

## Saved, Sealed, Delivered

Ephesians 1:13-14

### Ephesians 1:3-14

Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in love before him. 5 He predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ for himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace that he lavished on us in the Beloved One. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace 8 that he richly poured out on us with all wisdom and understanding. 9 He made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he purposed in Christ 10 as a plan for the right time—to bring everything together in Christ, both things in heaven and things on earth in him. 11 In him we have also received an inheritance, because we were predestined according to the plan of the one who works out everything in agreement with the purpose of his will, 12 so that we who had already put our hope in Christ might bring praise to his glory. In him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed. 14 The Holy Spirit is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of his glory.

**Our text today we see God has not only given us His word—He has also given us His Spirit.**

- God has given us His WORD and His SPIRIT.
  - His WORD is the truth.
  - His SPIRIT is our experience of the truth.

**This is significant because our lives are shaped by WORDS and by EXPERIENCES.**

- So it is vital for us to see that God has given us BOTH His word AND His Spirit.
- He are SEALED with His Spirit when we respond to His Word.
- The Spirit connects us with the Word of God.

**Words and experiences can disconnect us from God's Word and our experiencing His Spirit.**

- Words and experiences greatly influences how we think about ourselves.

**Words and experiences—positive and negative— can shape us.**

- They can shape the way we think, feel and act.
- These words and experiences affect how we live and what we live for.
- **These things can shape our identity:**
  - That is, how we think and feel about ourself & how we think, feel and act toward others.

**Ultimately, other's words and our life experiences end up shaping everything about us.**

- How we think, how we act, how we live and what we live for...

**This is bad because we tend to be self-absorbed.**

- And so we tend to see and think about life and other people from the perspective of “How does that affect me?”

Because we are self-absorbed, scripture continually confronts us with God...

- God is higher than us.
- God is greater than us.
- God is better than us.
- God who created us...

- God, upon whom we are dependent, contingent, and subordinate.

Scripture confronts us with the idea that we should live for God's glory and not for our own.

Because we do tend to be self-focused and desire to be pleased with ourselves, we often think of ourselves as better than we actually are....

- ...Scripture confronts us with TRUTH and shows us that apart from Christ, we will always and only be wicked.
- The more we know about God, the more we realize that we are more wicked and lost than we might have ever imagined.
- The more honest we are, the more we realize that scripture shows us to be less important and less necessary than we would ever dream.

*It is good and necessary for us to see in scripture that only God is good because:*

**When our self-focus and desire for self-glory is not recognized and repented of, then we end up living for praise, approval and glory from others.**

- We seek after the praise of people.
- We pander to the cheap compliments we attract from others.
- We end up living for the approval of others.
  - One loving comment to the next...
  - Some of us live from one Instagram "like" to the next...
  - From one retweet to the next...
- Our life changes course as we see new opportunities for praise from others.

The reason we do this is because words are powerful.

- Words are so powerful that when we are affirmed we feel good.
- Words can totally change our mood and attitude.
- The affects of words can be so strong that we might change our life in pursuit of more affirmation.

Some of us, when we are frequently affirmed, we become blindly arrogant.

- Some affirmation makes us feel good... a lot of affirmation makes us feel like we are awesome.
- We start to believe ONLY the positive things we hear from others.
- We might avoid honest truth and seek only flattering reviews.
- **And our culture LOVES reviews...**
  - Amazon reviews can make or break a product!
  - People watch a YouTube video and then read the comment section to craft their reply...

The problem with this life pattern of seeking the opinions of others is that the opinions of others are fleeting & temporary.

- People's opinions change...
- People's willingness to give a compliment may change...
- People may be harder to impress the next time...
- People are constantly comparing us to others...
- Flattery is 100% linked to our good performance.

When we don't repent of our self-focus and our desire for glory and for the elusive compliment and approval from others and we start to live in insecurity.

- It seems like there is always someone better...
- There seems to always be someone MORE WORTHY of compliment...
- MORE WORTHY of notice and praise
- There is always someone better looking.
- Someone always has BETTER THINGS...

**When we live for praise and recognition, we find ourselves growing more insecure as we notice the gifts and blessings of others around us.**

- We are shaken when someone comes along who receives more praise than we do.
- We grow defensive and envious of others' strengths and gifts.
- We scramble to feel better about ourselves as our identity is shaken...

We crave the words and experiences from others that puff us up so we can counter the insecurity that wells up within us...

