

OUR INHERITANCE

Ephesians 1:11-14

Intro: Some of you know that I had the privilege of attending the Dallas Theological Seminary, and I was there when the founder, Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer was still alive and the main theological professor. To my dying day, and perhaps for all eternity, I will be thankful to the Lord that I had that privilege. I got there in a rather round about way. I went to Dallas, Texas, married, with only our firstborn son, Dwight, Jr., to work with the Young Life Campaign. I had done most of my university work, but was disillusioned about seminaries because those I had had contact with were not primarily interested in training men to be expositors of the Word. Young Life Campaign was an organization started by Jim Rayburn for the purpose of reaching high school young people with the Gospel.

I was not in Dallas very long before Jim Rayburn, who was an earlier graduate of Dallas Seminary, suggested that I take a class where I could be under Dr. Chafer. I took his suggestion, but I was not prepared for the years of blessing that were ahead of me. To make what could be a longer story short, I resigned from the Young Life Campaign, and the following Fall I enrolled as a full time student at the Seminary. In those days there were less than a hundred students in the Seminary, but I found in the teaching of Dr. Chafer what I had long for but had not been able to find.

That was in the year 1943. Dr. Chafer was past his prime then physically, but very powerful spiritually. He would come into class, take a seat behind a desk which was on a slightly elevated platform, and pour out his heart in the teaching of the Word. Often when he had finished a class, he would close in prayer, and then leave the room. But those of us in the class would sit in silence. We had been led in the teaching of the Word into what seemed to be heaven itself, and none of us wanted to break the godly atmosphere of the teaching we had just received. Unfortunately the Seminary is not the same school today, but I am thankful to the Lord that I was there while Dr. Chafer was still alive and teaching.

Often in his teaching Dr. Chafer would reflect upon his past, telling us how the Lord had led to the opening of the Evangelical Theological College which was the original name of Dallas Theological Seminary. We learned that he had many years of ministry before he founded the Seminary. Actually he had written several books. One was entitled,

Major Bible Themes. Another was “He That Is Spiritual.” A third was called “True Evangelism,” with the subtitle, “Winning Souls By Prayer.” All through the years before I was there, and on until he died, he never lost his burden to see people saved. He used to tell us that he hoped that he could die preaching the Gospel over the radio. He used to hold evening meetings at the Seminary designed especially to reach people who did not know the Lord. In his Preface to his book on “Salvation” he said,

This book is presented as a simple Gospel message and is in no way intended to be a contribution to theological discussion. It is evangelistic in purpose. The writer has hoped that this statement of God’s saving grace may be adapted to the spiritual understanding of the unsaved that they may grasp the way of salvation from these pages and so be led to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.

Those words were written in 1917. He was known as Mr. Chafer in those days. The Seminary first opened its doors in 1924. I was there from early in 1944 to 1947. And it was during those years, and especially due to Dr. Chafer’s ministry, that I had my heart opened to what it means to walk with the Lord and to engage in expository teaching.

I have told you all of this because we have been studying the book of Ephesians, and have been thinking about the spiritual blessings that we have in Christ. We have seen from Ephesians 1:3 that all believers have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ through our salvation. Dr. Chafer said that the only place where you can find what those blessings are, is through divine revelation, which is what the Bible is. And he took his Bible, and especially in the New Testament tried to list what those blessings are. But he admitted that he might not have them all. He wrote as he listed them that he wrote them out “that God in some measure be glorified, *some, if not all* (emphasis mine) of these (blessings) are here given, (but) ‘the half has never been told’” (p. 59). And then he listed thirty-three specific blessings that apply to every true believer in Christ. Some of these blessings have subdivisions under them. So there are more than the thirty-three main divisions. He started out making his main point, “In the eternal plan of God,” And then he listed foreknown, elect, predestinated, chosen, called, and on and on. He admitted that there might be some that he missed, but the list is wonderful to read through. God has told us many things, many wonderful things about our salvation, and it takes a lifetime to even seek to learn it all, but when we get to heaven and will know as we are known, we surely will realize that words

could never be sufficient to tell us *all* about our salvation.

Paul and the other NT writers were doing the same thing that Dr. Chafer did as they wrote their epistles; they just did not list them all together. Here in Ephesians 1 we have seen that we were chosen for salvation before the foundation of the world. We were predestined to be the sons of God, brought into God's family, where we are now, with all the privileges of sonship. We are the recipients of God's grace. We have been redeemed by the blood of Christ. Our sins have been forgiven. We have been told what the object of God's saving grace is. And now today we come down to the last one that Paul mentioned: our inheritance. Now let us focus the rest of our time on Ephesians 1:11-14.

(Read Eph. 1:11-14.)

Let us begin by talking about:

I. THE INHERITANCE (Eph. 1:11, 14).

Some believe that verse 11 probably should read, *we were made God's heritage*. That is, that we became His inheritance. And that may be the correct idea. But in verse 14 it is clear that Paul was speaking there of "our inheritance."

Perhaps you have noticed in your reading of Ephesians that the second request in Paul's prayer for the Ephesian believers in chapter 1 was "that ye may know . . . what [*are*, understood] the riches of the glory of His [*i.e.*, *God's*] inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1:18). In Colossians 1:12 which is a part of Paul's prayer for the Colossian believers, he prayed that they could be "giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Also in Hebrews 9:15 we read that Christ by His death "is the mediator of the new testament," or covenant, "that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament," or covenant,, "they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." And just two more verses that are together in Romans 8, verses 16 and 17:

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

An inheritance is usually a family matter, isn't it? A man's heirs are usually his wife and children. And perhaps one reason that the Apostle Paul chose to speak of our inheritance, was because he had spoken in verse 5 of Romans 1 that we have been brought into the family of God with all of the rights of sonship! One of the rights of being a son, is that a portion of the inheritance belongs to him. But in our culture the inheritance is distributed to the heirs after the father dies.

