

Sermon Title: Your Inheritance Is Guaranteed
Scripture Text: Eph. 1:11-14 (Ephesians #6)

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 6-6-21

We are continuing in Ephesians this morning, as we come to Chapter 1, Verse 11.

You've heard the hassles that go on in our world over inheritances. You have to determine who are the rightful heirs, and there is the issue of paying the taxes, and all the arguments that can come up over who gets what—especially if somebody doesn't have a will. Then there's a resentment about what one receives compared to what another receives. And then there are the whimsical changes that can be made by dying people who get sideways with somebody. There are the legal technicalities, and a *whole bunch* of factors that can foul up an inheritance and greatly diminish its value.

Well, I have good news for you: You have an inheritance in Christ, and it is absolutely guaranteed—and *no one* can take anything away from it (Jn. 10:28-29; 17:24; 2 Tim. 4:18; Jd. 1, 24). It is secured by the power and the integrity of God Himself, and it includes a dramatic and powerful down payment that we will see this morning.

Remember, this first main paragraph of Ephesians is Chapter 1, Verses 3 through 14; and in the original Greek, that's one 202-word-long sentence—it's just *utterly impossible* to make sense out of it in English. I'm going to drag out my own translation of it that I made one time; I *think* I did it and made it all one sentence, but I had to go to the store and buy more semicolons and some commas and some parentheses to make it all happen. The best rendering, I think, is in our version, the New American Standard Bible.

You've seen the breakdown of this passage: Verses 4 through 6 deal with Election—that goes all the way back to eternity past (2 Tim. 1:9); that emphasizes God the Father. Verses 7 through 10 deal with Redemption—that is done in the past, but it is how we are standing in Christ now; we are redeemed, and that emphasizes the Son (Col. 1:13-14). And then Verses 11 through 14, our venue for this morning, deal with our Inheritance—which is in the future (1 Pet. 1:4), and you're going to see how marvelously this is connected to the Holy Spirit.

So, *what have* we inherited in Christ? We don't *have* all the inheritance yet, but it's a done deal. Understand: You have inherited righteousness—you're declared righteous in Christ (Phil. 3:9); sanctification—holiness, and ever-growing in holiness (2 Cor. 3:18); you have "peace with God" (Rom. 5:1); you have the power of God through His work in you (Phil. 4:13). You have "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22). You get suffering, *and* the strength to endure it (2 Cor. 1:5). You "inherit the kingdom" (Matt. 25:34; cf. Heb. 12:28). You have access to the throne of God in prayer (Eph. 2:18; 3:12; Heb. 4:16). And, oh...*several dozen* other things; feel free to keep a log of them as you read through the New Testament, and especially the New Testament epistles (see Ps. 103:2).

Now, let's see how Paul describes our inheritance. I know this is going to be kind of out of character, but *four whole verses* this morning as we look at the final section of this, on our inheritance. You're going to see The Benefactor, The Basis Of The Inheritance, The Purpose Of The Inheritance, The Requirement Of The Heirs, The Guarantee, and The Substance Of The Inheritance. And just watch this flow together.

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First, The Benefactor. Now remember, this is all one Greek sentence, but this section of it is absolutely marvelous. In light of what we have in the punctuation of all of this, we really need to back up and catch what, in your Bibles, is probably the last two words of Verse 10; that's where we're going to start, and we'll read that along with Verse 11. Pick it up at "In Him" at the end of Verse 10—"In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will" (NASB-1995; and throughout, unless otherwise noted).

We know the "Him" refers to Christ. It is for all who are *in* Christ. And remember, that phrase occurs 27 times in the Book of Ephesians; that's the theme of the book: we are "in Christ," and here are the riches that we have "in Christ." But it is the Father who *gives* the inheritance, and all that is Christ's is ours (cf. Jn. 17:26); we are "fellow heirs" with Him—we'll show you that in a minute.

