

THE GLORY OF THE SPIRIT IN OUR NEW BEGINNING

Ephesians 1.13-14, Message 06: The Seal of the Spirit

Ephesians is a book about what we have “in Christ.”

- It shows us the new life we have received in Him and the new life we ought to be living for Him.
- And in chapter 1, Paul takes us back to the beginning and shows us eight different blessings we received in Christ at the moment of salvation (the number 8 being the number of new beginnings in the Bible).

(v3) Once “in Christ” (at the moment of salvation), we have all spiritual blessings.

- (v4-6) Three specific blessings glorify the Father:
 1. (v4) He has chosen us: To be holy (we are not chose for salvation but rather for sanctification).
 2. (v5) He has predestinated us: To be adopted (born in to the family, adopted to receive inheritance).
 3. (v6) He has accepted us: We are no longer His enemies.
- (v7-12) Four of the blessings glorify the Spirit:
 1. (v7a) In Christ we are redeemed: We are bought with a price, the the blood of Christ.
 2. (v7b) In Christ we have forgiveness, complete and eternal.
 3. (v8-10) In Christ we have an abundance of wisdom and prudence (knowing God's plan and will).
 4. (v11-12) In Christ we have obtained an inheritance (three times inheritance is mentioned in Eph 1).
- (v13-14) And the one final blessing glorifies the Spirit: The Seal of the Holy Spirit in us.

What is this “seal” and what does it mean for our lives today in Christ?

1. The seal indicates a finished transation in the past.
2. The seal indicates security in the present.
3. The seal indicates ownership, and therefore a full redemption of the purchased possession in the future.

I. PAST: A Finished Transaction—We were sealed in the past...

A. All those in Christ “were sealed.”

1. (v13) “In whom”: (v12) In Christ. Once in Christ (in the moment of salvation), we all received this blessing of the Spirit.
2. It's not something we have to wait for or pray for. It is a spiritual blessing give to us freely by God when He saves us and places us in Christ.
3. The blessing, then, is the sealing: “In whom... ye were sealed...” (notice that everything else in these two verses modifies this central truth).
 - a) The seal referred to here is like the seal a lawyer or a notary will make on a legal document.
 - It's not like a zip-lock baggie that “seals” us up and protects us from contamination.
 - b) (Jer 32.9-10) It's a legal seal that indicates a finished legal transaction.
 - c) (Jer 32.11-12) It's a legal seal that indicates the present security of that transaction (i.e., it cannot be revoked or reversed; it is finished and secure).
 - d) (Est 8.8) It's a legal seal that indicates ownership (by the King) and therefore is a visible sign to all that the decision made and sealed cannot be changed—the seal is a guarantee for the future that the transaction occurred in the past.

B. The seal is the presence of the Spirit of God Himself.

1. In Christ we were sealed, not by something extra that the Spirit did, but rather “with that holy Spirit of promise” Himself.
2. The presence of the Spirit in us (v13) is God's “earnest” (v14; His down-payment, His guarantee; His official, legal seal) of something bigger and yet future.
3. This is why we all have received this spiritual blessing, because we all (all Christians) have received the Spirit of Promise.
 - a) (Luke 24.49) The promise of the Spirit was given after the resurrection.
 - b) (Acts 1.4-5, 8) The promise of the Spirit was not fulfilled until after the ascension.
 - c) (Acts 2.1-4) The promise came for the first time on the Day of Pentecost.
 - d) (Gal 3.14) Today, the sinner receives the promise (and the seal) of the Spirit in the moment he places his faith and trust in Christ for salvation.
 - (1) (1Cor 12.13) We have all received the Spirit (it is not some “second blessing”; we have all spiritual blessings in Christ from moment we are saved).
 - (2) (Rom 8.9) Those who have not received the Spirit are not saved. All the saved have the Spirit, and the Spirit (as promised) is our seal and our guarantee.

