

Owned by God Forever

Building a Christian Mind

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Bible Verse: Ephesians 1:13-14
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Before our text this evening, I invite you to turn to the book of Ephesians 1. We're going to skip ahead from where we left off last week and go to the final two verses in Paul's extended sentence of praise in verses 3 through 14. We're going to look at verses 13 and 14 tonight in Ephesians 1. I've titled tonight's message, "Owned by God Forever," and we'll see this from these two verses 13 and 14.

13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,
14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Now, as almost all of you know, for the entirety of this calendar year, we've been doing a series, a mega-series, that we've called "Building a Christian Mind," and the predominant theme if you think about it, of much of what we've covered is dealt with the matter of authority, the authority of God, the fact that he's revealed himself and made himself known, the authority of Scripture, the authority of Jesus Christ, and the authority of truth, and the existence of truth, and so on, and we've developed that over, you know, some 40 messages or so and we have to establish that matter of authority before we can actually move on to anything else. We have to know that there is truth, what the source of truth is, and how we know those things to be. All of those things are certified to us by the authority of no one less than Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God himself. And more recently on the past few weeks, on Sunday and Tuesday, we've been considering the matter how to know true salvation and what I want you tonight to be able to make the connection in your mind is that the security that we have in Christ is tied directly to all of the matters of authority that we've been addressing over the past year or so. You can't really know security in Christ unless you have the matter of authority first settled in your mind. How are you going to know for certain that your salvation is real, how are you going to know for certain that there even is such a thing as salvation unless you have an authoritative place to look where those questions can be settled?

Now, notice what the effect of the way people think about authority, the boomerang effect that they don't intend and recognize of what that has. When you reject authority like our society, our culture has done, like people do because we want to be our own boss

and we want to be our own authority and autonomy and all of that, when you reject the principle of authority, you have undercut, you have torn away the foundation upon which any matter of truth and rest for your soul could possibly have. If there's no authority, then there's no way of knowing what the truth is, and if there's no truth, you're left wandering in your sin without any knowledge or any way of knowing whether your sins can be forgiven, and even more pressingly you might say, you know, what's going to happen to you when you die? You have to embrace the principle of authority lovingly, gladly, submissively, before the blessings that that authority brings to you can be secured to your soul. Now here we've covered the matter of authority sufficiently that I feel like the principle is established, that there is truth, that there is a God, and you know that Christianity is true. We've established all of that and now what you and I have the privilege of doing tonight is entering into the blessings of what all of that means if indeed, the Lord has brought you into his family, he's redeemed you and adopted you because he chose you before the foundation of the world. Now the full momentum of all of these wonderful things comes together and has a gracious, profound impact on your soul in the deepest recesses of your heart.

You see, to have a Christian mind, we've been wanting to build a Christian mind, to have a Christian mind, to be a Christian, and to have a Christian mind is to recognize that in Christ you are in a position of complete safety, of complete security that can never be taken away. If, as we've taught recently, the Lamb of God gave his life for the sins of the world, and that blood has been applied to your soul, if Jesus Christ indeed has lived a perfect life in complete obedience internally and externally to the law of God and that righteousness is applied to your account in salvation, and it is, we have a righteousness not of our own, Paul says in Philippians 3:9, but that which is by faith in Christ a righteousness communicated to us, the delivery mechanism of that righteousness is through faith. Faith itself is not our righteousness. The righteousness of Christ is our righteousness. So if the blood is applied to our soul and his righteousness is imputed to us, then we stand before God complete and accepted in the Beloved. Now those are wonderful, wonderful truths that you can't know unless there's an authority that certifies them to you, but to have a Christian mind is to have Christian affections and to have Christian affections means that you love the word of God, you accept and find confidence and security in the authority of God. We don't resent that. We sit in willing bonds at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ in the word that he's revealed. Now, once your mind is submitted to those things, then you are in a position to receive what the authority of the word of God delivers to those that are in Christ and what it delivers to you is a place of unquestionable safety and security.

