

Bless God for Securing You
Ephesians 1:13-14
Reading : 1 Thessalonians 3:1-13

Bethany Baptist Church
April 9, 2017

...pray...

John MacArthur began his commentary on this morning's text by remarking that men require *assurances* from one another...

And so we *take solemn oaths*,

Swear out affidavits,

Post surety bonds,

Pore over the *fine print* on *guarantees*,

Buy *extended warrantees*...

In an *earlier day* a man temporarily *surrendered* his *cloak* when borrowed from his neighbor, a *bond* that might be his *only protection* against the *cold night*.

Now when it comes to God, perhaps most would agree that His *promises*, alone, should be *enough* to satisfy us...

... but God gives us *more*!

God *guarantees* His most important *promise* with His *seal* & with His *down payment*! But, *what exactly does that mean...?*

Let's open our NT to Eph 1:3-14 (focus on vv.13 & 14).

That's all just *one sentence* & it's a *long one*!

Let's call it Paul's "*Call to Worship*" song, as he opens his letter to the Ephesians.

You *can* organize it into **3**-stanzas:

#1 – The blessings by the *Father*. (3-6)

#2 – The blessings in the *Son* (7-12)

#3 – **The blessings thru the *Holy Spirit*. (this morning – vv.13-14)**

Every *stanza* ends with the phrase: ~ "*to the praise of the glory of [God.]*"

We've already examined *Stanza 1* – the blessings of *election* & *Stanza 2* – the blessings of *redemption*..

This morning we'll *drill down* on the *Stanza 3* – *the blessing of spiritual security*:

The *best blessings* you have are *sealed* by the *Holy Spirit*!

- 1. *When* the Holy Spirit is *given* to every Christian (v.13).**
- 2. *What* the Holy Spirit *does* for every Christian (vv.13 & 14).**
- 3. *Why* the Holy Spirit is *given* to every Christian (v.14).**

Paul praises *God* because *God* gives you the Holy Spirit the *instant* you trust in *Christ*!

1. In order to be *clear*, let's consider the question: *when* does every Christian receive the Holy Spirit...?
 - a. Paul's answer is, "*at salvation*." **Read v.13**
2. The apostle begins with a simple explanation of how a man or woman is saved:
 - a. *First*, he writes that there is a *message* that explains God's *plan of salvation*. Paul gives that message **two** related names: the *message of truth* & the *gospel* of your salvation.
 - i. *The message of truth*. The Bible's plan of salvation is *completely true* & it is the *only truth that saves*. It is the story of Jesus' *life & death & resurrection*, & Jesus said: "*I am the way the **truth** and the life, no one comes to the Father but by Me.*"
 - ii. *The Gospel of your salvation*. "*Gospel*" means "*good news*" It is *good news* because all men & women are born *estranged* from God, they live in *rebellion* towards God, and they need a *Savior*! The *good news* is that *Jesus saves*!
 - b. *Secondly*, Paul clearly implies that the *Gospel message* must be *preached* (communicated). *Jesus* preached the Gospel, the *apostles* preached the Gospel, the *first deacons* preached the Gospel (Stephen), the *early church* preached the gospel. And the pagan, idol worshiping *Ephesians* **heard** its promises!
 - c. But *preaching* is not enough: v.13 says you have to *hear* the Gospel when it's *preached*. You know, that's really not as *simple* as it sounds! Bible teacher **Howard Hendriksen** points out there are different ways to hear, and *not every kind of hearing* leads to *believing*:
 - i. Some hear the message it so often their hearing (hearts) become *calloused*. Like pouring warm *water* on a cold *rock*.

