

Sealed with the Holy Spirit

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Date: 01 March 2026

Preacher: Bill Story

[0 : 00] How are we doing?

How are we doing? Yeah? Take out your Bibles with me please.! And turn to the first chapter of Ephesians.

! Galatians, Ephesians. Philippians, Colossians. Gentiles eat workshops. G-E-P-C. We want the E of that saying.

We began a month ago or so, this study of this book of Ephesians, which is about the essentials of healthy Christianity.

What do Christians believe and how do Christians walk? What is the work of God? And then what does it look like to walk worthy of God's calling of us?

[1 : 13] So we're looking at just the opening sentence that Paul writes from verse 3 through verse 14. That includes a number of blessings.

He's blessing the Father for having blessed us with every spiritual blessing. And then beginning of verse 4, he begins to enumerate those blessings. So I want to read first the text.

We're going to focus on verses 11 through 14 this morning. But I want to read the whole sentence from verse 3 through 14. So if you're able, please stand as I read Paul's letter to the Ephesians, chapter 1, beginning of verse 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, just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we be holy and blameless before him in love.

He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the kind intention of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the beloved.

[2 : 38] In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight.

He made known to us the mystery of his will, according to the kind intention which he purposed in him, with a view to an administration, suitable to the fullness of times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in heaven and things upon the earth.

In him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to his purpose, who works all things after the counsel of his will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of his glory.

In him you also, after listening to the message of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed you were sealed in him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of his glory.

So reads his word. Let us pray. Father, as we take these moments now to ponder these rich words, as the apostle Paul writes, as you have infused his mind with these high thoughts, these deep thoughts, these broad thoughts, may, Father, that roll over to us.

[4 : 40] Through your Holy Spirit, Father, quicken us and awaken us and teach us and encourage us through the word.

We pray as well, Lord, we know that faith comes from hearing and hearing, which is the word of Christ.

So may the word of Christ be proclaimed clearly today, that there may be the giving of faith through hearing.

We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated. Charles Spurgeon, who I mentioned a couple of weeks ago, that great preacher of the 1850s through the 1890s, was once quoted as saying that he was so sure of his salvation that he could grab onto a corn stalk and swing out over

the fires of hell, look into the face of the devil, and sing, Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine. Do you have that kind of assurance of your salvation? Could you grab a corn stalk and swing over the fires of hell and sing blessed assurance into the face of the devil himself?

[6 : 21] Are you that sure has God sealed you in such a way? This is a topic today that I love because it's about assurance.

We often can think about the gospel and the grace of Christ, the work of Christ, and the faith that we come to Christ in.

But often we don't talk about assurance of salvation. How can we know? How do we know? Do you know that you're saved? Do you have assurance of that? Do you know because of a feeling? Is it a fuzzy feeling?

That's not very reliable because those come and go, don't they? Is it because of something you did? Can you say, well, you know, back on such and such a date, I wrote it in the front of my Bible, I walked forward and I prayed the prayer and the pastor told me if I truly believed and prayed this prayer, I am saved.

[7 : 39] Are you certain because of something you did? I walked that aisle, I prayed that prayer, I signed that card, I threw that stick in the fire at camp. They still do that?

I don't know. We called it something else besides a stick back in those days. So, how do you know? That's what we're looking at today. We've been looking at and appreciating the blessings that God has given. As Paul says, he's worshiping God, he's blessing the Father because he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing.

And we've noticed several things here. First, in verse four, he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we are to be holy, not to live holy, but we are holy before him.

Then in verse five, he predestined us to adoption as sons. So we're adopted to himself for his pleasure. Again, that's about relationship.

[8 : 46] Then in verse seven, he adds that in him, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins. We're rescued from the slavery of sin.

Now, that's a present one. That's a present blessing. The first two, verses four and five, those are things that God did in the past before we even came into existence. Then in verse seven, that's something that we have in the present.