Notice, it says: "In Him also." What's the connection of "also"? In addition to the Redemption that we studied last time, in addition to the Election that we saw a couple weeks ago—in addition to that, we have "also...obtained an inheritance."

Our Benefactor is God the Father: He chose us (2 Thess. 2:13), He sent His Son to redeem us (1 Jn. 4:10), and He gives us the great "riches" (Rom. 9:23; cf. Lk. 12:32)—both now and forever—"in Christ." So it's what the Father has given to us "in Christ."

I said I would refer to this—here it is: Romans 8:16 and 17—"The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God"—we've seen our Adoption; we were "predestined" to "adoption," as we was earlier in this masterful sentence (Eph. 1:5; cf. Gal. 4:5)—"we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him." Not only our inheritance, but we share in what the Father gives to the Son (Jn. 17:13, 22; 2 Thess. 2:14). So The Benefactor is the Father.

Now let's look at The Basis Of Our Inheritance: "In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will." What is The Basis Of Our Inheritance? God chose it for us: "having been predestined."

And this is one of those things where the verb tense means a lot; it's very significant, whether or not you can get goosebumps over discovering an aorist participle connected to the verb "obtained an inheritance," but the significance is: The choice of the heirs was determined by the predestination.

"Predestine" is that same word we met back in Verse 5; it means "to mark off beforehand." And if you look carefully at what is said here, this is *absolutely thrilling!* Who did the planning? Well, it is the One who, according to Verse 11 there, "works all things after the counsel of His will." *He is the One* who chose that we would be adopted as His children! (Col. 3:12; Titus 1:1)

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Look at three words here that are a very interesting combination: The word "will" refers to God's sovereign volition; it's His choice. Right next to that is the word "counsel." This is the noun form, with "s-e-l," not "council" with a "c-i-l," which is a group that has a meeting. "Counsel" is the plan that flows from the will of God. So it's *by* His choice; it *is* His plan. And "purpose" means "the design or the shape" of the plan. In other words: God causes all things to turn out exactly according to the design that is according to the plans of His will (cf. Is. 46:10; 55:11). God is in charge of this whole thing! (Ps. 103:19)

And if you'll notice the word "works"—as in, the One who "works all things after the counsel of His will"—that's a translation of the Greek word which gets transliterated into English as the noun "energy" or the verb "energize." This is a *great statement!* God always energizes what He plans with divine energy! *That's* the basis of our confidence: It's *God's work*, from beginning to end (Phil. 1:6; cf. Rom. 8:29-30).

If you have plans—and you ought to have plans—but there aren't resources to fulfill your plans, or the power to execute your plans, then either your plans are not God's plans, or at least this isn't God's timing for your plans, because here it the promise that God always energizes everything that is according to His plan (Lam. 3:37). If you grasp that, it will help you to not get stuck on the treadmill of trying to pursue carnal efforts. God will do His plan (Prov. 19:21; cf. Ps. 135:6). Learn all you can about His plan, and then *go in the direction* in which He is unfolding His plan. As to our "inheritance," it will be worked out by "the power of God" (1 Pet. 1:4-5).

The Benefactor; The Basis Of The Inheritance; now: The Purpose Of The Inheritance. Why does God want us to have this relationship, which includes this fantastic inheritance? Look at Verse 12—"to the end"—that means: "here is why I'm doing this"—"to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory." You'll understand the purpose of your inheritance if you just take the beginning and the end of that verse: "to the end" of "the praise of His glory." This is *all* initiated by God, it's *all* worked out by God, it's *all* brought to its conclusion by God—so God gets the glory.

The little phrase "first to hope in Christ" is actually an interesting little tidbit to try to figure out here. "First to hope" is the best we can do in an English translation of one Greek word; and it seems to imply: "Well, maybe the first ones in the gate got something extra"—and that's not the case of it at all (cf. Matt. 20:9-10, 16). The meaning of the word is more like "pre-hoped," as if we "pre-hoped in Christ" *prior* to His coming again when we get our inheritance poured out for us, and God's glory is put on full display. It's referring to all who have "hoped in Christ" before the Second Coming—"pre-hoped" in Him before the fulfillment of it all (Phil. 3:20; 1 Thess. 1:10; 1 Pet. 1:13).

