

Series on the Book of Ephesians  
Ephesians 1:13-14  
Sermon #8  
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AN UNLIMITED WARRANTY  
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Turn in your Bibles again to the first chapter of the Book of Ephesians.

We come, this morning, to the last point in this opening paragraph, or hymn, whatever you would like to call it, in which the Apostle Paul was praising God for the wonders of our salvation. As we have seen Sunday by Sunday, he has been talking about salvation in eternity past, salvation as we experience it in the present, and then the prospect of the completion of our salvation as far as our experience is concerned in the future. That leads us up through verse 12. These last two verses of this opening doxology to the Lord are verses in which he was concerned to show the assurance, the peace, that we ought to have regarding our salvation through the provision that the Lord has made for us in what has been called the sealing with the Holy Spirit.

Let me read these last two verses for you again. Verses 13 and 14. He had been speaking about trust in Christ in verse 12, so when he begins verse 13 and says, "in whom," you link that with the last part of verse 12 and you know that this is in Christ. "In Christ ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is (or who is) the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

I would like to consider four things with you this morning in looking at these two verses. First of all, I would like to raise the question, and hopefully answer it, What is the seal? We are sealed with the Holy Spirit. What is the seal, and how is it used here in our text when he speaks "you were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise? Secondly, our text tells us who is sealed and when we are sealed. That is the second thing that we want to look at. Then, the third point, we will get some help from another passage of Scripture on this, Who does the sealing and how is that done? Then, finally, thinking especially of the fourteenth verse, What is the importance of the sealing of the Spirit? What should it mean to us?

First of all, What is the seal and how is that word used here in our text?

We are concerned mainly about the meaning of seals as they are used in Scripture. We are familiar with seals. Seals are on important governmental documents. There is a seal for the president of the United States which we all look at when the president speaks. Seals are very commonly used, but Thayer, in his Greek-English Lexicon (which is a dictionary of the New Testament) lists four different uses of this word "seal" in the New Testament. Some of these would apply equally to the Old Testament, but Dr. Thayer was dealing with the Greek New Testament.

The first is for security. We have an example of that in Scripture when Pilate told the Chief Priests and the Pharisees (or the Chief Priests and the elders) to put a seal upon the tomb of the Lord Jesus Christ. This meant that no one was to enter the tomb without their permission. The tomb was closed by the seal. They were fearful, you remember, that the disciples would come and steal away the body of the Lord Jesus and then say that He had been raised from the dead. So that seal was to prevent that. In Revelation 20:3 we read of Satan being sealed after he was cast into the bottomless pit, a seal which would keep him there, as Revelation 20 says, until the thousand years were closed. it has to do with security.

Secondly, a seal in Scripture is sometimes used to speak of secrecy. We read in the Book of The Revelation, for example, in chapters 5 and 6 and then you come to the seventh seal in verse 8, that there was a sealed book. Nobody could open that book except our Lord Jesus Christ. What was contained in the book was a secret until the seals one by one were broken. I am sure that most of you remember that account.

The third use of seals in the Bible is for marking or identification. Again, when we go to the Book of The Revelation we read of the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand. They were sealed as belonging to the Lord. They were sealed as those who were the servants of the Lord. This marked their identification so that anybody who sees the seal would recognize that they are identified as the people of God.

Then finally, the fourth use of seals in the Scripture is to prove something, or to confirm something, to attest that something is true, to put a matter completely beyond any doubt. Kings normally wore seals on their rings. They would make an impression with their seals. Consequently, not only was the impression called a seal, but the ring was called a seal. Seals are very, very important. I am sure that regardless of what culture we would visit around the world, we would find that seals are extremely important in use today.

Now. The question is, How was Paul using that when he says here "in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise?" Those of you who have studied the New Testament, and this includes most of you, know that often a word in Scripture will combine several different meanings that are attached to that particular word. I have given you four, this morning, on the authority of one of our great Greek scholars. But, I would say that this was a combination of several. When Paul says we are sealed by the Holy Spirit. Obviously, this seal identifies those who are the people of God. It is a mark of identification. It confirms that we are the people of God, and it secures us in our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. If we are sealed in Christ, then, of course, this means that we have been placed in Christ. The seal of the Spirit of God is upon us and we can never get out of Christ. This ought to help us to see the significance of this passage, coming as it does at the conclusion of this rather lengthy section in which he has been dealing with these three different aspects of salvation: past, present, and future; and now he is showing, in this connection, that we have been sealed by the Holy Spirit in Christ.