Let's look at Romans 8 for just a moment. These verses are familiar, but perhaps the Spirit of God will give us a fresh sense of appreciation for what we're reading, realizing that what we are reading is built on Christ, built on the word of God, built as we saw through a series of at least four messages, built on what the law and prophets had prepared for 1,500 years before the coming of Christ. Now we enter into the greatness of the rest that that gives to us. God establishes, beloved, his authority to us not to constrain us and make us miserable and hover over us like a father who can never be pleased, he establishes his authority to us so that we might know for certain the blessings that he

gives to us in Christ, and that we would have those without any doubt in our minds and from that position of security, we could then go on to grow in our love for him, grow in our sanctification, grow in our Christ-likeness, and all the other things that come with that.

So look at Romans 8:31 and we're coming at this verse with the general sense of what came before in the book of Romans, but approaching it from, you know, approaching the intersection from a different street. Romans 8:31,

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died--more than that, who was raised--who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

Drop down to verse 37.

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Full stop, beloved. Full stop. The Christian mind is to be a mind that understands that it is secure in Christ. God saved you not only to give you an eternal dwelling place in heaven, thank God that he did that, but in the meantime, between now and then, between now and arriving at the gates and entering into the fullness of the inheritance that he's prepared for us before the foundation of the world, the intention of God is for you to have settled in your mind and in your heart that you are secure, that you are safe, and nothing can take these blessings away from you. To have a Christian mind, the outworking of an advanced Christian mind is to recognize that we're safe and secure. We are reconciled to God in a way and we now enjoy a status and position in his family that can never be taken away from us. That is a Christian mind. It's not simply a matter of knowing right doctrine. It's not simply a matter of knowing the right kinds of apologetics to make. The Christian mind yields itself into a settled Christian heart that rests in the truth of God certified by his authority to us. That's the graduating nature of a Christian mind, "I'm secure in Christ. I don't have to be afraid of anything. I don't have to be afraid of life or death. I don't have to be afraid any longer of what happens to my kids. I don't have to be afraid of getting sick. I don't have to be afraid of the cancer that I have. I don't have to be afraid of what happens to my loved ones who do not know Christ. I don't have to be afraid of what will happen to me or what somebody might say about me or people turning against me. I don't have to worry about any of that." And I realize I slurred every word there. I did it deliberately. I don't have to be worried about any of that. God has taken care of

everything that pertains to me, and everything that I need he will supply. That's what Paul says. "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Verse 32, "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all" if he gave us the greatest gift of Christ, how will he not also give us the lesser things that we need to go along the way? That's the whole point of Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6, which we'll get to on Sundays in 2024.

And so the more that you build a Christian mind and the more that you study salvation in Scripture, the more you are humbled by what God has done for you. Do you want to have a test of whether you are operating with a Christian mind? Look at your heart and ask yourself whether there is a settled sense of peace and tranquility and confidence about what the future holds. The Christian mind informs the Christian heart to respond in that way, and then you live differently as a result. See, the problem in the church is that people want shortcuts to the spiritual blessings that I'm describing. They want to not be anxious, they want to feel secure and all of that, but they don't want to develop the Christian mind that's necessary to truly undergird that and so instead, they live off artificial emotions artificially generated by environmental manipulation. They look for quick and easy answers. Beloved, there is no quick and easy answer. If you went to an expensive restaurant, if you went to an expensive restaurant to celebrate a great family event, would you like it, would you expect that this expensive restaurant would deliver food that they'd popped into a microwave for 40 seconds, or really the right number is 30 seconds, and then they just bring out microwaved food to you? Is that worth an expensive meal tab? No, it's not. The product that's delivered through the cheap shortcut is nothing like that. In a like manner, the true profound blessings of a Christian mind, we work for them. We apply ourselves to them. We study the word of God. We read it consistently on a day-by-day basis. Look at Proverbs 2, and the attainment of wisdom is compared to the hard work and the deep work of mining. And in like manner, we've spent 40-some messages to get to this point. There's a reason why we did it that way. The foundation has to be laid rightly. And so, having come to these points and now entering into salvation, now that we've been through the prior things, now we're in a position where the fruit is ripe, we're ready to pick it and eat it fresh from the tree and have it nourish our souls.

