

Ephesians 1: 13 and 14; “Being Sealed with the Spirit”, Message # 5 in a series entitled – “The Exceeding Greatness of his Power”, a Bible Study prepared by Pastor Paul Rendall on April 3rd, 2019, for those gathered at his home.

This evening I want to open up the truth that every believer in Christ is sealed with the Holy Spirit. I want to set forth to you, 1st of all – The absolute necessity of your hearing and believing the word of truth to your being given the seal of the Holy Spirit. 2nd – the certain assurance of salvation which is brought to the true believer in Jesus Christ by God’s sealing them with the Holy Spirit And 3rd – The sealing with the Spirit is the real guarantee of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession takes place. May the Lord broaden and deepen our understanding of this great salvation which has been given to us by our Triune God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

1st of all – The absolute necessity of your hearing and believing the word of truth to your being given the seal of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 13 – “In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” I would have you to notice and remind you at the outset of this study, that there is a most definite order, in the salvation of any person, which is mentioned here in this first chapter of Ephesians. Salvation begins with the purpose of God in verses 3 and 4, to bless His elect people with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. And that purpose is always most definitely fulfilled in time and space by God’s applying to His chosen ones, at a certain and definite time in their life, the blessings of salvation, in a most definite order. We know nothing about God’s eternal purpose before we believe in Jesus Christ, as to whether we are chosen of God. But what comes before your believing is God’s choice of you to salvation. If you are to be saved, God must have already predestined you to it. And then, having predestined you, He brings that eternal purpose about, in the time of His choice also. In His appointed time, He calls you through the gospel, the word of truth. You hear the word concerning Christ, preached to you. And He makes that word effectually come to your heart and mind with power.

So, it is good for us to understand, from the very beginning of our Christian life, that when God calls a person effectually to salvation, He does so in relation to gospel preaching, and people sharing with them, the word of truth. He brings a preacher to them, or He brings them to him, a person who will tell them that even though they are a sinner, that Christ has died for sinners, and when a person believes in Jesus, then they can be declared righteous, and become truly righteous, in God’s sight. They can be reconciled to God, and the wrath of God which is upon them because they are sinners by nature, is removed by their trusting in Christ for salvation. This is the good tidings of the gospel. They are justified by faith in Christ. It is while the message is being preached or shared, that the Lord opens their eyes, the eyes of their heart and their understanding, to realize the truth of their need of Christ to be saved. God shows them mercy by opening their hearts to these great and glorious truths, and they believe, and they are saved.

Look with me over at Acts chapter 16 and verses 11-14. “Therefore, sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next day came to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of the that part of Macedonia, a colony.” “And we were staying in that city for some days.” “And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there.” “Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us.” “She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God.” “The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.” Now, you can see how absolutely necessary it was for Lydia to hear the gospel preached to her. Yes, she was religious; yes, she was a worshiper of God it says in verse 14. Yes, she customarily came to that place to pray. But on this particular day, something more was going to happen; something which would forever change her life, and her eternal destiny. Paul spoke the gospel to her, and to all who were gathered there that day.

And the Lord did His mighty work of regeneration, which is called here – opening her heart to respond to the things which were spoken to her by Paul. When Lydia trusted in Christ, she was given the gift of the Holy Spirit. Having trusted in Christ, she was also sealed with the Holy Spirit, we are told by Paul in the verse that we are studying now.

So the order is – The opening of the heart at the time of the hearing of the word of truth. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word concerning Christ, and then, having believed, the person receives the Holy Spirit and is sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. Let's look at God's purpose, once more, as it is laid out in Romans 8: 29 – “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” “Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.” All of these spiritual blessings were most certainly purposed by God in eternity past, before He saves a one of them. Everyone whom He intends to save are chosen by Him before the foundation of the world. And they are not chosen arbitrarily, this great number out of the greater mass of people whom God had purposed to create. They were chosen very particularly in accordance with His purpose, that they should be holy and without blame before Him because of His setting His love upon them. We are never told in the Scriptures, the reasons that God chose some and not all, or some and not others. They were not chosen because they were holy, but in order that God would make them holy. We are not given the reasons why He chose them, except that it says in Romans chapter 9, verse 15 – “I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.” “So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.”