**Worse than the insecurity that comes along with our need for affirming words and experiences is the devastation that comes with words and experiences of disapproval.**

- Some words and experiences puff us up, while others can destroy us.
- When the words and actions of others are those of disapproval, then we can be deeply wounded.
- We no longer struggle with the insecurity that accompanies our attempts to earn the approval of others...
- We now experience deep wounds and defeat as we live under the identity of "rejected" or "not good enough".

The words and experiences of disapproval from others has a special affect on the insecure person who longs for affirmation from others...

**When our identity is dependent upon affirmation, then words and experiences of disapproval and rejection can be absolutely devastating, carrying a much stronger punch than words and experiences of approval—they can break us down.**

- And if we hear words and have experiences of disapproval very often, then we start to have a hard time believing anything that is affirming—even when it is appropriate words of affirmation.
- When our identity is dependent on approval from others, then we will always be just one discouraging word away from feeling shattered and destroyed.

**So, to recap, when our identity is dependent on the words and experiences of others, eventually BOTH words & experiences of affirmation and words & experiences of disapproval will bring about insecurity.**

Words and experiences from others are POWERFUL and FORMATIVE.

**Powerful** because we're either arrogant enough to feel we deserve them, or deep down we know we don't.

- Apart from God I am rebellious to God and to doing good.
- Apart from God I am idolatrously self-absorbed
- Apart from God I actually deserve the shame and rejection I fear in life.

**\*\* HOWEVER... \*\***

**As we've been exploring the crazy love of God we've learned we're radically loved by God.**

- This love heals us from our desperate need for approval.
- This love satisfies our longing for more love and acceptance from others.
- This love satisfies our insecurities and fears.

**And we start to realize that what God says about me and what God has done for me through Jesus is better and more true than what others say about or do to us.**

God wants us to understand His love and walk in His love as His children, so He has given us His Holy Spirit.

- God wants us to be convinced of His love for us in Jesus.
- God wants us to be convinced that the realities of Ephesians 1 are FOR US who are in Christ:

**In Christ:**

- **We are radically loved children of God. (Vs 2)**
  - God has loved us from before the beginning of time.
  - God has sent His perfect son as a sacrifice in order to save us—His rebellious kids.
- **We are chosen by God. (Vs 4)**
  - Chosen before we were born.
  - Before we could be disappointing.
  - Before we could feel awesome about ourselves.
  - God did not choose us because we are awesome, but because He is awesome.
- **We are adopted into His family as God's own child. (Vs 5)**
  - He brings us near
  - ME—the once-rebellious, orphaned child—up onto His lap.
    - Arrogant, self-absorbed ME!!
    - Insecure, longing for approval ME!!
    - **God has taught ME to be still and know that HE is God and I am His approved, well-loved son!**
  - He brings us into the intimacy of His immediate family.
- **We are given EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING by God. (Vs 3)**
  - My Father's Spirit is in me.
  - My father's strength is for me.
  - My identity as my father's identifies me.
  - My HOPE is in Him.
  - My JOY is in Him.
  - My PEACE is in Him.
- **We are set free from slavery to sin and forgiven of our sin and made right with God. (Vs 7)**
- **We are given wisdom and understanding. (Vs 8)**
- **We have an inheritance in Jesus from God. (Vs 11 & 14)**

The Word of God tells us these things and we believe them by faith.

**But every day we struggle with faith and belief...**

- Even people who knew Jesus and came to him for healing struggled with faith—one father of a sick child confessing “I believe but help our unbelief...”

More than simply believing these things, I think we also struggle with experiencing these truths.

- We don't always “FEEL” like they are true of us.
- We don't always “FEEL” loved or empowered or wise...
- These truths don't always seem to be true or obvious as we want our expect them to be in life.
- We hear this on Sunday, but don't always feel them or see them happening on Wednesday.

This is because we face a constant flow of OTHER and CONTRARY words and experiences.  
And so this is what our passage is telling us today about the gift of the Holy Spirit given to us:

**Because God is loving and kind, He has given us the gift of His Holy Spirit to help us...**

- **To convict us...**
- **To convince us...**
- **To remind us...**
- **To assure us of these things that He has done for us in Christ.**

**Ephesians 1:13-14 (CSB)—In him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed. 14 The Holy Spirit is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of his glory.**

Now, anyone can read these words and choose to believe them or not...