And so we're humbled by what God has done for us. We're glad for his authority. And you're also just increasingly impressed by the unsearchable wisdom of God in the plan that he works out over the ages. Our passage today in Ephesians 1, you can turn back to that, adds to the praise, adds to the security that we feel in Christ and so we're going to see three marks of the work of God through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, which provides kind of a crowning capstone to having a Christian mind, which deepens our assurance of salvation and we see the outworking of these things all the way back, stretching back into eternity past where God decreed things in the ministry of Christ when he promised things, our present possession of these things and how we know we have them, and then our enjoyment of them throughout all of eternity. The whole thing starts to come together in these final messages tonight and in the weeks to come.

Let's look at Ephesians 1:13 and, first of all, see the past promise of God. The past promise of God. Paul had just said in verse 12 that "we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory," and then he goes on and he says, "In him you

also," that is, in Christ, "when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation." When you heard the gospel, you believed in it, something happened, it says at the end of verse 13, you "were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit." God says you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. Now before we deal with what it means that we're sealed, I just want to remind you of in what sense the Holy Spirit is the promised Holy Spirit. And we remember that God is a God of truth. He's a God of faithfulness. When he promises something, he always keeps his promises. He always keeps his promises. He's a God of loyal love. He could never contradict himself. He could never break a promise. It's impossible for him to do that. It's impossible for God to lie. And so we go back and we remember some of the things that Christ said to his disciples while he was still with us on earth.

Go to the gospel of John 14. John 14 in verses 16 and 17 Jesus made a promise to his disciples. He promised them in verses 16 and 17 of John 14, he said, "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever." Promise, promise, promise. "I promise you that I'll ask the Father. I promise you that he will give you another helper. I promise you that that helper will be with you forever." Verse 17, "even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you." Jesus is speaking about how he would send the Holy Spirit after his ascension and the Spirit would come to live inside his disciples, to dwell within them, and the Spirit would take up the role in the hearts of believers that Christ had physically with his disciples while he was on earth. He was able to be with the disciples. He instructed them. They saw him with their eyes while Christ was with the twelve on the earth. Well, what Jesus is saying is, "I'm going to send you the Holy Spirit who will perform similar functions for the disciples, for you, but he'll be with you in a different way. It'll be a spiritual indwelling rather than a physical presence with you. I promise you," Jesus says, "that that will take place and he will be with you forever."

Now with that in mind, go to the book of Acts 1. Acts 1, speaking of the resurrection of Christ in verse 3, Luke tells us that Jesus "presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, 'you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.'" Jesus, during his earthly ministry, before the crucifixion said, "I promise you that I'm going to send you a helper." After he was resurrected, after the crucifixion, before his ascension, he says, "I want you to wait in Jerusalem until you've received the Holy Spirit. I promise you that I'm going to send him to you." Well, it's those promises that the Apostle Paul is calling back to mind when he calls the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 1:13, the promised Holy Spirit and this has a wonderful effect on us when we realize, when we think about him in these terms. The life of the Spirit of God in our souls reminds us how Christ had planned our salvation from the beginning, how Christ made promises to his disciples while he was with us on earth, and now as we have the Holy Spirit within us, we are reminded that Christ kept his promise, that Christ did what he said he was going to do, and when we believed in the gospel, the fullness of the promise

was delivered to our souls and as we grew in grace, as we read Scripture and were taught Scripture, we started to see the fullness of what had happened. The Spirit of God came and dwelt within us, made us someone new. The old man is gone.