We have that redemption, forgiveness. And then again, in verse nine, he's made known to us the mystery of his will. He's made known to us the mystery, the mystery that is his eternal plan in Christ to bring all things together, to sum up everything in Christ and to unite all things.

And specifically, what he's gonna get into in Ephesians is the uniting of Jews and Gentiles. And it's called a mystery because that was not revealed in the Old Testament.

That through the Messiah, the Gentiles would come in and be on equal ground. So a radical change from what it was in the Old Testament.

[9 : 56] Gentiles could come, but they were on the outskirts. Remember, they're on the farthest out from the holy place in the temple, the court of the Gentiles, where they sold stuff.

That was where they couldn't come any closer. But then through Christ, and that's what chapter two in Ephesians is gonna talk about, that Christ has made the way. He's broken down the wall.

So the Gentiles, everyone, Jew or Gentile, can come to the Father, right to the holy place. I'm out of stage room here. I didn't fall, at least I.

So, we have these blessings. And now we continue in verse 11 now. This all, another blessing that we have in the present, we've obtained an inheritance.

I'll sum it up this way. This blessing is that he guarantees our inheritance, or salvation, by giving us the Holy Spirit.

[11 : 03] So he's gonna speak about, in verse 11, our inheritance, right, that we are heirs. Since we're adopted sons and daughters of God, since we are his children, he has a future inheritance for us that we're gonna receive in heaven, right?

But we get part of it now. And so we have an inheritance, and he guarantees that inheritance, which is our salvation, by the gift of the Holy Spirit, which he calls in verse 13, a sealing.

We're sealed with the Holy Spirit. We're made assured by the Holy Spirit. So let's dig into this a little bit. Two parts. So verses 11 and 12, notice verse 11 and 12 uses the term we.

We have. And then in verse 13, notice it says, in him you also. So there's two different groups here. So verses 13 and verses 11 and 12, we'll talk about the we.

And then in verses 13 and 14, we'll talk about the you. Who's the we and the you? Paul's talking about the we, and then the you. So there's two groups, but they're all receiving the same thing. [12:22] So part one is about the Jewish believers. Jewish believers, the we part in this, receive the full eternal inheritance in Christ. They receive. They're the ones, verse 12, who were the first to hope in Christ.

Okay? The we. We Jewish believers, right? All the disciples and the apostles of Jesus were Jewish, right? Very rarely do you see, but you do see in the Gospels, you do see Gentiles coming. You see the centurion, right? You see, you see the Syrophenician woman with the daughter demonized, right? Who's coming to Christ, right? And he ministers to them. But his primary focus first was to the Jews. And that was Paul's as well, to the Jew first and also to the Greek, right?

Whoever Paul went, he went to the synagogue first, preached to the Jews, was usually rejected, and went to the Gentiles in the street. So Jewish believers receive a full inheritance, eternal inheritance in Christ.

[13:29] That's the we. We who are the first to hope, to the Jew first, and then in verse 13, will be the Gentiles, to you also. You also, right? You also receive this inheritance.

You also are believers, right? Verse 13, you not only listened, but you also believed, right? So two groups. And then what's inheritance?

So he says in verse 7, we have obtained an inheritance. So what's an inheritance? Any of you get an inheritance? Anybody get an inheritance yet?

No? No? No? Wait. You got one? Yeah? Or maybe you're planning an inheritance for your children, or your grandchildren, whatever. Right?

It's a promise, right? To give upon the death, right? To the children, and the grandchildren, et cetera. So an inheritance.

[14:30] And this word in the Greek literally means to be appointed by lot. That doesn't seem to help very much. What's that mean? Appointment by lot. Well, biblically, remember in the Old Testament, there was the giving out of land.

In the Old Testament, the different tribes inherited different lands, right? It was appointed by lot, right? So once Joshua came into the promised land, they started, right, coming through the land, and then they started appointing areas of the promised land to different tribes.

Right? So it's an appointed by lot. The promised land was parceled out to each tribe. So that's the background on it.

But what does that mean today, right? Do we get that land? Do we get the promised land? By the way, how big is the promised land? It's not very big, right?

