

Our Wealth in Christ (Part 2)

Text: Ephesians 1:8-14

Introduction:

1. Verse 3-14 are all one sentence in the Greek text indicating that they are one unit of thought. They reveal the many facets of our salvation. It is like picking up a beautiful jewel, holding it to the light and looking at it from different angles, and enjoying its various sparkles and flashes of color. In these verses we have the golden chain that links our salvation with eternity past and eternity future. The whole truth is immense and beyond our comprehension. Little did we know in that moment when we believed, that we had been swept into the eternal plan of God.)
2. The Three Persons of the Godhead are seen in these verses, each performing a role in my salvation.
 - Blessings from God the Father (Vs. 3-6)
 - Blessings from God the Son (Vs. 7-12)
 - Blessings from God the Spirit (Vs. 13-14)
3. Review of last lesson: We saw that we were chosen in Christ, predestined to adoption (sonship), accepted and redeemed (Vs. 3-7).
4. For our outline, we will use 4 words to summarize our wealth in Christ described in these verses.

I. ENLIGHTENED (VS. 8-10)

The blessing in these verses concerns the fact that God has revealed His will to us. "Paul is now going to discuss God's grace that is given to enable believers to understand his will." (Harold Hoehner)

A. The Richness of it (Vs. 8)

1. 'wherein' = refers back to the previous word 'grace'. God's grace is the basis of everything He does for us as His children.
2. 'abounded' = has the idea of lavished, overflowed. Same word also translated 'abundance' (Lk. 21:4; 2 Cor. 9:2); 'excel' (1 Cor. 14:12), 'exceed' (2 Cor. 3:9), 'increase' (1 Thess. 4:10).
 - a. "It means God's grace was manifested to us in superabundance. It is an oversize grace. It is more than enough to save and keep saved for time and eternity, every sinner who comes to God in Christ Jesus." (Wuest) It means "God poured this grace unsparingly on us." (Hoehner) As the hymn Here is Love puts it, "Grace and love like mighty rivers poured incessant from above, and heaven's peace and perfect justice kissed a guilty world in love."
 - b. Between the phrases "riches of his grace" and "abounded toward us" we get a sense of just how immense and boundless our salvation is. Rom. 5:20 "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did **much more abound**." Like the hymn says, "Marvelous grace of our loving Lord, grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt."

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3. "in all wisdom and prudence" = the specific point in view. God in grace has made us wise concerning His eternal plan. He has revealed it to us.
 - a. 'wisdom' = in the N.T., it refers to the highest and noblest in wisdom (Trench). It is mental excellence in its highest and fullest sense (Wuest). It has more of a theoretical knowledge in view.
 - b. 'prudence' = understanding. In particular the ability to rightly apply wisdom, hence more of a practical knowledge. Webster states, "Prudence is principally in reference to actions to be done, and due means, order, season and method of doing or not doing."

B. The Revelation of it (Vs. 9-10)

1. The Mystery Declared (Vs. 9)
 - a. "made known" = revealed
 - b. 'mystery' = not something eerie or mysterious but a truth previously concealed and now revealed (See Eph. 3:5). It is a sacred secret, once hidden but now revealed to God's people. The word occurs six times in Ephesians. It refers to New Testament truth revealed through the Apostles. There are a number of mystery doctrines in the New Testament such as the rapture of the church (1 Cor. 15:51); the church (Eph. 3:5-6); the believer indwelt by Christ (Col. 1:27) and the mystery of godliness (1 Tim. 3:16). Which mystery is Paul speaking about here in Ephesians 1? That is explained in the next verse.
 - c. "according to his good pleasure" = same as back in Vs. 5. We see God acting in accordance with His perfect wisdom, will and purposes. "This glorious plan finds its origins in the eternal will of God, apart from any outside influences." (William Macdonald)
2. The Mystery Detailed (Vs. 10)
 - a. What is this dispensation?
 - i. 'dispensation' = means a stewardship or administration. Our word 'economy' comes from this word. It means "the management of a household, or of household affairs, the management, oversight, administration of others property, the office of a manager, overseer, stewardship." (Wuest) We refer to "government administrations" which gives us a sense for the meaning of the word. It refers to God's management or administration of a particular period or age of time. We believe there are 7 discernible dispensations in the Word of God. An obvious one is the dispensation of law which went from Mount Sinai to Mount Calvary. Now we are in the dispensation of grace, the church age.
 - ii. "fulness of times" = the word fulness has the sense of "to bring to a completion, having reached the goal" and the word 'times' means 'seasons' as opposed to time in general. "By the fulness of these seasons is meant the time when the succession of the ages has come to a close in the plan of God. We are now living in the age of Grace. The season or dispensation which will complete