The verse tells us who is sealed and when we are sealed. This is answered especially in verse 13 when Paul says, "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." Paul is clearly talking to those who have trusted Christ, those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. The sealing which he is talking about is something which does not precede salvation; but, you see, he has made it clear in two statements "in whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth" and "in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." So sealing comes after salvation and not before. It comes to all who savingly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul does not make any distinction here saying, "some of you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and others have not been sealed with the Holy Spirit." He does not make this a matter of something that we have to pray for, something that we have to seek. He simply states as a matter of truth that if we have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ we have been sealed.

Notice what he has to say about salvation here, because he gives us an added light as far as salvation is concerned. He says that it is after people have heard the Word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. There are a couple of important things that we can see in this part of the verse. These certainly relate to salvation and help us to understand salvation and even help us as far as our witness to others is concerned. Paul is indicating here, when he said, "ye trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation," that no one is ever saved until they have heard the word of truth, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. You remember that this was Paul's concern when he was

writing to the church at Rome. He makes the statement in Romans chapter 10 verse 13 that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Then he says this, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Rom. 10:14-15). Then, to conclude this he says, "So then we know, since it is essential for people to have the Word of God preached to them, for them to hear it." Preaching does not mean by a pastor necessarily, although it can mean that. Anyone who proclaims the message of salvation, you are preaching when you tell somebody else about the Lord Jesus Christ. People need to be exposed to the Word of God. So Paul says, to conclude this, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

You have heard me say this many, many times, but I cannot pass over this passage without coming to this again. So many people are so concerned to get some kind of decision from people saying "yes, I will receive Jesus Christ as my Saviour"; but they never give people the Word of God. Consequently, many people make a profession of faith whose hearts have never been exposed to the Word of God. Peter, adding to what the Apostle Paul was certainly teaching, says that we are "born again by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. 1:23). Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. If you are fearful and timid about taking to others about Christ, and most of us are--it is easier for us to talk about anything else but salvation--but, if you do not know what to say and you are farful of how to approach that person, initiate your conversation with something from the Word of God that is going to help them to understand the Gospel. God always uses His Word in the salvation of sinners. There is not a person here today who is a Christian who has not come to the knowledge of Christ through the word of God. We do not need to understand how it is that God uses His Word, but the important thing for us to see is that He does use the Word. This is what He is talking about. You trusted, after that you heard the word of truth. It is only through the Word that we can understand what it means to trust, why we should trust, what the great issues of our salvation are. It is not just to make us happy. It is not just to solve our problems. We are sinners under the judgment of God. Jesus Christ came and took upon Himself the penalty that was due to sinners. It is only by putting our trust, our confidence in Him and in what He has done that we can experience this wonderful salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

That is the first thing that you see in this expression "that ye trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation."

The second thing that I want you to see in this is that it is not the sealing of the Holy Spirit that makes the Gospel the word of truth. It is the word of truth--absolutely and independently of everything else. The person who quibbles about whether or not the Gospel is true, whether the Gospel really does have to do with salvation from sin, that kind of person is not a Christian. A true Christian believes the truth. He trusts in Christ and in Christ alone for his salvation. He knows that he cannot be saved by anyone except the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is his only hope for the forgiveness of his sins and the only hope that someday he will be in heaven with the Lord. So Paul, writing to people who had come out of heathenism, reminds them that the Gospel is the word of truth. We do not need to apologize for the Gospel. May I say this morning, we do not even need to prove that the Gospel is the truth. What we need to do is to proclaim the truth, and the Spirit of God Who is using the Word of God will confirm that truth in the hearts of people as they put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The original text, that is, the way this thirteenth verse is given in the original language would read something like this. You can see that we have a good translation here, but I want to point out something that is unique and it is even stronger in the original text than it is in our authorized version. It goes like this: "In whom ye also . . ." You will notice that that word "trusted" is in italics (if you have a Bible that uses italics) meaning that our translators have added that word "trusted" to give the significance of the verse because he is talking about believing in Christ. It is a logical,