In the big scope of things. It's about, from Galilee to Jerusalem, about 90 miles. So Galilee being up north, and then Jerusalem, the heart of the south, 90 miles.

[15:43] A lot of fighting over that land, isn't there? Is that land, is God still giving that land to the Jews, by the way? There's a debate about that, but if you read the end of Joshua, it clearly says, God fulfilled it.

God kept his promise. The land was done, it was fulfilled. But here's another thought. So, let's think now, Hebrews. Let's think of the person, who was first given the land, Abraham.

Okay? What was his view on that promised land? Remember, he's the first one, that it was promised to. He's the first one, that steps in the land. What did he think about it? It was already occupied by other people, right?

It wasn't very fruitful, at the time that he came. In fact, he experienced famines. So, it wasn't, not much of a promised land, was it?

Well, here's the book of Hebrews, kind of explains to us, Abraham's view of it, when he came there. Abraham, the man of faith.

[16:56] Here's how Hebrews 11 describes. By faith, Abraham obeyed, when he was called, to go out to a place, when he was called, to go out to a place, that he was to receive, as an inheritance.

And he went out, not knowing where he was going. God just said, go, and I'll show you, when you get there. And by faith, he went to live, watch this, he went to live, in the land of promise, as in a foreign land.

He's living, in the land of promise, as, in a foreign land. In other words, it's supposed to be his land, but he's living in it, as a foreigner. Living in tents, with Isaac, and Jacob, heirs with him, of the same

promise.

Why did he live in tents? Why didn't he stake down land? Do you know, that he never purchased, any foot of that land, until Sarah died.

And he bought the cave, right? He bought the tomb. And that's where Sarah, he buried his wife, and that's where he was buried, that's where Jacob, and his, and Rebecca, were married.

[18:15] No, not Rebecca, with Leah. Wait a minute, am I mixing it up? No, no, no, Isaac. History lesson. Abraham, Isaac, and Rebecca, right?

Yes. And then, Jacob, and not Rachel, but Leah. Because Leah was his first wife, and his wife of promise. They were all buried in that land.

That's the only land Abraham ever bought. And he bought it by faith, because he's burying them for the future resurrection. That's another sermon, but. So then, why did he do it?

Why did he live in tents? For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. He lived in tents, not in a permanent home.

For he was looking for something else. Later, Hebrews 11 says, these all, talking about Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, all died in faith, not having received the things promised.

[19:29] Have we received all the things we've been promised? No. We're still living in faith for future. Not having received the things promised, but having seen them.

Watch this now. Here's faith. Having seen them, and greeted them from afar. Having acknowledged that they were strangers, and exiles on the earth, just like we are.

For people who speak thus, make it clear, that they are seeking a homeland, a real homeland. If they had been thinking of that land, from which they had gone out, they would have opportunity to return.

But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. What is the true promised land? It is not that strip of land over there that's called Israel, which has shrunk over time. Now, does God, does God, still plan to work through the Jews, and through that land over there?

[20:37] Sure. I mean, God can do whatever he wants. But the big picture, that Abraham saw, and all those of faith, see, is not land. Not a small strip of land, that's temporary, but the true, eternal home, where God has built the city, not man, where it is lasting, where it is satisfying, where it is truly home, where there are not famines, where there are not enemies.

Right? But there is security, and hope, and peace. We read of that land in the end of the book of Revelation. So, how did they, it says, verse 11, they obtained it.

How did they obtain it? We obtained an inheritance. How? Having been predestined, according to his purpose, who works all things, after the counsel of his will.

Oh, so, we got this inheritance, not because we did something, but because God said so. Because God gifted it. Just like he gifted us, that we are adopted.

We were adopted. We were predestined to adoption. He planned that all along, and when he planned that, since we're sons, he planned that we would have an inheritance, as well, that he'd just keep giving to us.

[21:58] It's a gift. It's his plan. It's his purpose. It's his will. It's his resolve. He did it according to the counsel of his own will. So, he didn't ask anybody else what they thought.