C. The sealing of the Spirit is a guarantee of the past transaction of our salvation.

1. The one who hears and believes is the one who immediately receives the Spirit, a legal seal of a past and finished transaction: Salvation!
2. The transaction of salvation begins with hearing.
 - a) Obviously, that means that we must communicate the Gospel to the lost if the lost are to be saved. They must hear the message of the Gospel in order to believe it.
 - (1) (Rom 10.13-17) During the Church Age, God has ordained preaching as His method of saving lost sinners.
 - (2) This is why He has commanded us to preach the Gospel to every creature.
 - (3) (1Cor 1.17-18, 21) We must communicate the Gospel to the lost if they are to be saved.
 - (4) The lost need to hear, and therefore we need to speak.
 - b) However, “hearing” goes far beyond just words falling on lost ears.
 - (1) How many times have we been speaking with someone just to stop and ask them, “Are you hearing what I'm saying?”
 - (2) All throughout the Bible we see the exhortation that God gives the sinner: “Hear!”
 - (a) “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!” or “Hear another parable!”
 - (b) God is saying: “Listen up! Listen to me! Pay attention!”
 - (3) This is important for us to understand because there is some very bad teaching come out of some very influential ministries today: Calvinism.
 - (a) Calvinism teaches a “general calling” to all sinners and an “effectual calling” to the elect. God does a general work in all sinners but a special work in the elect so that they might be saved (and without the “effectual calling” the sinner will not hear).
 - (b) Although that might seem to explain why some pay attention to the preaching of the Gospel while others do not, it's not biblical.

- (c) Who is responsible for the hearing, God or the sinner? Example in Scripture abound:
 - i) (Luke 8.8) If you have ears that can receive sound, God calls you to hear! He says to the sinner: Listen up! Pay attention!
 - ii) (Luke 8.12) Some hear but they don't pay attention—they don't listen.
 - iii) (Luke 8.15) Some hear and do listen, and these are the sinners who can be saved.
 - iv) (Luke 8.18) Who is responsible for the hearing, then? The sinner! God calls all lost sinners to “take heed” how they hear.
- (d) There is no “general” or “effectual” calling. God convicts all sinners and He calls all sinners to repentance and faith in Christ.
 - i) Whether that sinner listens or not, is not God's fault.
 - ii) (Eph 1.13) The sinner must hear (listen, pay attention to) the Word of Truth, the Gospel of our salvation if he is to be saved.

3. The transaction of salvation that begins with hearing also requires believing.

- a) The sinner must hear and believe the Gospel in order to be saved (it's not blind faith, and it's not “just believe”—the sinner must believe the Gospel message in order to be saved).
- b) Here is another common error in many influential ministries today: Many say and teach that there is only one Gospel and that Gospel has been the Gospel since the beginning.
 - (1) That's simply not true. The Bible mentions several different Gospels and we should be aware of them so we don't preach another Gospel than the one we ought to be preaching.
 - (2) (1Cor 15.1-4) Paul defines his Gospel (the Gospel of grace for the Church Age) very clearly: It is the message of the cross—the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
 - (3) The Twelve, though, did not preach this same Gospel message.
 - (a) (Luke 18.31-34) The Twelve did not even understand Paul's Gospel message, let alone preach and teach it to others.
 - (b) (Mat 10.5-7) The Twelve preached the good news that the kingdom was at hand.
 - (c) (Mat 24.14) The Twelve preached the Gospel of the Kingdom.
 - (4) (Rev 14.6-7) In the Tribulation, an angel will preach the Everlasting Gospel to the whole world and this Gospel calls sinners to believe on God as Creator and Judge.
- c) We should also understand that biblical, saving belief is the combination of repentance and faith. It is not simply intellectual assent.
 - (1) God calls sinners to believe on Christ, to trust in Him completely and only for salvation.
 - (2) That requires that the sinner stop trusting in something else in order to start trusting in Jesus. The sinner turns to Christ from all other confidences.
 - (3) Lost sinners trust in their own goodness, their own works, their own religion, or their own god they have fashioned in their minds to save them. They must repent and turn to Christ. They must turn from their sin and their own selves, and turn to Christ, believing in Him.
 - (4) (Acts 26.16-20, esp. v20) Biblical, saving belief is repentance of sin and faith in Christ. And because of that, we expect to see visible fruit in a true conversion. Salvation will generally and normally result in works meet for repentance (a changed life and lifestyle).