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the succession of seasons is the Messianic Kingdom.” (Wuest) So it is in reference to an administration by God of a certain period of human history designated as “the fulness of times.”

- b. What happens in this dispensation?
 - i. “gather together in one” = means to gather again under one head, to sum up, to gather up into one. (Linguistic Key) “Sin has created a disharmony, a division in every part of the universe like myriad strands contradictory to each other. But God has His plan and will gather all these strands up into one unified result of reconciliation in the Person of His Son Jesus Christ.” (Richard Hester)
 - ii. “all things” = all created beings and things. See Rom. 8:19-22. “God contemplates a regathering, a restoration to that former condition when all things were in perfect unity...The mystery of God’s will includes the restoration of this unity in and through Christ; one kingdom on earth and in heaven – a new heaven and a new earth in which shall dwell righteousness, and ‘the creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God’” (Wuest)
 - iii. Col. 1:20 “And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him **to reconcile all things** unto himself; by him, *I say, whether **they be things in earth, or things in heaven.***”
 - iv. It seems to refer to the future Millennial reign when the cosmos will be under the headship and rulership of Christ. Ultimately, it looks beyond that to the new heaven and new earth and the eternal reign.

II. ENRICHED (VS. 11-12)

A. The Provision of our Inheritance (Vs. 11a)

1. “in whom” = in Christ. We have this **inheritance** because through salvation we are in God’s Son. We both have an inheritance and we are ourselves an inheritance (Psalm 2:8). Romans 8:17 tells us, “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.”
2. The Apostle Peter gives us further insights into the magnitude of this inheritance – “Blessed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance **incorruptible**, and **undefiled**, and that **fadeth not away, reserved** in heaven for you,” (1 Peter 1:3-4)

B. The Predestination to our Inheritance (Vs. 11b)

1. The word ‘predestinated’ means to mark out beforehand, to predetermine. It is translated “determined before” (Acts 4:28) and ‘ordained’ (1 Cor. 2:7). In Vs. 5 the word was used in relation to our adoption (sonship), now it is used in relation to our inheritance. We

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were previously marked out for this inheritance according to the purpose of His will.

2. The wonderful truth conveyed by the word 'predestination' is that in His love and grace, God Almighty made plans for His children to enter into glorious blessings in Christ. God predetermined that all who trust in Christ as Saviour be blessed with:
 - a. Adoption – made a part of God's family with all the rights, privileges and blessings of adult sons and daughters in full standing (Vs. 5; Rom. 8:23)
 - b. Inheritance (Vs. 11) – granted a glorious inheritance in the gift of God's Holy Spirit at salvation (Vs. 14) and much more awaiting us in heaven.
 - c. Christlikeness (Rom. 8:29) – God determined that his children would become like Christ. I need to cooperate with the working of the Spirit in the process of sanctification but let us remember that "...it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. 2:13) and that we can be "...confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:" (Phil. 1:6). So, stop trying to live for Christ and rather let Christ live through you. Stop trying to work for Christ but rather let Christ work through you.
3. "according to the purpose" = This predestination was according to God's Divine purpose. The word 'counsel' has the idea of intelligence and deliberation. It again highlights that God's Sovereign choices were not random, thoughtless exercises but were in accordance with His Divine wisdom. God works all things according to the standard of the counsel of His will.