He planned it. For what purpose? Unto what end? Verse 12. To the end, that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of his glory.

That we who were the first to hope in Christ, that is, Jewish believers, right? Peter, James, John, Paul, all of our apostles, and the 3,000 at Pentecost, which were Jews, and then the 5,000 later in Acts, right?

And the many priests who came to believe in Christ. Those were the first ones. Primarily Jewish. Then later, we see in Acts, what happens?

God sends a, because they're all camping out in Jerusalem, right? And we got all these people camping out in Jerusalem, all these Jews, and the widows. Remember, the widows weren't being fed, and now we have all these kind of problems, because the people won't go home.

[23:09] They're staying in Jerusalem. And so God sends a persecution in Acts 8 to get them back home, because the mission is go home and preach Christ where you live. But you know how we are.

We like to just kind of stay where it's comfortable, and it's good, and all the good things happened, and create problems for the leadership. So that, it illustrates, verse 12, it illustrates the glory of God

in these believers.

These believers, in other words, will be an example of God's grace. That we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the glory. So those Jews should be to the glory of God.

Why? Because they become an example of God's grace. who have now received an inheritance. So that's part one.

It's not just to the Jews it's given, but now we see in verses 13 and 14, there's another group that also, verse 13, in him you also, what?

[24 : 14] Have received this inheritance. You also are going to be vessels that are to the glory and praise of God. So part two is Gentile believers.

Gentile believers received the Holy Spirit as proof of heaven. Just as the Jewish believers received the full eternal inheritance in Christ, Gentile believers also received the Holy Spirit as proof of heaven, as proof of the inheritance, as proof of salvation.

If we have the inheritance, then we must be sons. And if we're sons, we must be saved. So notice verse 13, what happens to them?

In him you also, after listening to the message of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed. Okay, so notice there's two parts.

There's a listening part, a hearing part, and then there's a believing part. What? They believed. They did not just hear it and did not just assent to it.

[25 : 21] They believed. They put their faith in it. They were convinced of it. They trusted and relied upon it. What is it that they believed, that they put their faith in, that they were convinced of?

Again, you also, after listening to what? The message of the truth, which he defines further as the gospel of your salvation.

So two phrases there that are the same. You listen to the message of the truth, and which is the gospel of your salvation.

So it's not just truth in general. I don't know if you noticed that I said the message of the truth.

Do your translations have the before the word truth? Put it there. It's there. It's there in the Greek. And when it's there, when the the is there, it's defining.

[26 : 32] It's specific. It's about a particular truth, not just truth in general. You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free. Free.

Right? So it's a specific truth. And what is the specific truth? Verse 13 there. It's the gospel of your salvation. That's the truth.

The gospel about your salvation. The good news of how you receive salvation. Two parts. First, you listen. Then you believe.

You don't believe and then listen. So what does Romans 10 tell us about faith and hearing? Faith comes by hearing.

Hearing what? Hearing the word of Christ. Christ. Christ. Faith comes by. So faith, that's exactly how faith comes. Faith doesn't come out of the air.

[27 : 30] Faith comes by hearing the message of Christ. That's how faith comes. That's how faith grows. That's how faith is strengthened.

But that's how faith comes. Which is why we want to be under the word. Which is why we want to be exposed to the word about Christ.

If we want our children saved, how do we do that? We want them exposed to the word of truth. The gospel of salvation. It's a mystery how God does it, but he does it through this.

What Paul calls a foolish message, a crucified Savior, through a foolish method, preaching, and a foolish means.

It's dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit, not the work of manipulation, or music, or stories, or whatever to get people to believe. It's just done by God through foolish ways.

[28 : 37] So what happens when we believe? Verse 13. In him, after listening to the message of the truth, gospel of your salvation, having also believed, you were what?

Sealed. Does everybody have sealed? Sealed. In him, with the Holy Spirit of promise.

We're sealed. What is that? What is sealing? Do I feel that? Is there a mark?

