

Whose and Who We Are

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Ephesians 1:3-14

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Introduction

Whether a person is religious or not they have to admit that the relevance of the Story of Genesis cannot be ignored. It is so significant that Leon Kaas, an American Physician and Scientist, after twenty years of research of the Book of Genesis, not as a theologian but as a scientist and a philosopher states,

"The best place to start is at the beginning, with the first book of the bible Leon Kaas

¹." Although not advocating a belief in the historicity of Adam and Eve, Kass observed that Genesis seems to provide a history of a sequence of what happened at the start and conveys timeless *anthropological beginnings or roots of human life, and in all their moral ambiguity*. Genesis seems to present a powerful pedagogical beginning for the moral and spiritual education of the reader. He states that ***Genesis shows us not just what happened, but also what always happens***. It is further suggested that Genesis 3 is not to be studied in a vacuum. Even though it seems to be the pivotal narrative that suggests a blueprint for shame, this narrative is connected to the larger framework and scope of the Book of Genesis, the Pentateuch and the rest of the Old Testament. Kaas believes that ***Adam and Eve are not just the first, but also the paradigmatic man and woman***. Kaas explains

"By means of such paradigmatic stories, the beginning of Genesis shows us not so much what happened as what always happens. And by holding up a mirror in which we readers can discover in ourselves the reasons why human life is so bittersweet and why uninstructed human beings generally get it wrong, Genesis reflectively read also provides a powerful pedagogical beginning for the moral and spiritual education of the reader." Leon Kaas ²

What always happens? Well, beginning from Genesis 3 we see people **seeking an individualistic identity that fragments community**. Relationships were no longer defined by whole and Holy identities found in Diversity, Dignity and shared Unity but dysfunction and division. Community, Mutual caring, companionship reflecting God's purposes and character was replaced by individualistic craving, coveting, consumption, comparing, conceit and corruption.

Individualistic Identity became an idolatrous image management and impression management. As far back as Ecclesiastes 4:4 – Solomon lamented

"Then I saw that all toil and all skill in work come from a man's envy of his neighbor. This also is vanity and a striving after wind." Ecclesiastes 4:4

¹ Leon Kaas, 2003. The Beginning of Wisdom: Reading Genesis. Chicago:University of Chicago Press. pp. 10, 12

² Leon Kaas, 2003. The Beginning of Wisdom: Reading Genesis. Chicago:University of Chicago Press. pp. 10, 12

Just a Biblical thought? “Individualistic identity” has been on the rise around the world over the last few decades. Individualist cultures tend to conceive of people as self-directed and autonomous, and they tend to prioritize independence and self-expression and uniqueness at the expense of interdependence, family relationships and social connection of Collectivist cultures³. This individualistic identity has a price. Researchers, Psychologists and Mental Health experts see individualistic identity as cutting people off, not living a “presenting self”, leading to a staged life of isolation, which over time, because it cuts of community leads to depression, creates a lesser sense of belongingness, and even suicide⁴. We are designed by God to belong. Belong to God. Belong to one another. NO one matures or grows in isolation. The Apostle wrote the Book of Ephesians, as a circular letter to ensure all the Churches he had started go this message. Chapter 1-3 he defines what are identity belonging to God looks like. Whose and Who we are is designed by God through Christ and His Spirit. Ephesians 4-6 Paul; defines what our identity in belonging to one another looks like. Whose and Who we are in significant relationships with one another.

This morning will focus on Chapter 1:3-14 that defines what are identity belonging to God looks like. Please turn in your Bible’s to Ephesians 1:3-14. Now hear the Word of the LORD

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he **chose us** in him before the foundation of the world, that **we should be holy and blameless** before him. **In love 5 he predestined us for adoption** to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which **he has blessed us** in the Beloved. 7 In him **we have redemption** through his blood, the **forgiveness of our trespasses**, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, **in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will**, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. 11 [In him]**we have obtained an inheritance**, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, 12 so that we who were the first to hope [in Christ]might be to the praise of his glory. 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. Ephesians 1:3-14

This morning we want to answer two questions **What would Paul have us understand about of our individual yet interdependent identity? Secondly, how do we receive this interdependent identity?**

Firstly, what would Paul have us understand about of our individual yet interdependent identity?