Now, it *is true* that you could take "the first to hope in Christ" to refer to the Apostles—Paul says "we who were the first to hope," but he seems to be including the Ephesians. You could take that to be the Apostles, though, and the other first-generation Jewish believers; they *were* first onboard to be in Christ. But the text goes on to explain that *all* who have believed share in *all* of the blessings. So the sense of it is: "We who hoped in Christ before He comes again—we get all the blessings."

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Now, that points you to that word "hope"—*great* theological word in the New Testament! It is that word that means: "a favorable, confident expectation" (see Ps. 71:5; Heb. 3:6). It's not tail-biting; it's not, "Gee, I *hope* this works out." This is your *trust* that God will accomplish everything for His glory, according to His plan (Phil. 1:6).

And again, the tense of the verb is significant. I know you also don't get goosebumps about a "perfect" tense, but this is a perfect tense—which in Greek means that it has been accomplished in the past, and the results are in full force now, from then on—it's a done deal. We have hope; we've placed our hope in Him, we stand in hope, we look forward to the fulfillment of hope—always continuously abiding in hope, if you will (Heb. 6:19; cf. Acts 24:15; Rom. 5:2; 8:24-25; 15:4, 13; 2 Thess. 2:16; Titus 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:3).

Christian hope and Christian faith is not something that just *happens* at a point in time (Jn. 5:24). I always say, it's not that you once believed; it's that you *became a believer*—you entered into a life of faith (see 2 Cor. 1:10; Col. 1:23; Heb. 11:1 Rev. 14:12). Faith is not merely a moment, it is a life pattern (2 Cor. 5:7; cf. Lk. 22:32; 1 Jn. 3:14).

I had somebody ask me this week—and then I was listening to a podcast, and somebody had asked the same question there—"I don't know the moment that I came to faith in Christ!" Well, you know, *I do*—I happen to know, because I had never heard the Gospel; I heard the Gospel and I repented and I believed. But if you *grew up* hearing that—well, was it when you said yes in Sunday School when you were 4, or was it when you said yes at Vacation Bible School when you were 8, or was it when you got caught doing something naughty when you were 14, or was it when you were actually 18? If you've heard the Gospel the whole time, it can be difficult to know.

But you know what? The answer to that question is: *It doesn't matter!* It *really* doesn't matter! The point is: *Right now*, are you trusting in Christ alone, are you standing on faith alone, in the grace of God alone, for His glory alone, on the authority of Scripture alone? It's what you're doing right now—*that's what matters!*

And it can get really fuzzy, on that front end of it. For me, it was a *dramatic thing*, but you know what? I was still *pretty good* at sinning! And I found out, the whole difference between me and the other people that I went to college with is: They would do something with both feet, all the way in, in the deep end; I would stick my toe in the waters, and I would come out feeling ten times worse than they did—because *I* was convicted of my sin (cf. 1 Sam. 24:5; 2 Sam. 24:10; Ezek. 6:9). And then I would think, "Oh, no! Would I really have done that if I know the Lord?" But see, when you know the Lord, you *love* the Lord and you *hate* your sin (Prov. 8:13; Rom. 7:21-25).

How are you doing *today*? The life of faith is where you stand today. You don't come in and out of it (Heb. 3:6, 14; 1 Jn. 2:19). You enter in; and once you're in, you're sealed—I'll show you that in a few minutes. But understand: To "hope in Christ" is to fix your abiding trust in Him (Ps. 26:1; 39:7; 71:5, 14; 1 Tim. 4:10; 5:5; 1 Jn. 3:3), and that's how you come to be "in Christ" (see 1 Thess. 1:3; Heb. 10:23).