You know, those of you that are in Christ, the old Jeff, the old Robin, the old Katie is gone. Done away, the old things have passed away, behold all things have become new because our heart, which was dead in trespasses and sins, dominated by Satan, doomed to suffer the wrath of God, we've been delivered from all of that, transferred into the kingdom of God, and now the Spirit of God himself indwells us and unites us with Christ with an eternal bond that can never be broken. That life of the Spirit, beloved, is manifested in spiritual ways, new spiritual desires, new affections, new ways of thinking. You know, we've had a number of baptisms, praise God, in recent past few months. The baptism testimonies speak to these kinds of spiritual realities and how God has sent the promised Holy Spirit to us. We hear in the testimonies, and our own testimonies as Christians should bear something of this reality inside us, we hear the candidates tell about their desires to read and obey Scripture, how they have rejected the old religion that they knew and have embraced the things of Scripture, and those things of Scripture are now dearer and closer to their heart than their closest loved ones. To love Christ more than the praise of family, the acceptance of family, to be willing to endure rejection from family for the sake of Christ is a mark of the Spirit of God within a heart because that's not natural. Who sacrifices family relationships for the sake of something they can't see? We hear of a love for Christ, an appreciation for his atoning work on the cross. We hear testimony of changed hearts and the fruit of the Spirit coming out naturally from the life. All of those things reflect what Scripture tells us to expect from true salvation. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. And when we hear the testimony of new believers speaking to these things, we are seeing the Spirit of God manifesting himself in them. The promised Holy Spirit dwells within them. The change has taken place.

Now look, beloved, when we talk about loving Scripture, loving obedience, embracing the authority of Christ, wanting him more than life itself, isn't it true that affections like that mean nothing to the world? They mean nothing to the unsaved man. Nobody cares about that. That's why you don't see it discussed. That's why media wants nothing to do with it. It's because those affections mean nothing to the unsaved man whatsoever. But those affections in the heart of the redeemed, which are watered and fed when we gather together as believers in meetings like this week by week, those affections illustrate that there is a spiritual reality taking place inside and that spiritual reality, here's the point, it's taking a long time to get to the point, I guess, the spiritual reality, we see the fruit of it with these new affections – watch this – those affections we trace all the way back to the promises that Jesus made when he told the disciples, "I'm going to send my Spirit to you." And so as we see the fruit of the Spirit coming up naturally in our lives, we see it manifested in each other's lives as we go around, we are reminded, we are shown, God testifies to us through these spiritual realities that are certified to us by the word of God that God has kept his promise to his people, he has sent the Spirit and as we see these affections working themselves out, we are to trace it back and say, this is exactly what Jesus Christ promised and here we are enjoying it, seeing it lived out inside our hearts

and in the lives of fellow Christians, and we realize how good Christ is, how he kept his promise and how that testifies to eternal realities that transcend everything in this world.

Now let me encourage you in what I'm about to say and also to help inform and undergird the significance of a gathering like this. Scripture talks about people like us, talks about Christians, says there aren't many noble, there aren't many wise. No, it's not the places of power that you normally find flourishing Christians. It's in simple, humble lives like yours and mine following Christ in the midst of domestic sorrow, following Christ in the midst of affliction and rejection, following Christ in the midst of disappointed hopes and expectations, and continuing on and continuing to pray for people we love when the prayers just seem to go unanswered and nothing changes month by month, year by year, and yet you persevere, you gather together like this, and we share these things together. Here's what I want you to see, beloved, here's what Scripture teaches us: you and I should be astonished at how what seems to be such simple, unremarkable faith actually is testifying to the glories of Christ and his faithfulness to keep his promises because people live that way, Christians live this way because the Spirit of God is producing it within them, renewing them day by day. As the word of God is fed into our minds and fed into our hearts, the Spirit takes that and helps us to continue and to persevere.

Philippians 1:6, we may look at it next Tuesday. God completes the work that he begins in us. "I'm confident of this very thing that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus." Well, what I want you to see is that these simple things that I've been talking about, what seem to be so simple and unremarkable and not at all treasured by the world, these are actually the marks of the power of God within you, the Spirit of God within you, and corporately we see the Spirit of God at work in our midst. This is no small matter. This is exactly what God planned when he decreed before the beginning of time how salvation would work, how it would work out in the course of human history, how it would work out in your individual life, it would work out in these seemingly unremarkable ways that the world cares nothing about but things which are precious in the sight of God.