legitimate addition to make the sense complete. Sometimes if you leave those additions out the verses are even more forceful. So that it would say "In whom ye also, having heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation . . ." Then he said, "In whom having believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." You can see that you have those words "in whom" twice. The Greek text just seems to put them a little bit closer together so that you are conscious of the fact as you read this verse that Paul was emphasizing that particular thing. It is in Christ that we are sealed. It is in Christ that we believe. It is in Christ that we have our hope of salvation. It is through the Word of Truth, the Gospel of our salvation that we hear about the Lord Jesus Christ. People are not preaching the Gospel unless they are preaching Christ, preaching who He is and what He has done. These two words "in whom" ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: "in whom" also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise"--t is there for emphasis. People are sealed in Christ after they believe, not before, but immediately afterwards. As I mentioned, it is not something that you and I are necessarily conscious of. It may be that you are hearing this morning for the first time that you have been sealed in Christ by the Holy Spirit, or with the Holy Spirit; but you were actually sealed with the Spirit at the time of your salvation. It is not an experience we seek. It is a work that is done to us and for us. We know that it has happened because the Word of God says so.

Some things having to do with the ministry of the Spirit relate to our experience. The filling of the Spirit certainly has to do with our experience; but there are many other things that the Spirit of God does that we are not conscious of until we learn of them in the Word of God. Then we can rejoice in them and see the profit that we gain from them by the explanation that is given in the Word.

Now. Who seals us and how?

Look at the last part of the thirteenth verse, "ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise"--with that promised Holy Spirit. Remember, the Lord Jesus told the disciples when He was last with them that they were to go to Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father. The promise of the Father was the coming of the Holy Spirit. Our verse says, very accurately, "ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." It means that we do not seal ourselves. This is a passive. We were sealed by someone else. Since we are sealed with the Holy Spirit, and I think that that is certainly a better translation than simply saying by the Holy Spirit, because then the Holy Spirit would be the sealer. We must take this as meaning that the Holy Spirit is the seal, but He is not the One Who does the sealing.

I want to take you to 2 Corinthians chapter 1 where Paul gives us a very, very clear statement of Who it is Who does the sealing in establishing this relationship that we have with the Holy Spirit. I hope you will look at this in 2 Corinthians 1:21-22. Here Paul writes to the Corinthians, Now he which stablisheth (or establisheth) us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." You can see from this passage of Scripture that God does the sealing and He seals us with the Holy Spirit, and He seals us in Christ. Notice that again. Let me read those two verses again. "He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

I think most of you know from your reading of the Bible that passages that mention all three persons of the Godhead are not very numerous in the New Testament, or in the Old Testament (we can say the same thing for that matter). I am talking about where they are mentioned together. Here you will notice that you have Christ, you have God the Father, and you have the Holy Spirit mentioned. Whenever you find any one person of the Godhead mentioned with respect to any work, that is important, extremely important; but when you have all three persons of the Godhead mentioned in connection with any work, you know that this is especially important. Here in your sealing and my sealing, God sealing us in Christ by the Holy Spirit, all three members of the Godhead taking part in the sealing; therefore, the sealing with the Spirit of God must be extremely important for all three

persons of the Godhead to be involved. We can see that God seals us. The way He seals us is with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, a person; the Holy Spirit, a member of the Godhead; the Holy Spirit, with all of the divine attributes that you would find in either the Father or the Son.

When we see that, then we are in a position to come to this fourth point. What is its importance? Why did God seal us with the Holy Spirit in Christ, and why is it important for us as believers to know that we are sealed by God with the Holy Spirit in Christ?

In a sense, Paul was teaching here. It may be that there were Ephesian believers who had never heard about the sealing of the Spirit of God. Paul was instructing them, telling them something that happened when they were saved, and it is with the background of all that he has been saying about salvation.

