

Sealed by God Ephesians 1:11-14

Ephesians 1:11-14 (ESV) In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, [12] so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. [13] In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, [14] who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Introduction

- A. One of our favorite songs here at Living Hope was penned by Steve & Vikki Cook. The title of the song is *The Glories of Calvary*. Here is part of the lyric:

Lord, You're calling me to come and behold the wondrous cross
To explore the depths of grace that came to me at such a cost
Where your boundless love conquered my boundless sin
And mercy's arms were opened wide

1. In Ephesians 1:3-14 we are exploring "the depths of grace that came to me at such a cost." This grace has come to everyone who believes in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin.
2. My aim has been for us who believe in Jesus Christ to grasp this grace. Paul had the same concern as we will see in his prayer in Ephesians 1:15-23.

- B. Here is what we have seen to this point. God, three persons in One, has worked salvation on our behalf to the praise of his glorious grace (remember the acronym cars):

1. We are chosen by God the father in eternity past (see Ephesians 1:4)
2. We are adopted by God the father (see Ephesians 1:5)
3. We are redeemed by Jesus Christ the Son (see Ephesians 1:7)
4. We are sealed with the promised Holy Spirit (see Ephesians 1:13)

- C. These realities belong to us if we are in Christ. In Ephesians 1:3-14 3 times we read "in Christ" and 6 times we read "in him."

1. Here is how I read these 12 stupendous verses. See if you can relate. Chosen ... check. Adopted ... yup. Redeemed ... absolutely. Sealed with the promised Holy Spirit ... ??
2. The title of this sermon is **Sealed by God**. My aim is to help us appreciate the gift of the Holy Spirit.

I. In verse 11 we hear an echo from verse 3. In verse 3 we have "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places." In verse 11 "we have obtained an inheritance."

- A. The reality of this inheritance is so significant that Paul speaks of it as if we have it already. We own the inheritance but we have not possessed the inheritance yet.

1. This is clear in verse 14. We do have a guarantee of that inheritance in that we have received the Holy Spirit.

Ex: Think of it as a down payment on a piece of property. You signed a contract, you have the piece of paper, the land is yours, but not yet.

2. This inheritance that we possess in Christ has been predestined for us. Why? Because God had a purpose and God works all things according to the counsel of His will.
 3. That plan whereby God saves sinners and creates a people for his possession is to the praise of his glory. God created this world for Himself.
- B. To some folks this is offensive. God is allowed to be God anywhere but on His throne. God is supposed to be “hands off.” God (they think) is supposed to make much of us.
1. But, this inheritance which we own is for the praise of his glory (the phrase is here twice to make sure we don't miss it).

The glory of God is the revelation of God, and the glory of His grace is His self-disclosure as a gracious God. John Stott in *TBST Ephesians Commentary*, p 50

2. Unless God moved and acted we could not see His glory. But praise be to God He did move and He did act. God saved us but we needed to see that we required rescue.

John 16:7-11 (ESV) Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. [8] And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: [9] concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; [10] concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; [11] concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

- C. In verse 12 Paul mentions those who were first to hope in Christ. We are far off from the NT days but those who first believed in Jesus Christ were Jewish.
1. In verse 13, the gospel spreads to the Gentiles (Greeks) as well. God's purpose is a people from every tribe, every tongue, every people and every nation,
 2. Originally God elected the nation of Israel.

Deuteronomy 7:6-8 (ESV) "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. [7] It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, [8] but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt."

3. God's ultimate purpose, as promised to Abraham, was to save for Himself people from all over the world. How will God accomplish that? God uses means.

II. The gospel must be preached to the world we live in so the Holy Spirit may act.

- A. There was a point (see verse 13) when the gospel was preached to you and you heard. I do not mean heard only audibly but rather your heart was stirred.
- B. When your heart was stirred it was God at work to save. You heard the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Wonder of wonders, you believed.
1. I cannot make anyone believe, nor can you. Only God opens eyes, heals ears, raises the dead and gives us life.
- Ex: This is why we pray and ask God to save folks that are perishing. If we could do it, we would. If God doesn't do it, don't ask Him.

2. When you heard the word of truth, the glorious gospel, and you believed at that moment you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.

III. What does it mean to be sealed by God (sealed by the Holy Spirit)?

A. This is glorious doctrine. If you heard the gospel (cut to the quick in your heart about your sins), and believed (the cross), you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.

1. It doesn't matter if you believe this or not. Some don't, some won't. Doesn't matter, the glorious news about grace is you are sealed.
2. To see and believe this truth is to be dazzled by grace. God has acted to save us while we were yet enemies.

B. So what are you? You are three things.

1. First, to seal is to authenticate as genuine and true.

Ex: A United States seal on a passport or a hologram on your Visa debit card.

2. Second, to seal is to mark as one's property.

Ex: In the wild west they would brand cattle with a logo.

3. Three, to seal is to render secure.

Ex: The Pharisees show us this at the tomb of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 27:62-66 (ESV) Next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate [63] and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.' [64] Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first." [65] Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can." [66] So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

C. All of these apply to the Christian. I'll let the Bible speak.

1. The Holy Spirit tells us we are genuine believers (children of God).

Romans 8:14-16 (ESV) For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. [15] For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" [16] The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

2. Having the Holy Spirit means that God owns us.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (ESV) Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, [20] for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

3. The Holy Spirit gives us assurance that we are saved.

Ephesians 4:30 (ESV) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

D. As a believer you are sealed by God in God. You are authentic (fruit of the Holy Spirit), you belong to another (not your own), and you are secure.

1. God's grip on you is bigger and stronger than your grip on Him.
2. Therefore, we have rest and we have peace with God. Once we were children of wrath but now we are heirs of God. We have an inheritance (one day we will be like Christ).

Close

- A. This doctrine properly understood will produce at least three things in us.
 1. A life of worship and adoration (see Ephesians 4-6).
 2. Humility (we have nothing to boast about because all is grace and mercy).
 3. Peace and joy (you don't keep working to earn your salvation).
- B. But won't this doctrine lead to a pile of sin? No. No because we are fundamentally a changed people with a new heart. We have a new identity in Christ given to us by the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:7-18 (ESV) Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, [8] will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory? [9] For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory. [10] Indeed, in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all, because of the glory that surpasses it. [11] For if what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory. [12] Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, [13] not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end. [14] But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. [15] Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. [16] But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. [17] Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. [18] And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.