- ii. Some hear it like a *lovely song* but don't get its real *point & power*. Like being so caught up in the *sound track* you don't pay attention to the *story line*.
 - iii. Some hear but don't take the message *seriously*. They fail to grasp the serious reality of *death & the judgment* to come.
 - iv. I look out from *this pulpit* on some Sunday mornings and I see people who I must say *don't seem to hear...*
 - v. Jesus said to *be careful* how you hear. You are *responsible* to *turn* your ears to *hear* His story carefully.
- d. Paul also writes that *effective hearing* is accompanied by *believing*. Here is a *fundamental* gospel truth: the *good news* must be *believed* in order for you to be *saved*.
- i. Paul's Greek term can be translated with several English words related to *belief, faith, & trust*.
 - ii. I like idea of *trusting* because is so clear. I can *tell* you this chair will hold you up. You *tell* me you believe me, but that doesn't require *much* of you. *Trust* implies you will *set your bottom* in this chair & rest ***all*** *your weight* on *these four legs...*and then I know you *really believe* me!
- e. The gospel is *preached, heard, trusted...*and the *Holy Spirit* is given! (Spec., Paul says the *believer* is ***sealed*** – we'll explore that more carefully in a moment.)
- i. The best understanding of v.13's *grammar* is that *hearing & believing* the gospel & being *sealed* by God with the Holy Spirit *all happen at once!*
 - ii. Don't try to put *too fine a point* on the *order of events!*

The bottom line is, every Christian gets the Holy Spirit when you are saved.

But the apostle is concerned about more than *when* you receive the Spirit, the *blessing* is found in the Spirit's *benefits*!

1. At this point, let's *pause* in Paul's text and be *reminded* about *who* the Holy Spirit is:
 - a. First, don't forget that we are dividing the apostle's long sentence (3-14) into **three parts**: the *first* deals with God's blessing of *election*, the *second* with Jesus' blessing of *redemption*, & now this *third* part praises the Spirit's blessing of *sealing*. So the *Holy Spirit* is a part of the Trinity – the three persons of God: *Father, Son & Spirit*.
 - b. And Paul says He is the **Holy Spirit**. *Holy* means *pure*, but *holy* also means *set apart* or *unique*. *Uniqueness* is the emphasis here. Among other things, He is *unique* because the *Spirit* is *God* → *deity*!
 - c. **Finally**, you read (v.13b) He is the *Holy Spirit of promise*. In other words, this is the *same* Holy Spirit the OT prophets & then Jesus *promised* would come & live within the *apostles* (& *all* Christians), beginning at *Pentecost*, in fulfillment of the *New Covenant*.
2. So back to **Eph 1**: (13.b) ...*you were sealed in Him* (→in Christ) *with the Holy Spirit of promise who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession...*
3. Paul highlights **two benefits** of the Holy Spirit in the life of every believer: the Spirit *seals* & He serves as a *down payment*.
 - a. Again, v.13: *you were sealed* [in Christ] *with the Holy Spirit*. This is Paul's *main point* is today's text! One of God's *big ticket blessings* on every Christian is *sealing them with the Holy Spirit*. (PAUSE)
 - i. The Gr verb translated "*sealed*" has **4** related but distinct thoughts: *security, authenticity, ownership, & authority*.
 - ii. *Security* – King *Darius* threw *Daniel* in the *lions' den* & *sealed* the opening so no one would *free* him. God *seals* you in Christ by His *Spirit* and no one dares *tamper* w/your *relationship* to Christ.