The word seal can mean a mark, marked with a seal. When Jesus was buried in the tomb, they rolled the big stone over it, and the Romans put a seal on there to secure it.

If you break the seal, then they know somebody's gotten in, right? So it's a seal. It's a mark of ownership. It's a mark of confirmation. Scrolls.

[29 : 40] When they sent scrolls, they were sealed with wax, right? And they would usually have the identity of the one sending it on there. So again, a mark of ownership, a mark of identity.

He says also, verse 13, it's a sealed in him, in Christ. In other words, all of this is done through the work of Christ with the Holy Spirit of promise.

So how's the Holy Spirit of promise? When was the Holy Spirit promised? So, upper room, upper room, the night before Christ was on trial and crucified, the upper room, the Gospel of John has five chapters covering that one night.

John has 21 chapters. He devotes five of his chapters to one night. And Jesus, from John 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, talked about the Holy Spirit over and over and over again.

And Jesus basically said, right, he says, I'm going away, but it's to your advantage that I go away because if I go away, then I will do what? I will send the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Paraclete, the one called alongside to you, I will send him to you.

[31 : 12] And over and over again, he talks about what the Holy Spirit will do. He will comfort you. He will teach you. He will bring things back to your remembrance. He will witness to you. And he will witness through you.

He will convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment as you go out and give the message, it's not your job to convict. That's the Holy Spirit's job. He will convict as you just give the truth. He's the one who draws. So, that's the promise. Jesus said, he will come. He will dwell in you, right? He will not leave you. I will never leave you or forsake you because I will send this Holy Spirit to you.

He is just like me, by the way. He is another helper. He's another one just like me, but he won't be in flesh. He will be permanently indwelling within you.

He will indwell you. He will empower you. He will teach you. He will witness. On and on and on and on. I mean, the Holy Spirit does. So, we've been talking, this morning, we just talked in our morning class about the Trinity.

[32 : 16] What's the Trinity? What's the role of the Trinity? Right? What's the Father do? We learn in Ephesians 1 here, what does the Father do? Verse 4, he does what? He chooses us.

Verse 5, he does what? He adopts us. Right? What does Christ do? Christ is the one who accomplishes all the work, so we're chosen in him.

We're predestined in him. We have, we have redemption, verse 7, in him. In him also, we have the Holy Spirit.

So everything, so the Father starts everything. He chooses, he plans, he predestines, right? After the counsel of his own will, he does these things, and then he accomplishes, he sends his son, and the son accomplishes the work.

The son finishes the work. On the cross, it's done. I did all the work. I did everything the Father told me to do. Last of all was to lay down my life willingly for the sheep.

[33 : 24] Right? So then what does the Holy Spirit do? What's the role of the Holy Spirit? He resides. So Jesus accomplishes, the Holy Spirit applies it.

All that Jesus has done, he takes, the Holy Spirit takes, and puts, you know, he comes and dwells, and then he seals, he empowers, he applies all that work to us.

That's his work. And then he never leaves us. It's an incredible gift. It's an incredible gift.

So what's, who is this Holy Spirit? We see verse 14, who is given. So he adds this also. We're sealed with, in Christ, with the Holy Spirit of promise.

Who, the Holy Spirit, who is given to us as a pledge of our inheritance. I'm reading from the New American Standard.

[34 : 29] As a pledge of our inheritance. I think the ESV has guarantee. Guarantee of our inheritance. NIV, I think, might have something like deposit.

So there's lots of different words translating this, this Greek word. Guarantee, pledge, uh, uh, uh, uh, lost the other word.

Um, deposit, deposit. Down payment. Down payment. So here, here's the Holy Spirit. So remember, we're talking about inheritance. We have this inheritance.

It's an eternal inheritance. We have that because of Christ. We have it because we're, we've been predestined to be adopted. So we are the sons and children of God.

And so God saves us. God forgives us. And then God makes a plan for eternity to give us more, to give us an inheritance, a home, right?