C. The Purpose of our Inheritance (Vs. 12a)

1. This is the second time this truth is mentioned in these verses (See Vs. 6). The grand design and purpose of it all is the glory of God, that He might receive praise.
2. Expositors: "This clause states the ultimate end which God had in view in foreordaining us to be made His inheritance. It was not for our own privilege but that through us His glory might be set forth."
3. Isaiah 43:21 "This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise."

III. SAVED (VS. 12b-13a)

Paul now speaks about the salvation both he and his readers had experienced. We note the simple steps of salvation in these verses:

A. They Heard the Message of Salvation (Vs. 13a)

This was the hearing of faith (Rom. 10:17). The message they heard is described in two ways:

1. The Word of Truth – Jesus Christ is the truth (John 14:6), the Word of God is truth (John 17:17) and the Gospel is the truth (Col. 1:5). Truth is the opposite of lies and falsehood. Truth is reality.
2. The Gospel of Salvation – the Gospel means good news (1 Cor. 15:1-4) and it's the good news of salvation. Salvation means to rescue, save, deliver. The good news is that you can be rescued,

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you can be saved from your sin because Christ died on the cross for your sins, was buried and then rose again the third day. Salvation comes through faith in the Gospel, not through baptism or any other good work.

B. They Believed the Message of Salvation (Vs. 13b)

1. They Trusted – the word ‘trust’ means to rely or depend upon, to have confidence in. They had trusted in Christ.
2. They Believed – the word ‘believed’ means to put one’s faith in. It is a humble reliance upon Christ for salvation. We are saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9). Faith is the hand that reaches out to receive God’s gift of salvation. Faith is the channel by which salvation is received into the life.

C. They Received the Gift of Salvation (Vs. 13b)

1. Note the phrase “**your** salvation”. This is the Gospel message made personal. Upon hearing the Gospel, the individual must make a decision to personally receive the offer of salvation.
2. They acted upon the message of salvation, making a choice to receive God’s gift of grace. It is not enough to simply ‘believe’ in the sense of accepting facts in your mind. That is important, but you must not only believe about Christ in your head, you must receive Him into your heart.
3. John 1:12 “But as many as **received him**, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that **believe** on his name:”
4. Challenge: Have you taken Christ as your personal salvation? Has the message of the Gospel become the message of your salvation? Has it become personal? Has it transformed you? You need to **turn and trust, repent and receive, believe and be born again.**

IV. SEALED (VS. 13B-14)

The focus now turns to the work of the Holy Spirit who is the One who makes salvation a reality in the repentant, believing sinner. Observe three truths about this sealing we receive at salvation:

A. The Person of our Sealing (Vs. 13b)

1. “heard...believed...sealed” = “the two participles (heard & believed) show contemporaneous time with the main verb ‘sealed’. This means that the “sealing with the Holy Spirit” happens when we hear and believe.” (Hester) In other words, they received the Holy Spirit and His work of sealing the moment they were saved. They did not need a second experience after salvation for this to happen (e.g. speaking in tongues, laying on of hands by a preacher etc...).
2. ‘sealed’ = to set a seal on one as a mark or stamp; marked and authenticated as God’s heritage. (A.T. Robertson) A seal was like an ancient stamp. Illustration: NBC’s Common Seal
3. “Holy Spirit” = the third Person of the Holy Trinity, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son.
4. “of promise” = He was the promised Holy Spirit. For example, Christ promised the coming of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26, 16:7; Luke 24:49).

B. The Point of our Sealing (Vs. 13c)

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What does it mean to be sealed with the Holy Spirit? The word 'sealed' speaks of several truths. To be sealed means...