And so, as we see the promise of Christ, we learn from Scripture what the fruit and the marks of a true Christian is, and we see it among us, we stop treating the gathering of the people of God so superficially and so lightly, which is what you've done here in the room. It matters enough to you to come out on a cold night and be here, right? We don't treat these things superficially. We realize that there is a precious deposit that has been given to us, that has been put in us, and we look beyond the external. We see things by faith and we recognize that these wonderful things are the mark, the evidence, the fruit of an even greater reality of the truthfulness of everything we've been talking about for the past 12 months, that God exists, that Scripture is true, that Jesus is Lord, that God rules over all, that Christianity is true, that truth exists, and we know true salvation in the flow of all of those things. You see, these are the things that Jesus described as the pearl of great price. These are the things that are so precious that you, as Jesus is using the parable of that pearl of great price, these are the things that you go and you sell everything in order to get that one thing, in order to possess that one great treasure. Well, what God does in our hearts through the gospel is the Spirit of God opens our eyes to the loveliness

of Christ and the lowliness of our sin, and we embrace these things. We gladly forsake the world, reject and repudiate ourselves, repent of sin, so that we could have all of the loveliness of Christ in the promise of the gospel and then the fruit starts to show, and the fruit is visible evidence that everything we've been talking about is true as affections that are unnatural and opposed by the world grow and flourish in our hearts enough that many of you have wanted to step forward and make public testimony to it in the waters of baptism, enough that you've been content to have family turn against you. All of these things are not inconsequential. These are things of great eternal value, and we are blessed to share in them together. We are greatly privileged to be Christians. It is the most noble thing in the world to be a believer in Jesus Christ because it is to recognize in the course of everything that we've been talking about, is that we have been the object of God's special, electing, adopting, redeeming, sanctifying love and that he's going to keep that in us forever. Forever. And so while the world despises and thinks lightly of these things, we know that they're precious to God, and therefore they're precious to us. That's what the past promise of God in giving us the Holy Spirit shows us.

Let's move on to the second point that we can see in this text, not just the past promise of God, but we could mark it out this way if you're taking notes, as Christians, we are the present property of God. We are the present property of God, meaning that we belong to him. We belong to him. When you believed in Christ, at the very instant that you believed in Christ, Scripture says in this passage that God sealed you with the Holy Spirit. Look at verse 13 with me again. Ephesians 1:13, "In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit." You were sealed. It's a past tense verb indicating a completed past act of God. God did something at the moment of your conversion for you, to you, that was complete and irreversible. He did this in a way that could not be changed when you believed.

And so God sealed you with the Holy Spirit. What does that mean? Well, he sealed you in the sense that – oh, this is so precious. This is just so precious. He marked you out as his own. He stamped you with the Spirit to show that you belonged to him. Now, ancient documents, you know, in the age in which Paul was writing, they were often rolled up and sealed with a waxy substance that would close them up and protect the contents. If the seal was on it, it authenticated the document and it protected the document from tampering or forgery. The owner's distinct seal guaranteed that the document was real. You can think about this in a different way, the owners of cattle or slaves would mark the beast, would mark the person, brand them to show that they belonged to the owner and so that there was a physical mark on the beast or on the person indicating that he belonged to that person. The distinct brand showed a distinct, unique owner, so that ownership was clear by the brand, by the seal that had been placed upon them. Now, beloved, in keeping in mind the spiritual affections and things that we were just talking about, the marks of the Spirit of God that we've been describing here this evening, the marks of the Spirit of God are an indication that the Spirit of God is within you, okay? The fruit of the Spirit indicates that the Spirit of God is within you. Precious to think about. But there's more to it than that. All of these things express expanding realities when you see the fullness of what Scripture says. The fruit of the Spirit, these new affections, indicate that the Spirit of

God is in you and as a result of that, the Spirit of God is the signature indication that God owns you, that you belong to him. That's why these affections, these new affections that you experienced at your conversion, they were no small matter. Our understanding of them grows in retrospect. We look back at those early days of our conversion and we say, "Look at what happened to me. Now I understand more of what that indicated. Those new affections meant the Spirit of God was now in me and now I see and understand that the fact that the Spirit of God is within me indicates that God had taken ownership of me and I now belong to him. I belong to a different realm. I'm a child in a different family. I have a different Lord, a different Master."

