

EPHESIANS 1:13b-14
The Wonderful Work of Salvation
Message 23, August 29, 1999

INTRO: In our last message we saw that in Christ we are given a hope that is sure and steadfast. We saw that we were given this hope through the Word of truth. Truth is that which corresponds to reality. This word of truth which gives us hope is contained in the Gospel of our salvation. In this Gospel we have believed and through that, we have received salvation rich and free.

We have already seen a number of blessings which we have because we have believed in Christ. This morning we want to look at the last but not least blessing which became ours the moment we trusted Christ. We find this in 13b-14. We will consider several very important terms: sealing, guarantee, inheritance, redemption and praise. After the message, when we have talked about praise I want to give you opportunity to share anything the Lord is doing in your life.

So we want to look at the fact that:

i. God has sealed us with the HS in Christ (1:13b-14)

- the sealing of the believer

"...in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise..."

Seals of all kinds were used throughout Bible times. Numerous seals have been found with the names of OT people on them. Seals were made of hard substances and generally were small and oblong. The most common seal was placed on a finger ring. When it was necessary to seal something they would put soft clay or wax on it and then take off their ring and impress the seal on it. After the clay or wax hardened you could not tamper with it without messing up the seal. The seal identified the owner. Let us say the seal was placed on a book. In order to open the book the seal would have to be broken. (Read Revelation 5:1-5.)

It is generally agreed that seals have three main purposes. First, it conveys authority. When you borrow money from the bank you make an agreement with them. When the agreement is completed and the terms are set

then the documents are signed. After the documents are signed they are sealed with the bank's seal. If a certain agreement should come under question the bank would look to see if the agreement had been sealed. If it has been sealed it is authoritative.

For those of you reading the series on the tribulation time you will be interested to know that this word *sealed* is the same as the sealing that takes place in the foreheads of God's saints in the tribulation. This seal is the authoritative mark of God and says that these people belong to Him. Interestingly, the authors of this series picture this seal as visible to other Christians but invisible to non-Christians. That is speculation but it may be so.

But let me tell you something else. If you are a true believer in Jesus Christ you too have been marked or sealed. The seal is this: the Holy Spirit of promise. Those who are truly Christians have received the Holy Spirit.

Second, a seal is a mark of ownership. In 2 Timothy 2 Paul speaks of those who are false teachers. Then in verse 19 Paul says that the foundation of God stands, because it has a twofold seal. First, "The Lord knows those who are His..." And second, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Now how does the Lord know who are His? Well, Romans 8:9 says the Christian is not in the flesh but in the Spirit if he is a Christian and if any person does not have the Spirit of Christ, that person does not belong to God. How does God know who His people are? They have the seal of the Holy Spirit! The second part of the seal of the foundation of God is, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Now how does one depart from sin? By the Holy Spirit! So Paul says we were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. That means I belong to God. It is the seal of ownership.

Third, the seal of God gives security or safety. Look at this use of a seal in Matthew 27:62-66. When we send a letter we seal it. That makes the contents secure or safe from tampering. If it is tampered with you can see it.

So the reception of the Holy Spirit means that by God's authority, I am His and I am safe in Christ. Now let me answer an oft debated question: When is a person sealed with the Holy Spirit? Well, our text answers that question. It is when a person has believed. Now there are two opinions here. Some say it is right after you believe. Others say an indefinite amount of time may pass between believing and receiving the seal. I am of the conviction that the moment a person truly believes, that moment he is sealed with the Holy Spirit.

Now note that the Holy Spirit here is specifically called the Spirit of promise. There are many names for the Holy Spirit but here He is called the Holy Spirit of promise. Well, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit had been promised way back in the OT. When the Holy Spirit was poured out in Acts 2 some claimed that these people were drunk but the Apostle Peter quoted the prophet Joel of the OT to prove this was nothing but the promise of the Holy Spirit as given in the OT (Acts 2:16-18). See Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:33.

- the inheritance, "...who is the guarantee of our inheritance..."

We have mentioned earlier that God has an inheritance in the Christian but in this text we find that the Christian has an inheritance in God. The inheritance is ours but we do not yet have it in possession. But that raises a question: What is the believer's inheritance?

Mt. 5:5 meek shall inherit the earth

Mat. 19:29 eternal life

Mat. 25:34 kingdom of God (Neg. 1 Cor. 6:9 and others)

Rev. 21:7 shall inherit all things

1 Pet. 1:4 tells describes our inheritance. It is incorruptible, undefiled, does not fade away and it is reserved in heaven for you

Now let me show you something beautiful about the believer's inheritance. In the earthly inheritance as we know it, the person who dies leaves the inheritance behind and others receive it. But in the heavenly inheritance, the one who dies receives the

inheritance. Isn't that wonderful? I like that a lot better don't you?

- the guarantee, "... who is the guarantee of our inheritance..."

What assurance or guarantee does God give that you and I will receive what He has promised? He gives us the Holy Spirit as a down payment or guarantee. Let us say you want to buy a new pickup truck. But you do not have enough money. So you go to the bank and say, "I would like to borrow \$25,000.00 to buy a new pickup truck." The bank is going to want assurance that you will actually buy the truck. The assurance they want is a down payment. So they might say, "We will loan you \$25,000.00 dollars if you have a \$5000.00 down payment." If you give them \$5000.00 they are assured that you will pay the rest and in that confidence they loan you the \$25,000.00.