1. Christ purchased you – a seal in the ancient world was used to signify a **finished transaction** (Jer. 32:9-10; John 17:4; 19:30). The fact we are sealed with God's Holy Spirit is a reminder that Christ paid the price for our redemption in His own life's blood.
2. Christ possesses you – a seal signified **ownership** (Jer. 32:11-12; 2. Tim. 2:19). You are Christ's precious possession through salvation. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? **For ye are bought with a price:** therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."
3. Christ protects you – a seal spoke of **security** and protection (Es. 8:8; Dan. 6:17; Matt. 27:66; Eph. 4:30). No one can break the eternal seal of the Holy Spirit upon you. You are Christ's forever!
4. Christ proves you – a seal was a mark of authenticity. "Just as a signature on a letter attests to the genuineness of a document, so the presence of the Spirit proves the believer is genuine." (Harry Ironside). Rom. 8:9 "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. **Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.**"

C. The Permanence of our Sealing (Vs. 14a)

1. 'earnest' = "a pledge, a down payment, a deposit that guarantees the full amount will be paid at the appropriate or due time." (Hester) "Earnest money" is an amount of money you put down to show you're serious about purchasing a home. It's also known as a good faith deposit. (Ironside) "It was the first instalment with a guarantee that the rest would follow." (Hoehner)
 - a. "So, the giving to us of the Holy Spirit and our being sealed by Him is a foretaste of the blessedness of heaven' and it is the guarantee that someday we will enter into full possession of the blessedness of God." (Hester)
 - b. "God's gift of the Holy Spirit is the pledge and first payment for the final inheritance in Christ." (ATR)
 - c. The giving of the Holy Spirit to the repentant believer is the first portion of the believer's inheritance and God's guarantee to us that we will receive the rest of the inheritance He has in store for us in heaven. Other verses that mention this truth are: 2 Cor. 1:22 "Who hath also sealed us, and given the **earnest** of the Spirit in our hearts." 2 Cor. 5:5 "Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing *is* God, who also hath given unto us the **earnest** of the Spirit."
 - d. Illustration: An engagement ring is a token, pledge that promises made will be kept. That is why when the bride and groom exchange rings at a wedding it is preceded by the question "What pledge do you give of the sincerity of your vows."
2. "**until** the redemption of the purchased possession" = we are redeemed by the blood of Christ at salvation but this is a reference to the future aspect of our redemption called glorification when we

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will be given a new, resurrection body. The truth of the permanence of our salvation is found in the word 'until'. The Holy Spirit will never forsake or leave us. He will be with us all the way until we reach heaven and are glorified in God's presence. It is impossible for you to lose your salvation. (See also Eph. 4:20)

3. "purchased possession" = that which is one's own. What a precious description of our belonging to Christ.
4. Our salvation is in three parts:
 - a. Justification – Salvation from the penalty of sin. This takes place the moment you trust Christ as Saviour.
 - b. Sanctification – Salvation from the power of sin. This is "a progressive work of the Spirit in the life of the believer, giving victory over the power of sin in the present and conforming us to Christ's image." (Wuest)
 - c. Glorification – Salvation from the presence of sin. This is "the act of God transforming the present bodies of believers into perfect, sinless, deathless bodies." (Wuest)

D. The Purpose of our Sealing (Vs. 14b)

1. "unto the praise of his glory" = this is the third time the praise of his glory is mentioned.
2. You will notice that this phrase finishes off each of the main sections in Vs. 4-14.
 - a. Why did God the Father choose, adopt and accept us? "To the praise of the glory of His grace" (Vs. 6).
 - b. Why did God the Son redeem us, forgive us, reveal God's will to us and make us a part of God's inheritance? "That we should be to the praise of His glory" (Vs. 12).
 - c. Why has God the Spirit sealed us and become the guarantee of our future blessing? "Unto the praise of His glory" (Vs. 14).
 - d. Let us never forget that God's main purpose in saving you was that He might receive the glory due unto Himself.

Conclusion:

1. Have you received God's gift of salvation? Will you respond to the Gospel message and put your faith in Christ, just like the Ephesian Christians did all those years ago?
2. If you are saved, you are secure for all eternity. What a message of comfort!
3. Remember, you were saved for Christ's honor and glory. Live in light of that truth!