1. We are blessed BY our Blessed Father –

³ <https://www.psychologicalscience.org/news/releases/individualistic-practices-and-values-increasing-around-the-world.html>

⁴ Jacob Wilmer, 2019. Our Individualistic Society is Causing Serious Mental Health Issues
With the increase of individualism comes depression, low self-esteem and a lesser sense of belongingness.
<https://medium.com/the-philosophers-stone/our-individualistic-society-is-causing-serious-mental-health-issues-b4a6e56bf5e7#:~:text=The%20result%20of%20our%20individualistic,Sometimes%20it%20leads%20to%20suicide.>
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/talking-about-men/201707/is-increase-in-individualism-damaging-our-mental-health>

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (Ephesians 1:3)

We get our word “eulogy” from the Greek word for “blessed”. It means to “speak well of someone” or “to reason or think well of them”. “Blessing” is about speaking or thinking well of someone with the result of seeking to practically benefit and add value to their lives. “God thinks well of us, he speaks well of us and he acts well towards us – that is what it means to be BLESSED! It is to receive that kind of love, focus, attention and help from Almighty God

Blessings, therefore, has a **“vertical” and a “horizontal” focus**. If they are from God, it is a Vertical blessing **to us** and **in us** horizontally, which then **works through us into the lives of others**. The Gospel, the Good News, is that God has given us **“positional” benefits in His Son, Jesus Christ**. *Blessings that not only add value to our salvation but must shape Whose and Who we are and who we and what we value.*

In Ephesians 1:3a *“Blessed be the God”* is another way of saying “Blessed is God”; we are thinking and speaking well of God. In other words, we are praising and worshipping God alone. Think of this as a horizontal position, us as believers, who have a total **vertical focus**; from us to God. ***Our entire thoughts and words are praising God are focusing on God.***

Why begin here? As A.W. Tozer said in his important work Knowledge of the Holy stated:

“What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. ...” A.W. Tozer ⁵.

WE become WHO we Worship! The Bible Begins with a high view of God. God is the Bible’s SUBJECT. God reveals Himself as the Primary, strategic and intentional God who seeks a Covenant Relationship with humankind. New Testament Commentator Max Turner commenting on Ephesians 1:3a states:

Ephesians 1:3-14 is best understood as a stately prayer, or call to worship, designed to lift the readers’ eyes away from themselves, and from their fears, **to the majesty and love of God revealed in his unfolding plan, and to the privilege of participating in it.** Max Turner ⁶

Harold Hoehner reminds us that the

“The concept of blessing with reference to God is not expressing a wish, “blessed be God,” but rather a declaration, “blessed is God. Harold Hoehner

“The concept of blessing with reference to God is not expressing a wish, “blessed be God,” but rather a declaration, “blessed is God⁷.” “Blessed is God” is an Old Testament expression of Praise for God for WHO HE is. To state “blessed is” God **carries the meaning to kneel in gratitude, honor, and recognition of God⁸**

⁵ A.W. Tozer (2012) The Knowledge of the Holy. Electronic Version. Fig Tree Classic. P.11

⁶ Turner, M. (1994). Ephesians. In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), New Bible commentary: 21st century edition (4th ed., p. 1225). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

⁷ Hoehner, H. W. (2002). Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary (p. 162). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

⁸ Pierce, R. W. (2015). Daniel. (M. L. Strauss & J. H. Walton, Eds.) (p. 36). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

The Apostle Paul keeps a **vertical focus on God** irrespective of his horizontal challenges, suffering or pain. Paul wrote Ephesians from a Prison cell. Flip ahead to chapter 3 verse 13

So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you (Ephesians 3:13)

The Greek word Paul uses in Ephesians 3:13 “suffering” (thlípsis) means to be squeezed, confined, under immense pressure, afflicted, distressed and oppressed⁹. One would think this would leave the Apostle in a “Dungeon of Despair”, a “Pit of Pessimism” and a “Castle of Contempt-Cynicism”. On the contrary, he wrote one of most encouraging, engaging and edifying letters

How did he do this? How did he keep from descending into despair?

Paul focused on WHOSE He was, Who He is in Christ not just WHAT was happening to him. There was purpose in his pain. ***Paul’s focus was vertical, on worshiping God in spite of His intense suffering horizontally. Our identity is authenticated when our focus is on WHOSE we are. Our meaning and identity is in WHOSE we are in God and through Christ in the midst of challenges.***

We are who our Father says we are. He is blessed forever and, He has blessed us. Everything else that we are going to unpack is an overflow of this blessing that we have received. It is all connected – an exposition of the blessing that our Father has entrusted to us. So let’s move to the next aspect of this blessed identity that we have received. Paul would have us see that:

2. We are “in Christ”

We find the prepositional phrase “in him” or “in Christ” or in Christ Jesus 12x in Ephesians 1:3-14. “The expression “in Christ” and its parallels occur thirty-six times in the Book of Ephesians¹⁰

John Stott states

“The commonest description in the Scriptures of a follower of Jesus is that he or she is a person “in Christ.” The expressions “in Christ,” “in the Lord,” and “in him” occur 164 times in the letters of Paul alone, and are indispensable to an understanding of the New Testament. To be “in Christ” does not mean to be inside Christ, as tools are in a box or our clothes in a closet, but to be organically united to Christ, as a limb is in the body or a branch is in the tree. It is this personal relationship with Christ that is the distinctive mark of his authentic followers. John Stott¹¹.”