So, what assurance or guarantee does God give that you and I will receive what He has promised? He gives to us the Holy Spirit. If you have the Holy Spirit, you know that the whole inheritance will someday be yours. The Holy Spirit is the guarantee or down payment.

The Greek word for guarantee is *arrabon*. Vines Dictionary says that in modern Greek an engagement ring is an *arrabona*. It is a guarantee of marriage. When a young man starts to see a young lady you wonder, "Will he marry her or no?" And so they see each other for some time. And then one day you hear that the young lady has received an engagement ring. Now you no longer wonder if they will get married. Rather, you wonder when they will get married. You see, she has an *arrabona*; a guarantee.

- until the redemption

Now we come to another matter. In Ephesians 1:7 we found that in Christ we have redemption through the blood of Christ. Then in verse 14 we find that the guarantee of our redemption is until the redemption of the possession. If we have already been redeemed, is the guarantee still valid? You will remember that we saw that man is a being of three parts; body, soul and spirit. We have also seen that the soul and spirit are

the inner man. The body is the outer man. The inner man was born again and has been redeemed but the outer man, the body, has not yet been redeemed. Redemption is not complete and final until you and I receive our new bodies (Read Romans 8:18-23). It is this final redemption that is in view here (Read Luke 21:24-28). When this redemption takes place, then you and I will receive brand new bodies! It will take place in a split second of time.

There is a difficulty translating the little preposition just before the word redemption. The question is should it be translated *unto* or *until*? Basically it comes out to the same thing and many translators translate it *until*. So how long is this guarantee good for? It is good until the redemption of the possession. By the way, the word *purchased* is not in the original text.

- the purchased possession

When an arrabon or down payment is given on a purchase and the deal is signed and sealed, that guarantees that when the bargain is fulfilled the whole thing belongs to the one who made the down payment. In our text it is God who gives the arrabon or down payment or pledge. The Holy Spirit of promise is the down payment. The believer is the possession. But God does not have every part of us in His possession until we have been entirely redeemed; body, soul and spirit. Look at 1 Cor. 15:50. Paul says, "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption." You see, this body of flesh must go. We will never see heaven in this body. So when Paul speaks of redemption in this verse he is referring to that final redemption when the body is changed into a body suitable for heaven.

- to the praise of His glory

This brings us to consider the last phrase in this text, "...to the praise of His glory." The word praise occurs three times in Ephesians and each time it is connected with the glory of God (1:6, 12, 14). When you trace this word praise, *epainos*, down to its root it means a story. It came to mean praise which is when

you have something good to tell about someone. John Calvin says it signifies "to make known" (Vol. XXI:210). Sometimes another person does something good for you and you cannot keep yourself from telling others about it. That is praise. It is a good story about another.

My wife and I went salmon fishing one time. We did not know what kind of equipment we needed and took our trout and char rods and went salmon fishing. Well, I'm surprised we were not laughed right off the shore. Well, I'll tell you I worked my arms off trying to fish with the rods we had. My wife's rod was lighter and worked a little better. Whenever she was tired of fishing I used her rod. Well, here we were standing elbow to elbow and I would cast as far as I could and I couldn't even cast half as far as the rest. Well, there are some unwritten fishing rules. If you break those you get in trouble. So when you hook a fish you yell, "Fish on." And everybody quickly reels their lines in because the fish will take your line all over and if you get tangled with someone else's line, it is almost certain that you will lose your lure, some of your line and the fish.

Well, I had fished for hours. My arms were tired and all of a sudden I tied into what was the biggest salmon of the day. I had never experienced anything like this in my life. Well, I obeyed the rules and I yelled, "Fish on." Well, the line was light and the rod was light and I could not pull this fish in. I would get it close to shore and it would pull my line out. And after a while, those other fishermen got tired of this guy with the poor equipment who would not get out of the water. I knew they were anxious to fish and I was doing my best. But I didn't want to lose my fish either. Finally a few fisherman got tired and they headed for the water to fish. I was very excited and I didn't have the nerve to tell them to get out of the water but I was afraid I would tangle with them.

Well, in the crowd of fisherman was an older man. He was patiently watching this inexperienced guy with the poor equipment. When he saw these other guys casting their lines in the water he said, "OK guys. Lines out of the water. You wait until this fish is landed." And

by and by and with great care, I landed a fourteen pound coho salmon. When I had the fish in, this older fisherman calmly walked back into the water and began fishing. And I have often told this story, this story of the good character of another fisherman.

Now I'll tell you something about a good story that means a lot to you. You never tire of telling others. Is it not fitting that this first section which speaks of the blessed source of our salvation should end with these words, "...to the praise of His glory." The praise of God's glory is any story that reveals to others the goodness of God.

Some people say, "Praise the Lord, Oh praise the Lord" and then they think they have praised the Lord. But praising the Lord is saying some good thing about Him.

CONCL: Ephesians 1:3, the beginning of this very long sentence, began with these words, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." In your bulletins this morning you received a sheet of paper giving a number of these blessings as found in 1:3-14. On this sheet you will find these blessings given first in verse order in which they occur and then I have given them in the chronological order in which they occur as I understand it. I have given the last one as ever existing to the praise of His glory. But we exist to the praise of His glory right here and now as well. When we understand that once we were Gentiles without hope and without God in the world and now we have this wealth of the blessings of God, surely we will have some story to tell others. This morning I want to give you an opportunity to praise the Lord. It is fitting that we close this wonderful theological section on the God of salvation in praise to Him by telling others what He is doing in our lives.