Let me just review that for you briefly so that you will be able to get the picture. He tells us that salvation is a work that God planned before the creation of the world, before He ever made man, before man had ever sinned, before Satan had ever sinned. Salvation was completely planned by our God from the foundation of the world. It was then that God chose us to be saved and God determined that He would bring us into His family as His sons, members of the family of God--one of the most wonderful truths in Scripture. As we came along, we were saved. The way he expresses this is that we now have been redeemed, and with redemption we have forgiveness of our sins. Every believer can claim redemption. Every believer can, amazingly, claim that his sins have been forgiven; not just because God closes His eyes to them, but because Jesus Christ went to the Cross to pay the awful penalty for our sins. Never take your sin lightly. It cost Jesus Christ His very life in that dreadful sacrifice on the Cross. Consequently, this is the reason, by the grace of God and not because we deserve it, that we can claim through Christ this wonderful salvation having believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then he moves on to talk about the future of this. He gets into the subject of our inheritance--these two verses that we considered last Sunday together. God is working all things according to the purpose of His own will. His purpose in salvation is not just to take us to heaven, but His purpose in salvation is to take us to heaven where we will be like Christ. That process, that work, that divine work, of changing us into the very likeness of Christ, starts the moment we are saved and continues until the time that we go to be with the Lord through death, or until the Lord Jesus comes and we are all caught up into His presence. Verse 12 just reaches the mountain peak of the whole passage when it says, "That ye should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ." The emphasis, you will not, is not "be". That ye should "be" to the praise of His glory. He is not only going to have us in heaven to give Him glory and to sing His praises, but to "be" to His glory. We will be to His glory because we will be conformed to the likeness of Jesus Christ.

It would be wonderful enough just to be in heaven; but if the Lord took us to heaven just like we are, heaven would not be heaven very long because we would do with heaven what we have done here on earth. We are going to go to heaven changed, transformed into the likeness of Christ. We will be like Him for we shall see Him as He is.

When you see Paul moving from that mountain peak statement there in verse 12 to talk about our sealing in the Spirit, he is perhaps thinking in his own mind about questions that have come to him time and time again and there are still questions that come into the minds and hearts of the people of God, What if after I have been chosen, I have been brought into God's family, I am redeemed, my sins have been forgiven, I have been given this inheritance, after all of this has been done, What if I do something that ruins the whole thing and I lose it and am no longer saved? You know, the church has always been divided into people who think that you are saved as long as you behave yourself, and others believe that you are saved eternally. There may be some who believe that you are saved eternally who have a distorted view of it because they may feel that they do not need to be concerned particularly about the way that they live; but the church has these two divisions. As Paul approaches this subject remember that, having talked about this inheritance and this wonderful

salvation and the culmination of all that in Christ, he mentions, as we saw last Sunday in verse 11, that God is the One Who is working all things out after the counsel of His will. His will was exercised in His choice of us. His will was exercised in determining that we would be sons and daughters in His family. His will was exercised when it was determined that Jesus Christ would come and that He would be the sacrifice for our sins. His will was exercised when it was determined that the Spirit of God was the One Who would convict of sin and righteousness and judgment, and we would be born again by the Spirit and born again by the Word of God. All of this was the determination of the will of God. Those who say that once you have this salvation and then can lose it are unconsciously perhaps, but nevertheless they are casting reproach and raising questions concerning God's ability to do what He has determined from eternity past to do.

We spent some time in Lamentations 3 this last week. Jeremiah, in that passage, raises the question about, Is it possible for people to successfully oppose and stand against God? If God has determined that He is going to do something, are you big enough to keep Him from doing it? If He has determined that you are going to be saved, are you big enough to keep Him from doing that and carrying that salvation through to completion? I am not saying that we do not have responsibility in all of this. We are responsible before God to give ourselves to obedience. But the work is God's work. God works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. He has not left anything out as far as salvation is concerned. To guarantee and to show us that our salvation is guaranteed, we have been sealed in Christ with the Holy Spirit by God the Father; therefore making it very, very evident that once God has brought us into a saving relationship with Himself through Jesus Christ and He has started this work of salvation He is going to continue it on to the day of Jesus Christ and there is not going to be one single instance of failure. God is going to accomplish one hundred percent of everything that He determined before the foundation of the world to do. That is a wonderful truth. I hope that really blesses your soul.

We saw last week again that Paul gave us four strong words there in verses 11 and 12. If these are the only words that we had why we would know that our salvation is secure. Those are the words "predestinated" which means that He has decreed it. You never hear of any of the decrees of God failing. You have the word "purpose"--the purpose of him who worketh all things. Then you have the word "counsel" and you have the word "will." If after saving us He loses us, then His decree means nothing. His purpose means nothing. His counsel means nothing. His will means nothing. I am not willing to say any of that because I believe that when God decrees something, when God purposes something, when God counsels something, when God wills something, that it is going to come to pass. But to encourage our faith and give us even a greater sense of peace we see that we have this wonderful relationship to the Spirit of God.