But we know from the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32 that in NT times it was possible for a man to get his inheritance before the father died. I suppose the father had the right to deny the inheritance to his son who came to him and said, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me" (Luke 15:12). He was asking for his inheritance. Unfortunately his father gave it to him, and you know what he did with it.

Now it may be, and probably is, as in accordance with our laws, that the death of Christ is what secured our inheritance. I want to deal with that more in detail as we move on in our text. But we are heirs of God, those of us who have trusted Christ as our Savior, and God has an inheritance in us. They both may be the same, but we will see about that in just a moment.

Now I don't know if there is actually anything that can really an inheritance in this world and in this life. A man might be very wealthy and anticipate leaving enough money to his wife and sons and daughters so that they would never have to worry about money again. But, as in the case of the great depression of the early 30's, many very wealthy men lost all that they had, and many of them committed suicide because they could not endure the loss.

But the wonderful thing about our inheritance is that it is absolutely secure. Nothing can destroy it, absolutely nothing. Nobody can steal it. We read just a moment ago in Hebrews 9:15 that our Lord became the Mediator of the new covenant that "they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." Those who "are called," are the elect, and so this means called to salvation. Our salvation is our inheritance and it is secured by the death of Christ, and it is secured by the promise of God. God has never made a promise that He did not keep, and He never will. There is total security here.

Now our text gives us three other reasons why we can know that our

inheritance, and all that pertains to it, is secure.

II. THE SECURITY OF OUR INHERITANCE.

The first of these is in verse 11. Our inheritance is secured because it is “predestinated,” predetermined, “according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.” Who was Paul talking about? *He was talk-ing about God! He was talking about the will of God.* Now we have learned from Ephesians 1, that salvation and who was going to be saved, were both determined by God “before the foundation of the world.” See it there in verse 4.

I have been trying to keep the verses that we learned in our Bible memory program earlier this year on “The Attributes of God.” One of our verses on “The Power of God” was Daniel 4:35. This tells us about how powerful the will of God is. Let me remind you what Daniel 4:35 tells us:

And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He (that is, God) doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?

God is not making up His mind as time moves on, neither does He ever change His mind. All that He has determined to do, He is doing, and everything is moving along in our universe just as God has ordained that it would. The biggest thing that God has ever done is salvation, and He is not going to fail in that.

After Paul had completed the greatest treatise on salvation that has ever been written, his letter to the church at Rome, he was overwhelmed with what God the Holy Spirit had enabled him to write. And so He said this:

33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen (Rom. 11:33-36).

So our inheritance, our salvation, in all of its marvelous details, is just as secure as God is. If God dies, then I am going to be worried, very

worried! But God is not going to die. He is not even going to get sick. And all of His decisions are perfect, so there is no need to change them. Moses said long ago, and his words are still true, and always will be true:

The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms (Deut. 33:27)

The false prophet Balaam said one thing that is really true. I am referring to Numbers 23:19:

God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?

So believe that our inheritance is secure because everything about it has been “predestinated according to the purpose of Him that worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.

The second of these assurances regarding our inheritance is given to us in the Gospel. Our first reason was in the work of Christ. But I believe that while the work of Christ is the Gospel, yet Paul spoke to the Ephesian Christians about having heard “the Word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation” (v. 13). How do you and I hear it? We heard it from the Bible, the Word of God. When you get worried about your salvation, take your Bible and go back to the verses that led you to Christ, *and see if they are still in the Bible*. If they are, and they are, then you and I have nothing to worry about. Our salvation is just as secure as the Word of God is true. The truth of God’s Word still stands today. The Lord Jesus prayed in His high priestly prayer in John 17:17 asking the Father to “sanctify them,” His own, “through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth.” The Bible is the only book that has ever been written where you can believe it all, and it tells us over and over that our salvation is secure.

But there is one more proof that Paul has given that our inheritance is totally secure. You can see it in the latter part of Ephesians 1:13, and in all of verse 14. Paul said, “In Whom (Christ) after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.”

Real also Ephesians 4:30. What does it mean that we are sealed? When you make out a will, there has to be some official seal to assure that your will was made out by you, and that it represents what you want done with your money after you are gone. I don’t know enough about legal

documents to know what to call it, but the embossed seal of a notary public is one way a document is made official. Lucille get one prescription for which we have to have a seal from the clinic that the prescription is official.

Now the Holy Spirit came to live in us the moment that we were saved. We may have learned about Him years later, but He has been there all of the time you have been saved, a seal that you and I belong to God, and an earnest, like earnest money to guarantee a purchase. God has given us the Holy Spirit as a guarantee that our salvation is genuine, and that while we have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ, the fulfillment of those blessings await the day of redemption when we will enter into the fulness of what it means that we are the children of the living God.

Concl: “The redemption of the purchased possession” means when we experience in body and soul and spirit the fulness of our salvation. And I believe that verse 12 gives us a greater idea of what that means: “That we should be to the praise of His (God’s) glory,” and that will be when we are finally “like Him,” like the Lord Jesus when we see Him as He is. We are yet to learn how wonderful, eternally wonderful it is, and is going to be for all eternity, to have our heavenly inheritance.

Possibly some of you who have been listening to me this morning, have never trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior. But now you are telling yourself that you would like to have such an inheritance, such great blessing to enjoy now, and to enjoy even more after you die, or when the Lord returns. All any of us have ever done is to realize how terrible our sins are, to know that Jesus Christ died for sinners, and that we trust Him Who took our penalty on the Cross when He died, that by simple faith in Him we can be saved. Trust Him now, and He will save you now. That wonderful verse, John 3:16, says it all. (Quote it.)