So let us not argue against the sovereignty of God's purposes and His choice in election. Rather, let us receive what the Bible clearly states. “There is none righteous, no not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God.” (Romans 3: 10,11) And yet it also says – “Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near.” (Isaiah 55: 6) The first verses are talking about man's total depravity; that apart from grace, no one will seek the Lord. The second verse is talking about man's responsibility, and what He must do to be saved. He must seek the Lord. How do we reconcile them? What we need to see is that without God's grace and His enablement, none of these things takes place effectually and savingly. And yet we should also see how it is true that men, realizing the sovereignty of God, should still seek for Him, for they will find Him if they seek for Him with all their heart. Only God can change the heart so that a person will seek Him in this way. Our conclusion should be, that God had to choose us, or none of us would be saved. And it should become apparent to us over time, more and more, that when a person does choose to believe, it is because God has supplied them with the grace to repent and believe.

For, let us not misunderstand, there is deliberate choice involved in putting one's faith in Christ, and the reason that people do so, is because God has come to them and caused them to be born again. He has opened their heart and renewed their will to receive the things spoken to them, so that they will believe in Christ. It is only when people want to assert some inherent power in the natural man, some native ability in an unsaved man, to choose to savingly believe in Christ, that great problems come into play in their being able to rightly conceive theologically of what salvation is all about. Being saved is not about man's ability to choose. He has that ability, but he will not use that ability to choose rightly, ever, unless He is effectually called and regenerated in the New Birth. Truly, each Christian has much to learn about God and His ways. We will never, in this life, stop learning about the greatness and the glory of His grace. And we will still marvel over it for all of eternity.

2nd – Let's think about the certain assurance of salvation which is brought to the true believer in Jesus Christ by God's sealing them with the Holy Spirit.

... “in whom also (*that is, in Christ*), having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” It does not say that you the believer were sealed by the Holy Spirit of truth. It says that you the believer were sealed with the Holy Spirit of God. The sealing of the Spirit is a part of the gift of the Holy Spirit which is given by the Father to every true believer in Jesus Christ. You were sealed with

Him. Turn with me over to 2nd Corinthians chapter 1, and verses 18-22. “But as God is faithful, our word to you was not Yes and No.” “For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us – by me, Silvanus, and Timothy – was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes.” “For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.” “Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.”

Now, you can see here that evidently some at Corinth thought that the certain saving influences and indwelling of the Holy Spirit were something which might take place in a believer, and they might not take place in a believer, so that there was no knowing for certain after a person had believed whether they were a true believer or not, or whether they might fall out of salvation in Christ or not. But Paul assures them, that this was not so; that the Christ who was preached among them by him and Silvanus and Timothy, was not Yes or No, but is Yes in Him. This, he explains was because all of the promises of God in Christ are Yes and Amen. They are not perhaps, or maybe. He then goes on to explain to them that it is God who establishes all believers together in Christ. It is God who has spiritually placed us together in the spiritual body of Christ. And it is His full and express intention of making over to us all of the blessings which Christ has purchased for us. It is our having been sealed by the Spirit which assures us of all this. It is the Spirit’s permanent impress of God’s truth upon our hearts, that it was by Christ’s perfect obedience to God’s holy law, and His suffering on the cross, to die in our place for all of our sins; that is the reason that we are saved, and will continue to be saved, all through our life, until we reach eternal glory. It was God who anointed us with the Spirit when we first believed. It was He who has given us the Spirit to dwell in our hearts forever.

Therefore, it is this, His gift of the Spirit, and our experientially realizing His working in our lives; that is what we have been sealed with. Because of our being sealed by the Spirit we have that assurance permanently impressed there by God. It is He who is at work in us to bring us salvation and establish us in it. God has made this permanent impression upon our lives by His sealing us with His Spirit. He has left His imprint upon our heart as an everlasting token that our salvation is really from Him and not from ourselves. His being given to us as a gift and as a seal of our salvation is meant to assure us that we belong to God as His purchased possession, and that He will most certainly convey to us every spiritual blessing that we will need; not only to be justified, or declared righteous in His sight, but also to be sanctified; that is that He will not only see us as His holy one, but He will be giving us imparted grace in order that we might be able to pursue and make progress in holiness. He will never leave us nor forsake us. We are united to Him forever.