He is called here, is He not, the "earnest of our inheritance." The word "earnest" means a pledge. It was used in olden times where financial transactions were involved to refer to the payment of a certain amount of money as a pledge that the rest of it would be paid. I do not know that we always look upon down payments as that in our day, I know that a lot of people do not. Down payment just means to them that they get to take it home and they have not intention of paying the rest of it. An earnest is a pledge. This is a divine pledge that God is making to His people. It says here that it is "the earnest of our inheritance." In other words, this is God's pledge to us in sealing us with the Holy Spirit that the day is going to come when we are going to enter fully into all that Jesus Christ died to provide for us when He suffered and died on the Cross. I do not want to be misunderstood here. Paul was not saying that God still has some work to do before our salvation is complete. When the Lord Jesus said on the Cross, "It is finished," He meant that it was finished. The will of God as far as His death was concerned, as far as the salvation of those for whom He died was concerned, that was finished. But, you see, as you look at me and as I look at you, this morning, we are not yet the finished product, are we? God is not through with us. He is still working. I look at my own life and I can see so much, so much that is not like the Lord Jesus, so many ways in which I need to be changed and I want to be change. I am sure that you can say the same thing about yourself. We are looking forward to the day, are we not, when we will never be able to sin again, we will never be

guilty of displeasing God, or grieving the Spirit of God, or quenching the Spirit of God. Sin will be a thing of the past. What a wonderful day that is going to be. It will be impossible to tempt us. We will not even be inclined in that direction. We will be like Him for we shall see Him as He is.

When Paul talks about the redemption of the purchased possession, this is what he is talking about. You see, a large part of our salvation has to do with these bodies of ours. It is our bodies that get us into trouble, is it not? Our bodies respond to temptation. Salvation includes not only my soul and my spirit, but my body. In Philippians chapter 3 Paul says, "Our conversation(our citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body . . ." This body of humiliation, this body of sin, this body in which I have displeased God so many times. He is going to change this body of mine and that body of yours so that our bodies will be ". . . fashioned like unto His glorious body according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (vv. 20-21). You see, as long as I am in this body I am not completely like the Lord Jesus. If you and I were caught up today into the Lord's presence, these bodies would be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, when we are caught into His presence. If the Lord should see fit to tarry until I die and my body is placed in the grave . . . I want to go on notice this morning that I want it put in the grace. I do not want it burned up because this body is a part of the redemption. It is put in the grace. The day is coming when the Lord Jesus will return and "the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16-17). And we will be like Him.

The sealing of the Spirit of God is God's pledge to you and to me that that most certainly in every one of our lives is going to take place. The result of it, you see, in verse 14, this is the pledge of our inheritance when we enter fully into it, the redemption of the purchased possession, my body, your body is a part of this purchased possession, the redemption of the purchased possession, and it is all to the praise of His glory.

If you are inclined to talk about your part in salvation and you think about salvation as something that you figured out for yourself and you kind of pat yourself on the back because you have trusted Christ as your Saviour and you are looking forward to being in heaven, listen, you had better pat your back all you can here; in fact, I would advise you to pat both hands, because when you get to glory you are not going to be doing that. You are going to realize then fully, if you have not realized it here, that your salvation is completely the result of what God has done for you through Jesus Christ by the ministry of the Spirit of God. They get all the glory. We get none. We are going to be to the praise of His glory and exalt the matchless name of the triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, throughout all eternity that He by His grace would choose us and change us and save us, forgive us, take us to heaven, make us like His dear Son. That is the kind of salvation that we have. I would plead with any of you here this morning who have never trusted the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the only way that you can get to heaven. This is the only way that you can have your sins forgiven. You do not deserve to have a single one of them forgiven. I do not either and still do not deserve to have my sins forgiven. But God in His grace has condescended to save sinners. I have sought to bring you the Word of God this morning. How wonderful it would be if, concerning some here this morning it could be said that after you believed, after you put your trust in Christ in this place and at this time by the grace of God, you were sealed eternally by the Holy Spirit, guaranteeing that the day is going to come when you will be in heaven with all the other saints rejoicing in this wonderful salvation that we have in Christ.