**But only God's children can read these words and KNOW them to be true.**

- Only God's Kingdom Kids can read this and find hope and joy and true life.
- Only God's family gets excited about the family blessings and promises and inheritance.

THIS is what the Holy Spirit does in us—He affirms and confirms the reality of God and God's Word and God's promises and God's salvation and God's power in those who have received the Spirit.

**The Spirit can quiet our doubt and disbelief.**

- He convinces us of the realities of God's kingdom and affirms our place in His house as His kids.

**The Spirit can sanctify the emotions that God has put in each of us.**

- He leads us into all truth and reveals the lies we fall into believing.
- He helps us see other people as God sees them—as rebels and orphans—and removes our competitive spirit by replacing it with compassion and love.

**And, above and beyond all other voices in our life...**

- Above the messages and voices and experiences that say all sorts of things to and about us...
- Above hurtful experiences of rejection...
- Above painful words and experiences of disapproval...

**The Spirit is working to convince us that we are radically loved by God, chosen by God, pursued by God, redeemed by God, forgiven by God, adopted by God, empowered by God, and equipped by God!**

- The Spirit is at work in you today, Christian, to make the Historical, Biblical reality of God's plan to redeem His creation a reality in your heart, mind and life today.
- The Spirit is working RIGHT NOW to sweep you up in the grand reality of history—that God **loves the world SO MUCH that He sent His son to save us.**

Look at vs 13:

**Ephesians 1:13 (CSB)—In him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed.**

**Ephesians 1:13b (NLT)—“And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago.”**

- We have been SEALED by God with the Holy Spirit!
- We have been IDENTIFIED as God's by the Holy Spirit!

- **This speaks directly to our insecurity and need for words of approval**

- **This speaks to our brokenness and past experiences of rejection!**

- This is what happens when we are saved—is says this in our verse—“When you believed...”

**When we put our faith in Christ for salvation we are immediately SEALED and IDENTIFIED by the Holy Spirit.**

**Historically, a “seal” was something that meant 3 specific things:**

**1. A seal confirms something to be genuine.**

- A king's seal was an impression of his unique ring into wax or plaster.
- An unbroken seal was VITAL to the integrity of a message or gift.
- Without an unbroken seal, any message or object would be held highly suspect.

**The Holy Spirit is God's SEAL upon us that confirms that we belong to God.**

**1 John 4:13 (CSB)**

**This is how we know that we remain in him and he in us: He has given us his Spirit.**

There is a true experience for the Christian that God's Spirit is in us—confirming that we are God's.

- We are sealed by His Spirit and are genuinely His!

## 2. A seal ensures security

—to seal something up...

King Tut's tomb was "sealed" with plaster and imprinted with the new Pharaoh's seal.

Ephesians 1:13-14 (NLT)

And when you believed in Christ, **he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. The Spirit is God's guarantee...**

An engagement ring becomes the SEAL—securing a marriage covenant...

- "How do you seal this covenant today?—With rings..."
- "As often as you look upon these rings, remember your covenant vows of this day..."
- The ring on the finger is the GUARANTEE of the promises that have been made.
- Just as a ring is the seal of the marital covenant between two people, so is the Holy Spirit a seal in the life and heart of those who are children of God.

The Spirit is a guarantee or a vow from God that we are His.

The Spirit is God's promise that He is going to complete the good work that He has begun in us!

**Jude 24 (NLT)—Now all glory to God, who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault.**

**God's gift of the Spirit is a foretaste of the eternal life we will have with God.**

- **God IS ABLE to save, sanctify and deliver you, and He has given us His Spirit as a foretaste.**
  - The Spirit isn't simply God's promise...
- **The Spirit doesn't just promise eternal security, but guarantees eternal satisfaction as well.**

God's Spirit in us is a gift to us from God securing our salvation.

We were saved BY GOD and sealed BY GOD—God is before and in our salvation.

- **The Spirit is God's guarantee that no failure on our part can invalidate the work that God has done.**
- **This work is promised and is guaranteed by God's seal of His Spirit in us.**

Listen, God is going to get you there—you're not a lost cause!

- Despite your failures and disappointments...
- Despite your brokenness and striving...
- Despite your weakness and identity issues...
- Despite the high highs and low lows of life...

God has begun a work that He promises to complete, and you can be sure of this because He has put His Spirit in you!

Christian, the Spirit is at work in you today to convince you that you are a child of God and have true hope in God—regardless of what you've done.

## 3. A seal marks one's possession

As a rancher might brand cattle or a king might have his face carved into the stone pillars of his castle...