God’s sealing every believer with His Spirit after they believe in Christ is His immediate witness to our heart and mind, that we are His child forever. This brings a certainty of assurance of our salvation to our hearts as it says over in 1st John 5: 4-11. “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world.” “And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith.” “Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” “This is He who came by water and blood – Jesus Christ; not by water, but by water and blood.” “And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.” “For there are three that bear witness in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.” “And there are three that bear witness on earth; ; the Spirit the water, and the blood, and these three agree as one.” “If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son.” “He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.” “And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.”

Now, I want you to see the certain assurance which is brought to the Christian through believing these words. It is our faith in God’s word, remembering what Christ has done for us, which allows us to overcome the world. Whatever is born of God overcomes the world. The Spirit is the author of the New Birth, and it is God who has sealed us with His Spirit; that is, God has given Him to us to be with us forever bearing witness to power of Christ’s death and resurrection in our lives. God has sealed us

with the Spirit in this wonderful way, that He has made a permanent impress upon our hearts by means of His presence with us forever. We must believe this word that is spoken to us here, because it is the testimony of God to us, and we will prove the power and the glory of it to ourselves, day by day by trusting in His word, which is His witness and testimony to us, assuring us that He is with us.

Jesus came by water and blood to establish this testimony which is inherently within the sealed believer. Jesus came to be baptized by John in our place in the river Jordan. He did that to show forth the fact that He would undertake to fulfill the law on our behalf, so that His righteousness could be imputed to us, so that we could be justified and seen by God as righteous and holy. And He came also through the blood; that is, His going to the cross and shedding His precious blood there for our sins, so that we would be forgiven and none of God's righteous wrath would remain upon us, or be poured out on us on the Day of Judgment. We are sealed by the Holy Spirit, who continually bears witness to this fact. Indeed, there are three in heaven that bear witness to this fact: The Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one, as God bearing witness to the truth of these things. And there are also three that bear witness on earth, because we have been sealed with the Spirit in our hearts: The Spirit, the water, and the blood. That is the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. Our souls have been washed and sprinkled with pure water by the Spirit, and also we have been cleansed and are daily being cleansed by the Holy Spirit's applying the efficacy of Christ's blood to our souls so that we might be purified by faith in Him.

And then 3rd, and very briefly, the sealing with the Spirit is the real guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession takes place.

Our verses tell us that the Holy Spirit of promise, with whom we were sealed, is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. That is, we know that we shall most certainly have this eternal inheritance, not only spiritually in this life, but also in regard to the redemption of our bodies on the last day, when Christ returns and raises us from the dead. Turn with me over to 2nd Corinthians 5, verses 1-8. "For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." "For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked." "For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life." "Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee (an earnest or a pledge)." "So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord." "For we walk by faith, not by sight." "We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord."

These verses confirm for us what our text in Ephesians is saying; that the Holy Spirit has been given to us as a guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. We have already been redeemed by Christ spiritually speaking, but in respect to the body, we still need to be redeemed. And, that application of redemption will take place on the last Day of the world, on the Day in which Christ returns. We know that if our earthly house, this tent, this body is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made which hands eternal in the heavens. In this body we groan, desiring to be clothed with this glorified body, which is called here – our habitation from heaven.

When we are clothed with this, we shall not be found naked; that is, a soul without a body, but shall receive a new house, a new body which shall last forever and have no sin attendant to it, as our body now does. We groan now, longing for that day, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. God has prepared us for this very thing in His giving us the Spirit as the guarantee. He will still be with us in the time when we die physically. He will be the One who will make our spirit perfect at our death, and who will be dwelling with us in heaven, giving us joy and peace awaiting that glorious time when God the Father will give Christ the command to return to this earth and raise all the dead physically, and then He shall give each of His saints the resurrection body. Death will be swallowed up in victory, and our eternal inheritance will be realized in all of its glory.