William Henriksen states that

“This phrase “in Christ” may without exaggeration be called the most important one in all the Pauline epistles” William Hendriksen¹²

⁹ thlípsēōs, Zodhiates, S. (2000). The complete word study dictionary: New Testament (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers. θλίψις Silva, M. (Ed.). (2014). New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis (Second Edition, Vol. 2, p. 462). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

¹⁰ Hoehner, H. W. (2002). Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary (p. 173). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

¹¹ https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/In_Christ_page1

¹² Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. (1953–2001). [Exposition of Ephesians](#) (Vol. 7, pp. 70–71). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

In Galatians 3:26-28

"In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:26-28

Paul is speaking to the Christians in Galatia, **reminding them of their new identity since they placed their faith in Jesus Christ**. To be "baptized into Christ" means that they **were identified with Christ, having left their old sinful lives** and fully embracing the new life in Christ. We were Spiritually Placed and Baptized into Christ the moment we received Christ (Romans 6:1-4). We have identified with what He did for us on the Cross of Calvary and demonstrated this inward decision through the outward act of baptism.

(Glove Illustration) This glove is designed to work. How do I get it to do what it was designed to do? I can tell it to work. I can talk to the glove and encourage it to be "what you were designed to be!" OR "I could have it hang out with different types of gloves". OR I could put my hand in the glove to bring the glove to life. We have to have Christ work in us! This is what it means to be "In Christ". It is Christ in us and through us. Go over to Ephesians 2:10 –

"For we are his workmanship, created **in Christ Jesus** for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10

Listen to:

"I can do all things **in Christ** who gives me strength". Philippians 4:13

We may live in such and such a geographical area, in such a such address, in such and such house....but authentic life is in Christ. Paul was in Prison when he wrote Ephesians, but he was "in Christ". Next Paul wants to see the blessing of our identity in that

3. We are Chosen

"...even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world..." Ephesians 1:4

We were on God's mind way before He was on ours. The word for "chose" means that God to select by a highly deliberate choice in view of a definite outcome that we would come into a Relationship with Him through His Son, Jesus Christ. "Chose" is from a Greek word which means to "speak out to a conclusion". It means that God deliberately spoke to a conclusion who would be His. This is known as the teaching of "election". Someone has said that **trying to understand EVERY aspect of "election" will make us lose our minds. However, to ignore this teaching on "election", we may lose our souls**. Basically, due to the sin entering into the world through the disobedience of Adam and Eve, each and every person was born in sin.

We ALL deserve Hell. NO ONE deserves Salvation. That God graciously, and lovingly chooses People, who have NOTHING to bring to represent Him is a common theme throughout Scripture:

“.....The LORD your God has **chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all** the peoples who are on the face of the earth. 7 It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and **chose you**, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but *it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers*, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”
(Deuteronomy 7:6-8)

God goes on to warn them in Deuteronomy 9:4-5

Also, God did not choose them because of their righteousness: 4 **“Do not say in your heart**, after the LORD your God has thrust them out before you, *‘It is because of my righteousness that the LORD has brought me in to possess this land,’* whereas it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is driving them out before you. 5 *Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land.*
(Deuteronomy 9:4-5)

In the same way Paul reminds the proud, immature Corinthians believers in

²⁶ For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But **God chose** what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; **God chose** what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸ **God chose** what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹ so that no human being might boast in the presence of God 1 Corinthians 1:26-29

Isn't that remarkable?! What a mystery! What a grace! I may be foolish and weak and lowly, but nevertheless I AM CHOSEN! It has nothing to do with who I am or what I have done and it has EVERYTHING to do with the kindness and the mercy of my heavenly Father. Paul wants to make sure you see that. He wants to make sure you rest in that. He wants to make sure you find your identity in that. You are chosen. Praise God!