D. (Eph 1.13) When a sinner hears the Gospel of grace (the message of the cross), and when he believes that message, God saves him and seals him.

- 1. And at that moment of salvation, God seals the saved sinner with His Holy Spirit.
- 2. The presence of the Spirit in the saved sinner is proof that the transaction of salvation is complete.

II. PRESENT: Security—We are sealed in present, and therefore we are secure...

A. (v14) The seal (presence) of the Spirit in us is a guarantee of something more, better, and bigger that is yet future.

1. The seal (presence) of the Spirit in us is just the down-payment. The whole “purchased possession” is yet to come.
2. But it is the down-payment (the “earnest”)! We are assured today that we were sealed and that we will receive an inheritance.
3. You cannot lose the seal because you cannot lose the Spirit. The Spirit of God in you, unto the day of redemption, is your security that you cannot lose your salvation.
4. (Eph 4.30) The seal of the Spirit is “unto” the day of redemption. He is our guarantee that all who have the seal will be fully and completely redeemed in spirit, soul, and body.

B. (Rom 8.35-39) There is nothing made (no creature, no creation) that can separate us from God in Christ.

1. Only God could do that, but He has give us His seal as King and Creator that we are His completely and forever.
2. Your salvation is sure. You have the guarantee of the King's seal: The presence of the Holy Spirit in your spirit, and He will never leave.
3. We are secure in Christ, kept safe in our salvation by the seal of the Spirit of God in us.

III. FUTURE: Ownership—We will be fully and completely redeemed in the future...

A. (v14) The seal of the Spirit is the earnest of what is yet to come.

1. (Eph 4.30) The redemption of the purchased possession happens on a day yet future.
2. (1Cor 6.19-20) That “purchased possession” is you. God bought you (all of you: spirit, soul, and body) with the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ.
3. (Rom 8.23) The day of redemption for which we wait, therefore, is the day God redeems our bodies.
4. (1Cor 6.17; Rom 8.16) The presence of the Spirit of God in our spirits is an earnest (a down-payment, a guarantee) of something bigger and yet future.
 - a) (Rom 8.9) We have the Spirit in our spirits and therefore we are now of Christ (saved!).
 - b) (Rom 8.10) But even though our spirits live, our bodies are still dead in sins.
 - c) (Rom 8.11) The Spirit in us, however, is a guarantee that God will one day redeem and save our bodies.

B. The seal of the Spirit is God's guarantee that He will finish the work He began in us.

1. On the day Christ comes back for us, the redemption we have in our spirits will be applied to our bodies.
2. (1Thess 4.13-18) Our blessed hope (our sure expectation) is this: Christ will come for us!
3. (1Cor 15.51-57) And on that day, when He comes for us, He will fully redeem the possession He purchased on the cross: Us!
 - a) The redemption we experience now in our spirits is just the earnest, the down-payment.
 - b) One day, God will come back to claim what He bought: Us!
 - c) (Php 3.20-21) And on that day, He will give us new bodies, redeemed bodies like the glorified body Jesus Christ has today.

Conclusion: (1Cor 15.58) These truths ought to affect how we live...

God has give us the seal of the presence of His Spirit in our spirits.

1. It's a guarantee of the past and finished transaction of our salvation.
2. It's a guarantee of the present security of our salvation.
3. It's a guarantee of the future, full redemption of the possession God purchase in Christ: Us!
 - The seal of the Spirit is proof of ownership and one day God's coming back for what's His!

(1Cor 15.58a) So be steadfast and unmovable in your faith: In Christ you are God's and God is yours.

- Don't let the trials and tribulations of this life move you.
- Stand firm in Christ! You are sealed and that means you are His and He is yours (forever!).

(1Cor 15.58b) And be always abounding in the work of the Lord—in the work the Lord is doing in this world (in the Mission of seeking and saving the lost)!

- (1Cor 16.15) Let's do so so much work in the ministry (so much evangelism and so much edification) that we get ourselves *addicted* to it.