Look at Romans 8:9. Romans 8:9. We'll read through verse 11, Romans 8, beginning in verse 9. Paul, speaking to Christians, says, "You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him." You see, there's two mutually exclusive groups. There are those that do not have the Spirit of God and therefore do not belong to God, and there are those who are Christians, every one of whom has the Spirit of God and therefore belongs to him. There's not a third group that are Christians but don't have the Holy Spirit. If you belong to Christ, you have the Spirit of Christ. If you don't have the Holy Spirit, you don't belong to him. You're not a Christian. So that does away with a whole bunch of bad theology in one verse, doesn't it?

Verse 10, "But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you." If you have the Spirit of God, you belong to him. You are the present property of God. And look, this is the way to think about these things, you belong to God by his right of creation. He made you in your mother's womb, Psalm 139, and therefore by right of creation he owns you. Well, in an additional way, God owns you by right of redemption. We just spoke about this in the message "Redeemed" two weeks ago, I guess it was. Christ paid for you with his shed blood and by paying for you, he took ownership of you, and therefore God created you, therefore he owns you, he saved you, he redeemed you, therefore he owns you. You belong to him. You're not your own. The book of Corinthians, 1 or 2 Corinthians says you were bought with a price therefore glorify God with your body. You were bought, you were purchased, you're not your own.

That's what we mean when we say you're the present property of God and so we can distinguish Christians from non-Christians not by a physical mark, like a brand on a cow, but by the spiritual mark of the Holy Spirit. Do these spiritual affections bubble up in your heart? Are they real? Do the things of truth matter to you? Do you love Christ more than you love life itself? Those kinds of things. Those spiritual attributes, those spiritual affections, mark us as someone who belongs to God. You see, think about it this way, those affections are the stamp of the Holy Spirit on your life. He has made his mark on you and the enduring nature of those affections, as we endure, as we persevere, it testifies to the ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Well, sometimes, as you know, people will make an outward profession of Christ and then they'll turn away from that.

They'll abandon the faith. People like Josh Harris flame for a while as a young man and a rock star pastor and then he turns away from it all, you know, and the spiritual history of the world is littered with people like that. What are we to say about that? Well, when you read Scripture in 1 John 2:19 it says, "They went out from us, but they were not really of us because if they had been of us, they would have remained with us, but they went out in order that it might be shown that they are not all of us." And so the mark of the Spirit is shown not only by these true affections, but by the fact that we continue and persevere in them. When the Spirit takes someone as his own, he keeps him forever.

The Spirit of God has authority over you. You belong to him and as we said recently, there's no reversal of adoption, there's no reversal of redemption, there's no reversal of election, there's no reversal of regeneration to be found anywhere in the pages of Holy Scripture. And so, when someone walks away, they simply show the reality of what Christ described at the end of the Sermon on the Mount or in the wheat and the tares. Sometimes the tares look just like wheat. Sometimes a non-Christian can look to outward appearances, to human eyes, to be the real thing but time and truth go hand in hand and those who belong to the Spirit continue in the Spirit because the Spirit of God owns them and keeps them forever. So, are you here and, you know, you look back and you were saved 20, 30 years ago, 5, 10 years ago, and yeah, I get it, we all have our spiritual ups and downs, but here you are after all of that, and you look and the Spirit of God has kept you, and the affections are still bubbling within you. Beloved, take heart. That is a mark of the Spirit of God owning you and if the Spirit of God owns you, it's an indication that Christ has kept his promises to his disciples, and if he owns you, it means he's going to keep you all the way into eternity. And the Christian mind, the Christian mind looks at these things in a global way and sees the full significance weighed out and seeing how they all fit together. Ah, it's wonderful things. Wonderful things. The psalmist said, "Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things from your law." What we're having tonight is God is opening our eyes as we read his word to understand the wonderful things from his word that pertain to those that he has saved and it's truly magnificent. And we get a sense, don't we, of what it is that God values. God doesn't look on the outward appearance, 1 Samuel 16:7, he looks on the heart. David prayed, "Lord, let the meditations of my heart be acceptable in your sight." We're talking about heart affections, heart attitudes, heart attributes here that inevitably influence the way that we think and live.