- iii. *Authenticity* – The king’s *seal* says this is a *real royal decree*. A *notary’s imprint* says this is an *authenticated document*. God is both *Father & notary* & the Spirit serves as His *seal*, & the Spirit *certifies* that you are a genuine child of God!
 - iv. *Ownership* – Like a *royal signet ring* impressed into *hot wax* that *seals* the King’s *dispatch* and says this *document* is from the King. The Holy Spirit signals that *you belong to the King*.
 - v. *Authority* – Every Christian is a *representative* of God; we operate under His *authority* (e.g. Great Commission’s *mandate* to *preach* this gospel). The Spirit reminds us of Who we represent.
4. Do you know what *earnest money* is (*pause*)? It is a *down payment* on the *full price*. It is a *guarantee* that the *full price is coming*. Paul says the *Holy Spirit* is also your *down payment* on your *full inheritance* as child of the King!
- a. **V.5** – Paul blessed God for *predestinating* each believer to be *adopted* into God’s family. Which leads to...
 - b. **V.11** – As members of God’s family you have an *inheritance* coming.
 - c. Now, **v.14** – the Holy Spirit, living in you, is your *down payment* on your *future full inheritance*. He *assures* you that your *heavenly reward* is safe! In fact, He is a *foretaste* of your *heavenly inheritance*.
5. Of course, the **NT** teaches that the Holy Spirit does *much more* for God’s children:
- a. He is your (more slowly): *helper* (spiritual strength), *advocate* (accused), *protector* (attacked), *encourager* (faint), *equipper* (spiritual fruit), *gift giver* (serve church), *comforter* (sorrow & loss), *guide* (narrow way), *assurer* (“Abba, Father!”)...and we can *grow* that list!
 - b. But Paul *caps* all the blessings of the Spirit w/ the **two**: God uses His Spirit to *seal* you in Christ (security, ownership, authenticity, authority) & God provides the Spirit as a *down payment* on your *eternal inheritance*! As *good* as it is to *walk by the Spirit* in this life, there is *more to come*! Both blessings (*sealing, pledging*) are experienced because the Holy Spirit now lives in you, never to leave.

What a *blessing*, Paul concludes! We are *blessed* by God's *gift* of the Holy Spirit!

1. Which brings us to the apostle's 3rd & concluding stanza marker: *to the praise of His glory!* We've seen this already in **vv. 7 & 12**; it ends each section of this *long & lovely* sentence: *to the praise of God's glory.*
2. So we *receive* the Holy Spirit & God *receives* the glory – your *praise.*
3. “*God's glory*” is a way of *summing up & thinking about* all God *is* & all He's *done.* Here is what God has done in this morning's verses:
 - a. By the *Holy Spirit*, God has *guaranteed* that every one of His *children* (all who *trust Christ*) will be *arrive safely* at the *gates of Paradise.*
 - b. And when you *arrive*, your *inheritance*, as God's son/daughter, will be there *waiting* for you.
 - c. *Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!*
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

*This is my story, this is my song,
 Praising my Savior all the day long;
 This is my story, this is my song,
 Praising my Savior all the day long.*

Beloved, you have the *Holy Spirit*, to the *praise* of the *glory* of His *grace!*

There are, perhaps, *uncountable blessing* for every Christian.

In *this* life...certainly in the *life to come!*

Yet Paul has dared to *identify* a few to *top his list* at the *beginning* of his *letter*:

First (vv.3-6) *God's blessing of Election*. In *eternity past* – *before the foundation of the world* – the Father *lovingly chose* you to *adopt you* into His *royal family*. Not because you *deserved* it, but because it *pleased* His *kind intentions*.

Second, the blessing (vv.7-12) of *Redemption*. On the cross, *Jesus ransomed* us from our *enslavement to sin*. He *shed His blood* to *pay* for His people's sins & *purchase* our *forgiveness*.

And one day, the *sacrificed Lamb* will be the *exalted King*, & *every knee will bow* & *every tongue confess* that *Jesus Christ is Lord* to the *glory of God the Father*.

Finally, (vv.13&14), the blessing of the *Holy Spirit*. He lives in you to *seal you*. Y Christian, you are *safely & securely* in Christ! Your *heavenly inheritance* is *safe!*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

...pray...

Here is the *gospel*; please *hear* it carefully...:

...because you are a *sinner* & God is a holy yet loving, He sent His Son to *die* on the cross to *pay* for His people's sins.

...and then Jesus taken down from the cross & *buried* in a borrowed grave.

But on the 3rd day, God raised Jesus' to *life*, just as He *promised!*

Multiplied *hundreds* then witnessed the *resurrected* Son of God over a period of almost 6 *weeks* following His resurrection! ...

There! You've heard the *message of truth!* Have you *believed...?* Will you *trust* that Jesus' *death* is *true...&* that it is *enough?*

If so, may I speak w/ you about your *new life* in Christ?