Next Paul wants us to see

4. We are Holy –

*“he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should **be holy**”* (Ephesians 1:4)

God's Holiness is that which makes Him distinct and unique, ALL powerful, ALL knowing, ALL presence. Contrary to North American Christianity we do not come to God “just as we are” and “we feel like it”. In Exodus 3, God has Moses to take off His Sandals because God is Holy. There is a pure intensity that makes up God's Character. We cannot come into God's presence impure. The Whole Book of Leviticus, and throughout the Old Testament God calls His People to “Be Holy as the LORD Your God is Holy”. But how can an impure, sinful people become Holy. We find the answer in 1 Corinthians 1:30 where Paul writes:

“God has united you with Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made him to be wisdom itself. *Christ made us right with God; he made us pure and holy, and he freed us from sin.*” 1 Corinthians 1:30

When we think about our holiness, we need to think about it in two respects. In one sense, **we ARE holy positionally**. Right now. Because we are in Christ. God looks at us and he sees spotless, perfect, holy people! Christ has made us holy, and that is what we are.

And yet, **we are becoming holy progressively**. God has called us to live lives that are characterized by holiness, and none of us have fully arrived in that sense, amen? We refer to this work of growing in holiness “sanctification”. Thankfully, we know how sanctification happens. Jesus prayed in John 17:17

Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth.” The ESV states: “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth”. John 17:17

Likewise, the Apostle Paul in Romans 12 talked about the renewing of our minds. When we put that together, we learn that God grows us in our holiness as we position ourselves in humility under His word. So, are you doing that? Are you digging deep in your devotions? Are you sitting under biblical preaching every chance you can? Are you discussing the Word of God with your brothers and sisters? That’s where growth in holiness happens.

We are holy. Positionally, and Progressively

What a blessing to be made holy and then being given the ability to continue to GROW in holiness, despite the pressures and temptations of this fallen world.” God preserves the positional and progressive emphasis be holy in a broken world! Next Paul wants us to see....

5. We are blameless

“...he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him” (Ephesians 1:4)

I think our series in Leviticus has really positioned us to appreciate the beauty of what Paul is saying here. The entire sacrificial system focused on bringing bulls, lambs, goats all without blemish. In the Book of Leviticus, the entire Holiness Code rested on a perfect picture of a perfect sacrifice begin prepared and presented at the perfect place in the perfect way.

if it is to be accepted for you it shall be a male ***without blemish***, of the bulls or the sheep or the goats. 20 You ***shall not offer anything that has a blemish, for it will not be acceptable for you.***
21 And when anyone offers a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering from the herd or from the flock, ***to be accepted it must be perfect; there shall be no blemish in it*** Leviticus 22:19-21

But NONE of these sacrifices cleanse the conscience of the Worshipper so that they did not carry the heavy burden of blemish and blame. But we have HOPE. We can be positionally free from blemish, shame, guilt and blameless:

¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, ¹⁴ **how much more** will the blood of Christ, who

through the eternal Spirit **offered himself without blemish to God**, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Hebrews 9:13-14

So we can live lives free from blame and accusation

God chose us not just to be able to stand before Him, holy but also, “blameless” -acceptable in His sight. , Paul states,

“22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order **to present you holy and blameless and above reproach** before him” Colossians 1:22

What a blessing to be free from Shame, guilt and accusation because ALL the accusation which we deserved fell on Christ. When we are sense the burden of being blamed, accused or ashamed. People then try to substitute this by hiding, avoiding and withdrawing. Also accusing, being judgement and critical. All of these are strategies in attempt to cover and conceal their shame and guilt. Hence, FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM and most of Social media becomes a fig leaf carefully crafts an image management and impression management we want the world to “admire”. We try to convey we are more than we actually are. Someone who is blameless is humble and teachable and willing to show both their dark side and what God has done in them and through them.

When our identity is in WHOSE we are with God, in Christ – we do not have to pretend.

1 John 1:8-2:2. A blameless person is not a sinless person. A blameless person will be open and honest about their wrong doing. They will accuse themselves and be honest about their wrong doing. But they will not try to cover their sin over their way. They will confess their sin to God who will forgive them. Remember this is HOLY AND Blameless – we cannot have the one without the other.

6. We are secure

Our Christ-like identity was secured by God’s Eternal decision to mark a boundary around us.

“..he predestined us for adoption...” (Ephesians 1:5a)

“Predestined” simply means Before the Foundation of the World had marked a boundary” around our lives. He decided BEFORE we were born that He wanted us to be His Sons and Daughters. This was accomplished by the death burial and resurrection of Christ.

When God set a boundary around our lives to be adopted, He secured EVERY aspect of our Salvation and Identity in Christ!

For those whom he **foreknew** he also predestined to be *conformed to the image of his Son*, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And **those** whom he **predestined** he also **called**, and those whom he called he also **justified**, and those whom he justified he also **glorified**” . Romans 8:29-30

God shaped us into the image of His son to be like Christ.