We complain and we groan. No. We make it our aim to please him. I mean, when we're away with him, that's easy, easy peasy to please him.

[41 : 17] When we're away in this body here, well, that's where we walk by faith. That's where we are of good cheer because we look forward to what God has in store for us.

So know how Paul describes the now and later. Now we groan, we burden, we long for heaven, but later, Lord, right, we rejoice. We are confident.

We walk by faith. We aim to please him. We are always of good courage. So let me meddle in these last few minutes here. Let me ask you some questions for you to reflect on.

Do you know, do you know you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit? Do you know? And I ask that, so if you say yes, then there's a follow-up question.

How do you know? How do you know? Has God given you proof that he has saved you? So you have asked him into your life.

[42 : 26] You have repented. You have turned to him. You have asked him into your life. Do you know that he has come into your life? Do you know that he has changed you? Do you have assurance?

And the assurance comes from a changed life. Not merely a feeling. I think feeling's part of it. That assurance of the Holy Spirit, that's part him witnessing to our spirit.

But how do I know I'm not fooling myself with that, right? So there's other evidence that God works through me. So if I'm born again, I am, I have some new things.

Right? And we're going to talk about in chapter 4 of Ephesians, right, that there's this old part of our life that's still hanging on and we're to put it off and we're to put on the new. You know, there's an intentionality to it.

There's a deliberateness to our walking worthy. We don't just passively go. We are thinking, okay, put that off, put that off, put this on, renew my mind, renew my mind.

[43 : 36] How do you know? Have you seen the work of the Holy Spirit in your life? Is there evidence of new life in you? In other words, has God changed your desires from ungodly to godly?

Has he changed your feeling toward him from hatred to love? Even if you grew up in church, if you're not yet saved, you hate God, if you're honest.

I realize that later because you're not supposed to say that in church. Do you hate your sin? You still fall, you still sin, but do you hate your sin?

That's different. Do you now love his commands and desire to do them as well as you can by the help of the Holy Spirit?

Are you aware of your need for the Spirit's power, for the Spirit's enabling? Right? So your prayers change from Lord, help me to, okay, empower me, enable me.

[44 : 49] Go into a meeting, give me your words. Right? Not my words, but give me your words. Give me wisdom to know how to respond or answer or do whatever with this meeting or this person.

Last question is this, have you not just heard the gospel, but have you believed the gospel? have you been convinced that the gospel is true?

Have you then embraced the gospel of Christ, your need for him and his rescue of you? Is your faith alive?

So if not, if not, if you don't think you have believed or maybe your belief, there's different kinds of belief, like I cannot believe the idea but not be, not have a living faith.

If not, then seek Jesus. Here's the altar call, okay? Not to this altar but to that one. Seek Jesus. Ask him to give you new life.

[46 : 05] Ask him to give you his Holy Spirit. Ask him to awaken you to his good news. Ask him to change you. And keep asking until he gives it to you.

Okay? Keep asking. So it doesn't rest on something you did because you prayed that but it rests on his actual doing in you.

If you keep praying like that, he will answer. And I have found the Father one who doesn't always answer on the first ring.

Because he's maybe testing me a little bit. And testing you. How much do you really want this life? How much do you really want this peace?

How much do you really want this rescue? So that's my altar call. Let's close. Father, we thank you for your word.

[47 : 08] What a tremendous word, Lord. This inheritance that we have. It's future. And yet, Father, it links us with the patriarchs who were given promises but they saw that those promises were not answered on this realm but in the future.

And Lord, we have those kind of things too. You've promised us so much more. You've blessed us with great blessings in this world and yet you want to bless us more with those future things.

Well, we thank you, Lord, that you don't just leave us hanging but you give us your very own Holy Spirit to indwell us and empower us and to awaken us, to draw us back to you.

Not to shame us with guilt but to convict us in a way that draws us to you gently. We thank you.

What a tremendous gift.

Help us to praise you. Help us to praise your Son and help us to praise your Spirit today. We ask in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.