God has put His Spirit in us to MARK us as His own.



Ephesians 1:13-14 (NLT)

And when you believed in Christ, **he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit**, whom he promised long ago. The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and **that he has purchased us to be his own people....**

The fact that we are God's means that He is jealous for us.

- He bought us with the precious blood of His son.
- He has forgiven us and made us brand new.
- He has adopted us and brought us as close as a father can bring His own child.

And He is jealous for us...

- He jealously competes with the OTHER voices and OTHER experiences we encounter in life.
- God jealously pursues us when we turn away from Him.

**2 Corinthians 1:22 (NLT)—he has identified us as his own by placing the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the first installment that guarantees everything he has promised us.**

When something is valuable to us we MARK IT as ours.

My Bible is important to me

- Given to me by a man who spent hundreds of hours working to help me grow as a disciple of Jesus.
- I have my name on it!
- It is made with amazing leather.
- It smells amazing
- It has led me to Jesus a million times.
- It has been backpacking, Jeeping, on dozens of pulpits and dozens of music stands and pulpits in churches, camps, at firepits, back yards, at the beach, in the desert...
- I'll give away any Bible from my office or home EXCEPT THIS ONE...

**If this went missing, I would see it or smell it and then FIND MY MARK ON IT and CLAIM IT.**

You are God's possession, and God is so serious about holding on to you that He has put His Spirit in your heart!

- What more can He do but put His Spirit in you and remain in you!

Let's pull it all together here...

**God, by the power of his Spirit that he has placed IN YOU—If we let him—can and will deal with your doubt and insecurity and shame and brokenness.**

- Our doubts, sins, insecurity, shame and brokenness which is often tied to words from and experiences with other people.
- Our doubts and insecurity and shame and brokenness which is often tied to our own foolishness.

God has put His Spirit in us to deal with this stuff!

- God's Spirit ministers the truth of God's love for us in Jesus.
- God's Spirit convinces us of the sufficiency of Jesus' finished work.
- God's Spirit reminds us that we are children of God.
- God's Spirit tells us again and again about our Father's love for us.

**God's Spirit reminds us that God has chosen us and done all necessary work to bring us into His family as Kingdom Kids.**

The Spirit is EVIDENCE and PROOF to us and to others that we are God's very own possession.

- God's mark on us!

### Romans 5:1-5 (NLT)

**1** Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.

**2** Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory.

**3** We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance.

**4** And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation.

**5** And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.

God has done INCREDIBLE THINGS to bring us close to Him.

- The Holy Spirit is God's proof of this—He is the real presence AND power of God in us!
- So that no matter what we face in life...

**Regardless of what we face, we have the PROOF and the POWER of God in us!**

- The Holy Spirit is in our hardship pouring the love of the Father into us.
- In financial hardship when we panic, the Spirit reminds you of your Father's love.
- In sickness and death, the Spirit is there reminding you of the Father's love.
- In anxiety, the Spirit is there with us speaking eternal truth into our moments of despair.

**God has gone to GREAT LENGTHS to ensure we KNOW and that we have EVIDENCE of His love and approval.**

### Ephesians 1:14 (CSB)

**The Holy Spirit is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of his glory.**

**He did this so we would praise and glorify Him.**

- He didn't just do this so you would feel secure...
- He didn't just do all this so you wouldn't feel guilty anymore...
- He didn't do this just so you could face hardship with confidence...

**The great purpose of all of this is so that we would be transformed into the image of Christ.**

- **This work of grace—the Gospel work of transforming rebels like me and you...**
- **this beautiful work of NEW LIFE in us brings praise and glorify Him!**

THIS is the good work the Lord has begun in you, Christian!

- If you've trusted Jesus for salvation and forgiveness of sin you've been SEALED with the Spirit.
- God is inviting you into deeper intimacy and identity by His Spirit.

**Today, let the Spirit speak LOUDER than the other voices you listen to...**

- Let the Spirit speak louder than your PRIDE, SELFISHNESS, INSECURITY, ANXIETY, SHAME...

If you are in Christ, the Holy Spirit is in you!

- He is the experience of these truths in your life—LET HIM SPEAK!
- Let Him bring you to Jesus.
- Let Him convict you of the sin that entangles your walk.
- Let Him shower you with the love and approval of the Father.
- Let Him lead you to glorify the Father today in worship!

If you don't know Jesus—maybe today is the day...