the importance of praising the Lord and our giving thanks to God. Perhaps we ought to do as the old gospel hymn suggests:

 …When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost, Count your many blessings,

 name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done.

 How easy it is for us, even though we may count our blessings, to look at our blessings and at the same time fail to consider the source of our blessings. We can become so absorbed with the gifts that we forget the giver of the gifts. I think that is the reason we so many times find ourselves murmuring and complaining ... in spite of the Lord’s instructions that **“in everything we are to give thanks”** [1 Thess. 5:18]... and we are to **“do all things without murmuring and disputing”** [Philippians 2:14], because we are focusing on what we have or don’t have or think we should have, rather than looking to the One who has given us so much.

 Remember that “**God** **who spared not His own son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also, with Him freely give us all things.**” [Rom. 8:32] If He met our greater need of forgiveness and Eternal life then don’t you think He will meet our lesser needs?

 As I was thinking about this, I was looking at Ephesians **Ch. 1** and **vs. 3**,

 **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every**

 **spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus.**

 In **vs. 4** through **14**, it goes on to list for us several of those spiritual blessings that are ours. The word **blessed** is used three times there in **verse** **3**. They are all a translation of the same original term, only one is an **adjective**, one is **adverb**, and the other is a **noun**.

 I want to walk you through this because I think this is so phenomenal, and this is why we can be thankful and content in whatever the situation is we find ourselves in.

* First of all it says there - **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**... and the word **blessed** there is an **adjective**, meaning it is a description of God. For He is **blessed.** This word **blessed** or **blessing** is actually two Greek terms put together, one meaning **good** and the other meaning **words.** So, it is a term that means **good words being spoken** or **declared**. In fact, we get our English word **eulogy** from this word. What is a eulogy? If you go to a funeral and someone stands up and pronounces the eulogy, they are speaking a **blessing** upon the person who died. They brag on the person (and isn’t it sad that we wait until they die to do that?)

 This an interesting term that is used for describing God, for it means **speaking good words**, or **declaring something as being good.** That is who God is – He lives in an atmosphere of blessedness and of praise. You see, God is not some mean and nasty God, who is just waiting to stomp on us, but He is a good, merciful, grace-filled and loving God who doesn’t want us to remain as we are. Oh, yes, He hates sin in our lives and He desires to redeem us, to purify us and to make us holy but it is because He loves us and He wants to bless us.

 Here is the picture of God, sitting on His throne and He **IS** **blessedness** and He doesn’t just have

 blessedness but that is **who He IS**. For He **IS** full of **blessedness** - of good and lovingkindness - which is like

 a fog or mist or this atmosphere of blessedness that He lives within.

* The 2nd word for blessed is an **adverb** when it says **that the God of blessedness ...has blessed us.**  So this is a **participle** acting as an **adverb** which describes and gives **content** to the main verb. The difficulty in this verse, is that there is no main verb, so the translators have supplied it, and it is the word **has**. **God HAS blessed us**.

 Let me give you a picture: God is sitting on His throne, and the God of all blessedness has blessed us. It is as if His blessedness just bubbles up out of Him, from the bottom of his toes and He has given to you and me, to those of us who have come to personal faith and trust in the Lord Jesus as our Savior, **His blessedness**.

* What is God’s blessedness that He has given us? This is where our 3rd word for **blessed** comes in. This time it isn’t an adverb or an adjective describing God - but it is a **noun**, so it is speaking of either a person, place or thing. The verse says **He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing*,*** there it is! It is this word **blessing** **that is in Christ Jesus**. That word doesn’t refer to the content or to the kind of blessing but rather **to the source of the blessing** and that it comes from God Himself. So, we have this **blessed God** giving **His blessing** – and what is **His blessing?** It is Himself! For it is the person of Jesus Himself. Now, how awesome is that!!! Another interesting fact is that the word **blessing** used here is actually in the singular tense, meaning it is actually **only ONE SINGLE Blessing, that the God of blessing has blessed us with.** The Lord gives us a list of more blessings in vs. 3-14 – His choosing us, adopting us, favoring us, redeeming us, forgiving us and giving us His eternal Spirit to seal us and to secure us. All of these are a part of the one single blessing He gives us and that one single blessing that the God of blessing has blessed us with is **Jesus**!

Get this, everything God wants for you and me, EVERYTHING is CONTAINED in Jesus.

 He is the answer to **every** question, **every** problem and **every** need of our lives.

That is why Peter says in 2nd Peter 1:3 – that **by His divine power** (speaking of Jesus) **He has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and by virtue.** I love this! Do you realize that in Jesus, we have everything we need for life and godliness? You see, there is nothing outside of Jesus we need! Nothing!

 So, Paul was saying here in Ephesians 1 that Jesus is to be our sole focus, HE is to be the central of our lives, the north star that points us, the compass of our lives. It is when we come to rely on this that we can praise the Lord and can live in gratitude even in tough and sticky times, just as we are living in right now. Everything God has for us and wants for us is found in one single place-in Jesus Christ and of whom He has blessed me with!

 So often we think of God as a store clerk – and I have this need in my life and so I bang on the door of God and I say: *God, I really need some love right now; for that is what I need, for I am desperate for love.* And He says: *Well, I’ve got just what you need!* And so, He goes to the back room and grabs this jar called love and He comes out and He hands me a pill from it and says: *Here is a pill of love!* So, I pop that pill of love ... and man, I’ve got my love need now filled and off I go! But then I soon realize that it wasn’t love I need, but it was peace I need; and so I run back in and I say: *God thank you for the love you gave me, but what I really need is some peace; and I sure would appreciate it if you would give me some peace.* And God says: *Well, okay I’ve got what you need.* So, He goes into the back room again and He grabs the jar called peace, and He comes out and gives me a pill of peace – and I pop it ... and away I go, and I am at peace now. But then I realize it isn’t peace that I need but it is patience or it is wisdom that I need. So, I go back to Him again and say: *Thank you for the peace and love you gave me, but what I really need is some patience and I need it right now.* Or *Lord, I need some wisdom, for I don’t know what I am supposed to be doing in this situation and I sure would appreciate it if you would give me some of your direction and wisdom.* Then He says: *Okay, I’ve got it; for I’ve got just what you need* and He goes into the back room, gets this jar and He gives me a pill of patience or a pill of wisdom.

 My friends, God doesn’t do that! God is not some store clerk, who divvies out what we need - need by need. No, but do you know what God does? I run to Him and I say I need love or I need joy, I need acceptance or I need forgiveness or wisdom. Well, He doesn’t just give me those things but He gives me Jesus Himself to live within me by His Holy Spirit. I have all that I need in Jesus. He doesn’t give me those things apart from Jesus but He gives me Jesus! In Jesus, I get all those things and I have everything I need!! Yes, and even in the Covid19 pandemic.

 You see, when He gives me Jesus, I have love, I have joy, I have peace, I have patience, wisdom, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. It is all found in Him, for I have everything I need for life and godliness in Him. Think about this, if everything God has for you is found in one single place, which is Jesus, then why wouldn’t you recklessly abandon and forsake everything else in pursuit of that one thing? Should we not as the writer of Hebrews exhorts us in Hebrews 12:1-2…

**Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us** (and which includes the covid19 pandemic) **looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

 As we do that, we can truly praise the Lord and not in just some aspects of our lives but in all aspects of our lives.