“Adopted” means to be placed as Son. In Ancient Romans times “adoption” does not carry the emotion and sentimentality it does in today’s day. In Ancient Rome, due to the high mortality rate of children, or

males were not born into the home, often wealthy people or Roman Senators would choose young men or young adult men, buying them from other families, and groom them so that their Family's name would carry on when they died. One of the most famous "adoptions" was Augustus who was adopted by Julius Caesar. (An nephew made an heir. Made a Son. Made a King.

Adam was to be God's First Son who would **representing His purposes, resembling His character and reflecting His Glory. Adam was to rule for God, protecting God's Word and World.** But He failed.

God then choice Israel as His First-Born son to represent Him, resemble His character. **But Israel failed as a son.**— God begged Israel as a loving Father:

*"Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God,
for you have stumbled because of your iniquity. Hosea 14:1*

Adam failed as God's son. Israel Failed. So, God sent His Son to purchase our adoption. God has entered into a new relationship with all People around the world. In Christ, God has "adopted" us to be His Children.

Who could faithfully represent a perfect, holy God? Who could faithfully resemble his character? Adam couldn't. Israel couldn't. But in Galatians 4:4-7 we read:

*"4 But **when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem** those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And **because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts**, crying, "Abba! Father!" 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God." Galatians 4:4-7*

Christ was the right Person, at the right time to pay the price for our sin -when it mattered the most so we could be adapted and placed as a Son or Daughter into an Eternal Relationship with a New Father! Look again with me at verses 7-12 from our passage for this morning.

7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. 11 [In him]we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, 12 so that we who were the first to hope [in Christ]might be to the praise of his glory Ephesians 1:7-12

Do you hear that, Christian? You have been adopted. You have been redeemed. You have been forgiven. You are God's Possession now. A hope now. A future now. You are SECURE. That's who you are in Christ. Those searching for Christ: You can be adopted. You can be redeemed. You can be forgiven. You can have an assurance of an inheritance and be God's Possession. You can be SECURE!

Adoption into a New Family with a New Father was free for us but it COST God His Son. Christ paid THE debt he did not owe and we owed THE debt we could not pay. We needed Jesus Christ to buy the debt of our sin. God made Him who had no sin to become sin for us so that we might stand righteous BEFORE God! v5 (2 Corinthians 5:21)

That's who you and Whose you are in Christ.

But perhaps you're here and you're wondering, "**Well how to I lay hold of that? How can I know that that's who I am? How did that identity become mine?**"

Why does this Matter? How did we receive this blessed identity?

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. (Ephesians 1:13-14)

There are 3 ways we received the blessing of an Identity in Christ:

1. We heard -

"when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation" Ephesians 1:13

"faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ". Romans 10:17

How do we know if we are chosen? How do we know we are redeemed? Are we genuinely listening. John 10:27-28 Jesus said

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand." John 10:27-28

When we are truly listening we will have a response just like in Acts 2:37

"Now when they heard this they **were cut to the heart**, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do? Acts 2:37

2. We believed

"and believed in him" Ephesians 1:13

When you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation demonstrated that the gospel is the source of their salvation. Paul stated in Romans 1:16 that he was not ashamed of the Gospel because it is

"the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. Romans 1:16

To be "in Christ" we have to believe "in Christ" as our LORD and Savior. Our faith is only as good as it's object. A jailer once asked the Apostle Paul and Silas

"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved..." Acts 16:30-31

We have a receptive heart and mind. We admit our sin. We ask Him to cleanse us. We Confess our sin.

3. We were sealed. ".... were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory". Ephesians 1:13-14

In ancient times a seal marked a

1. *Finished transaction.*

When important legal documents are processed, they are stamped with the official seal to signify the completion of the transaction. This sealing also implies ownership: God has put his seal on us because He has purchased us to be His own (1 Cor. 6:19–20). The Holy Spirit is a mark of a finished transaction of our identity in Christ.

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So Glorify God with your Body". 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Seal also was a

2. *mark and guarantee of ownership.*

The Holy Spirit is a guarantee that we are God's possession and that there is an inheritance waiting for us when we die. Therefore, we can live in the blessed benefit that we are in Christ. We are in a new identity.

A seal also was a mark of

3. *Authenticity and distinctiveness.*

Just as a signature on a letter attests to the genuineness of the document, so the presence of the Spirit proves the believer is genuine.

"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. 8:9)

It is not simply our lip profession, our religious activity, or our good works, but the witness of the Spirit that makes our profession authentic¹³.

So, whose and who are you? What will you do about it? This is the Word of the LORD

¹³ Adapted from Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 2, pp. 12–13). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.