**Brought to Life; Brought Together**

**The Spirit Seals Us, part 4**

Ephesians 1:11-14

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We are in our series, Brought to Life; Brought Together, from the New Testament letter to the church in Ephesus. If you have your bibles, turn to Ephesians 1:3-14. We are finishing chapter one today, looking at 1.11-14. If you remember, 1:3-14 has one main point found in verse three, praise God because he has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing (3). Then the rest of the passage describes these blessings: God chose us in Christ (4-6); the Son redeemed us through his sacrificial death (7-10); and today we will look *at the Spirit has sealed us, securing our salvation and guaranteeing our inheritance* (11-14).

**In Christ we Have an Inheritance (11-12)**

First, he tells describes the *source of our inheritance*, in him we have obtained an inheritance. The inheritance is ours because Jesus redeemed us by his own sacrificial death. A bloody and painful and horrible death whereby he took the judgement for our sin so our sins can be forgiven. The phrase in him or the equivalent is used nine times these twelve verses. The center and source of all these blessings are in and through Jesus. Every blessing is ours because of Christ. So, in Christ, we receive an inheritance.

This *inheritance gives us a promising future*. In Christ we are heirs (Gal 3:17) and co-heirs with Christ (Rom 8:17) so that all that is his is ours. Christ is the heir of all things (Heb 1:2) and all things will be united under his rule as the eternal king (1:10) and we will rule with him (Rev 3:21). This inheritance is our hope (Gal 3:18; Eph 1:11, 14; 5:5). The Old Testament patriarchs hoped for a heavenly country and city (Heb 11:13 -16). So, our inheritance is a promising future in which we will enjoy God as fully and eternally alive human beings in the New Creation. This inheritance is kept safe and secure in heaven for us (1 Pet 1:4).

The *cause of our inheritance*, is because God has predestined us according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will (11). This can be boiled down to two truths. First, God has predestined us. He already said that he predestined us to adoption, making us heirs (5), now he has predestined us to an inheritance. Second, in both places this predestining was according to the purpose of God’s will. Here he expands on God’s will, God purposely working or orchestrating all things to line up with the divine wisdom of his will. Picture God having an inter trinitarian board meeting in which in eternity past they chose to predestine you to an inheritance. You were not there, you were not involved in the decision. It was at God’s initiative, not ours.

Then for the second time, the *purpose of the blessings* lavished on is for the praise of his glory (12). The ‘we’ who were the first to hope or more literally, who have previously hoped,[[1]](#footnote-1) refers to all those who are in Christ, have faith in Christ. Paul has been describing how we obtain the inheritance from God’s perspective as part of his eternal plan (11-12) and is now shifting to describe how we obtain the inheritance from our perspective, we believe and when we believe God seals us with by his Spirit.

**In Christ our Inheritance is Secure (13-14)**

First, he describes *how we obtain our inheritance*, we believe. When you heard the word of truth, which is the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit who is then described as the one who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it (13-14). When we believe in Jesus, we are sealed with the Spirit. Believing is putting our hope in Christ’s sacrificial death. And when we believe, God seals us with his Spirit who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we possess it. The sealing of the Spirit secures our salvation.

The seal in the ancient world was a mark of ownership. For a legal document one would make a seal with melted wax into which you would press your family ring or crest, leaving an indentation so that when the wax dried, it made a seal. That seal marked the ownership of the document and demonstrated its authenticity. The word is also used for sealing Jesus’ tomb so that it could not be tampered with (Mat 27:66). Most importantly, this word is used in 4:30, Do not grieve the Holy Spirit by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. God sealing us with his Spirit secures our future redemption, resurrection to life eternal. The sealing with the Spirit is God marking us as his own, as genuinely his, and securing us to our final destiny, eternal salvation and life.

This idea is reinforced by the Spirit who is the guarantee our inheritance. A guarantee is a down payment which secures certain services and when those services are rendered, the balance is paid. In the same way, God seals us with his Spirit as his down payment so that our inheritance is secure until we take possession of it. So, the sealing with the Spirit marks us as belonging to God, as his own and the presence of the Spirit in our lives is the guarantee or down payment that we will take possession of our inheritance. The Spirit dwelling in us and working in us is the down payment guaranteeing our inheritance until we take possession of it.

This text is meant to give us hope in Christ, a bed rock foundation to find strength to fight the fight of faith when life is hard, when you struggle with stubborn sin and addictions, when you are losing your health, when you are struggling with depression, when your marriage is on the rocks. 3-14 is meant to strip us of hoping in the false securities we look for in this life and put hope for safety and security in Christ. What God wants you to walk away with today is I’ve got you, warts and all. In my saving arms have are secure unto eternal salvation. That is the promise of the gospel. God wants all of his adopted children to feel safe and secure in him, especially when life is falling apart.

And for the third time, we see God has blessed us so that his glory might be praised, adored, and enjoyed. The purpose of a promised inheritance secured and guaranteed is so that our hearts become so full of praise that it naturally spills over to the praise of his glory. Praise is the overflow of a heart full of God’s blessings.

Questions for Life Groups:

1. What is the one main idea of this passage, 1:3-14?
2. What is Paul’s goal in describing all these blessings as rooted in God’s initiative not ours?
3. How does it move you to praise God?
4. How is our future inheritance a motivation for us in our day to day struggles?
5. What does the sealing of the Spirit mean and what is the significance for us?
6. What does Paul mean when he says the Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance?
7. How is God speaking you through this passage?
8. How does this passage after the command to make disciples
1. The Greek word is a participle, literally meaning hoped before. Some think the change from we (12) to you (13) implies that Paul has Jewish Christians in mind (12) as over against you Gentile believers (13). But I think it is better to understand it this way, we are those who have put their hope in Christ previously or before and now you Gentiles have also put your hope in Christ in Ephesus. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)