Well, going back to verse 13 for just a moment, Ephesians 1:13, Paul says you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. Compare that past action, that completed past action, with what we read in Ephesians 5:18. We need to distinguish between the sealing of the Spirit and the filling of the Spirit. Ephesians 5:18 says, "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Holy Spirit." We are commanded to live in an ongoing way in which we are filled with the Holy Spirit. It's something that's commanded of us, not something that is described about us having happened in the past. And so the sealing and the filling of the Spirit are two different things. The Spirit has different aspects of ministry to us. We are sealed in the Spirit at the moment of our conversion. It's final. God marks us, impresses us, and makes us his own, and that never changes, and that can't be added to or decreased from, you either belong to God or you

don't. And so the Spirit seals us and marks us. The filling of the Spirit is something different. The filling of the Spirit occurs as the Spirit of God in our Christian life controls and directs us through the word of God. The sealing refers not to your Christian walk, but to your Christian mark. God has identified you as being his. The filling of the Spirit occurs when the word of God is filling your mind, transforming the way that you think, and producing within you the fruit of the Spirit as a result of the operation of the word of God on your affections. One is the sealing is a completed past act. The filling is something that is an ongoing mark of Christian growth and Christian life. And so we just keep those two things separate in our minds.

Now so we see the Spirit of God by the fruit that he produces. When we recognize the presence of the Spirit of God, it points us to the past promises of Christ, and we realize Christ has kept his promises. He has really sent the Holy Spirit, and he's blessed us to partake of him. Then there's this present dimension of the reality of the Spirit in our lives. It tells us that we belong to God. We are his. It's another way of thinking about having been adopted into his family. We are children of God, and thus we are, 1 John 3:2. And yet there's more. There's more. The Holy Spirit in our lives not only tells us about the past promise of Christ, tells us not only about our present position in Christ, his presence tells us yet more by telling us what is still to come. These things just get more progressively wonderful as we go along. It brings us to our third and final point for this evening, the future presence of God. The future presence of God. We've seen the past promise of God, it's pointed us to Christ; the present property of God, we know that we belong to our Father in heaven; and now we're going to see in point number three, the future presence of God.

You see, the Holy Spirit is given to us as part of an even greater whole. Look at verse 14 with me. You were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, now in verse 14, "who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory." He is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it to the praise of his glory. Now just make a general observation about this passage. This passage is looking forward to something yet to come. There is a future dimension to what Paul is speaking about here in verse 14. The Spirit guarantees our inheritance until we acquire possession of it. We don't yet have the fullness of the possession of our salvation. We're fully saved, but everything that salvation brings to us, all of its blessings, they're still future. The final blessings remain to be received and what Paul is saying here when he uses this word guarantee, that word guarantee is the word that describes a down payment on a purchase. Think about a down payment on a house. You buy a house and you make a down payment. The down payment is the promise, it's a guarantee that there's more to come. "I'm putting this down, I'm putting this money down, and it's an indication that I will deliver the rest of the money when the transaction is complete." Simple language, simple principle, concept that we understand in our daily life. Well, Paul takes that concept of a down payment that indicates that more is to come, and he says, "This is what the Holy Spirit is to you as a believer. The presence of the Spirit of God in your life now is God's down payment that he is going to deliver the rest of the blessings for certain that are promised in the word of God." The Spirit in your life guarantees that God will give you more later in the future. Our best life isn't now, not by far. Our best life is yet to come.

