Ephesians 1:3-2:22
An Expanded Paraphrase
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What a wonderful God is our God,
The Father of Jesus our Lord,
the Messiah.
What wonderful favors He has lavished upon us—
every advantage in spiritual realms,
every advantage of Heaven itself!
Remember that all He has given us is ours only by our union with the Messiah:
His gifts are “in the Messiah,”
and we ourselves are “in the Messiah.”
This is God’s chosen channel of blessing. Look at this list:

1. Before ever He laid the foundations of the universe, God chose us personally:
   but His choice was “in the Messiah.” That is, He planned that we should have the status and the character to stand unashamed in His presence,
   and for this purpose He destined us to be His adopted sons: and the adoption is made effective through Jesus the Messiah:
   so that even our lives reflect the Wonder of His glory!

2. He has ransomed us from the slavery in which we lived—or, in other words, released us from our faults and failings: but at what a cost! No less a cost than the blood of the one whom He so dearly loves. So that once again our blessings come to us “in the Messiah.” How rich is God in grace!

3. He has given us the insight and intelligence to understand the deepest riddle of the universe, the very secret of the Creator’s will. This, too, is an overwhelming generosity on God’s part,
   and here, too, it is “in the Messiah”: for God arranged that the whole of history should converge on Him. His plan was no less than this:
   that everything in heaven and everything on earth should find its focus and its meaning in the Messiah.

4. In this awesome plan He has given us a part! He who never fails to accomplish what He determines to do, powering and steering everything to achieve His purpose, has both destined us and invited us to be the first to have in us the radiant hope that the Messiah gives: so that even our lives reflect the Wonder of His glory!

5. But you, too, are part of this plan: for you too have heard the great truth of God, the good news of the rescue of mankind; you too have accepted it as true, and put your trust in the Messiah; and because you too are “in Him,” you have been given the Holy Spirit as a seal of membership and a sign of what is yet to come, a down-payment on the immense fortune that you will one day inherit when the whole ransomed treasure of God is finally restored to Him.

What wonderful, wonderful glory is God’s!
That is why I am so thankful for you all. Whenever I pray I am continually remembering you and praising God.

For I have heard of the faith that you have in Jesus the Messiah, and of the love you show to all His people, and I recognize this as evidence of His Spirit at work in you. This is what I constantly pray for you:
May the God of our Lord, Jesus the Messiah,