Look at Ephesians 4:30. Notice how the Spirit of God is tied to these things that are yet future. By the way, I should say we should look at verse 29 because it helps us discern certain matters of Christian leadership in our day. "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear." If you see a so-called Christian leader who is marked by corrupt, vile, vulgar, sexualized content in the things that he says and the things that he teaches, turn away from him. Walk away. You don't need that. You don't have to speculate on whether the guy is a Christian or not, you can just recognize that the corrupting talk that comes out of his mouth is not something to follow, emulate, or be attracted to. Scripture is so plain on this, there's no excuse for us to be deceived in any other direction.

Look at chapter 5, verse 3, since I'm on this tangent, "But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving." You mark it, beloved. Look, look, there is a whole subsection, a whole subculture of so-called Christianity that particularly appeals to young men, it seems like, who are attracted to the rebellious spirit that crude talk and things like this and, you know, and just putting forth cigars and liquor as being the mark of a cool Christian along with corrupting talk, understand that that is completely contrary to the spirit of the New Testament and when you see it, you can safely turn away, say, "I'm not missing anything by walking away from that." End of tangent. Back to the Holy Spirit and the fact that his presence indicates a future reality that he's going to give to us.

Ephesians 4:30. Look at this with me, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." God sealed you at the moment of your conversion and he did so with an ultimate goal in mind, that you would be safe in the day of redemption, that you would belong to him in the day of redemption, that you would be there, that these things are reserved in heaven for you.

Go back to the letters of Peter, 2 Peter 1 to just get one more perspective on this. 2 Peter 1. We read in 2 Peter 1, "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire." God has done that. He's granted to us everything that pertains to life and godliness, and he's done that in the Holy Spirit.

Look at 1 Peter 1:3. 1 Peter 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you," it's there waiting for you, "who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." The Holy Spirit is God's down payment that that future inheritance will be given to you. We have the fullness of the Spirit imparted to us, but only a portion of the

full blessing that salvation provides. The fullness of it all will be recognized when we receive our inheritance in heaven and the Spirit is God's promise that he is going to do it.

And so, beloved, the Christian mind, as we're building a Christian mind, the Christian mind takes in all of these different things that we've talked about, and it realizes a very profound, simple principle is that God has plans for you to give you much more spiritually than what you presently have on earth. You will be in heaven. You will be home in heaven. You will see Christ as he is and will be delivered from the fullness of all of the corruption in you and in the world around you and the point of Paul in Ephesians 1:13 and 14 is that the indwelling Holy Spirit is the guarantee from God that he will give you the rest. The gift of the Holy Spirit demonstrates the sincerity of God to bring it all to pass. Your salvation cannot fail in the end, beloved. It can't. It's absolutely impossible for salvation to fail and God has sealed us for the future day when he completes it. What a great God. What a great Savior. What a great salvation. And all of this grace showered down upon unworthy sinners like you and me. What can we say to these things? Let's go one final time to Ephesians 1:14. What can we say to these things? How do we respond to these things as we take them in as the Spirit of God certifies the truth of his word to the heart that he indwells? Oh, the blessings of the Holy Spirit. What can we say to these things? Look at the end of verse 14, it's all to the praise of his glory. We praise him. We honor the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We thank the ineffable Triune God now and forevermore. He has given us an unspeakably great gift, and for that we give him all the glory.

Bow with me in prayer.

Our Father, you have chosen us, adopted us, redeemed us, and by your Spirit sealed us, marked us as your own, and you own us forever. We belong to you. We are yours, and you are ours. The great eternal Creator, the eternal Father in heaven, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our elder brother in heaven, the indwelling Holy Spirit, all belong to us, freely given to us. We thank you, Father, We do give you the praise. We praise the glory of your name. We thank you and acknowledge that these things have come not from ourselves, this was not our idea, it was not our accomplishment. It was your idea and it is your accomplishment alone and to you alone belongs the praise, the praise of your great infinite glory. We gladly ascribe that glory to you as we close. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

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