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You've seen The Benefactor, The Basis Of The Inheritance, you've seen The Purpose Of The Inheritance. Now, what is The Requirement Of The Heirs? Who is qualified to receive this inheritance? The answer is in Verse 13—"In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise." The key word there is "believed." The ones who are "qualified" to receive "the inheritance" (Col. 1:12) are those who "believe" (Jn. 1:12)—those who have faith.

And into this verse is woven a great definition of what saving faith is. Notice the phrase: "after listening." "After listening" implies: "hearing with comprehension"—perceiving, understanding (Col. 1:6). It's a verb form that means you listened and understood, and that leads to your faith—it precedes the faith (Rom. 10:14).

Then comes "the message of truth." That's parallel with "the gospel of your salvation"; it is the message of the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ, "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to" many—look at First Corinthians Chapter 15 and you'll get that (vss. 3-8).

And then, "having also believed" completes the definition (cf. Heb. 4:2). "Believe" is a translation of that word—the noun form is "faith"; the verb is *pisteuō*—which comes from a root that means: "to bind yourself to something."

So, they heard "the message" and "believed"—three ingredients of saving faith, if you will. You have to have the correct message; you have to have an accurate *understanding* of the correct message; and you have to have a commitment. Romans 10:9 says that for a person to be saved, he or she must make the declaration, with their mouth and with their life, that "Jesus" is "Lord." In other words: you bind yourself to Him; it's binding yourself in obedience to the Lord (1 Pet. 1:2; cf. Ps. 119:106; Acts 11:23; Heb. 5:9; 1 Jn. 2:3-5).

I remember, almost 50 years ago, a friend of mine; he is with the Lord now. He was in the leadership of the Los Angeles Police Department when bulletproof vests were invented; and he used that to illustrate genuine faith. He described how they were presented to the officers, and they had videos and they had these samples you could touch and feel and look at; you could see how they would fasten around you, and all of that. And they had the videos that showed, in slow motion, what happens to the bullet when it hits the bulletproof vest, and then the vest would be taken off, and the bullet was embedded in it, and the person can walk away—at least live. And they had these elaborate demonstrations, and then—after they were all convinced it was so cool that something like that could thwart a lethal attack—then they had a problem. Putting those things on when it's 90 degrees outside—that wasn't comfortable! Wearing those things around under your uniform—you might have to get a bigger uniform to be able to wear it underneath, and that took time and that was trouble and that was uncomfortable. But, you know what? *You can't say*, when the bad guy fires the gun, "Hold on, let me go get my vest!" You have to *hear* the message of what will save your life, *understand it*, and *put your faith in it!* You have to *commit* to it! You have to *put that thing on!*

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When we get further into Ephesians, we're going to see things you have to put off and things you have to put on, in practice (4:22-24; cf. Col. 3:5, 8-10). Well, at the *core* of that is: Put on faith. And you have to *commit* to putting it on *all the time*! We're going to see how he tells us to "put on" the "armor of God" (6:11)—you have to do that *every day* (Lk. 9:23. Cf. Prov. 23:17). Yeah, there will be some discomfort. Some people *will hate you*! By the way, some of them may shoot "fiery darts" at you (Eph. 6:16, NKJV)—like, maybe not *bullets*, but things designed to take you down (e.g., Matt. 5:11).

So, you've seen The Benefactor, you've seen The Basis Of The Inheritance, The Purpose Of The Inheritance, The Requirement Of The Heirs—which is faith. Now, here comes what I think is the best part of this section. *It's all great*, but this part just makes me smile all over: Ephesians 1, the end of Verse 13 and the beginning of Verse 14—"having also believed"—that's the requirement to be an heir—"you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance."

This is great! "Sealed" is the verb form of a word that means: "the signet ring" which would be worn by a powerful person, a person in authority (Dan. 6:17). The signet ring would have a reverse image of something in it, and you could take that ring—Joseph was given the "signet ring" of Pharaoh (Gen. 41:42)—and you would melt some wax onto a document, and then you could press the ring into it to make the impression, and it would have a lot of significance—at least four ways that the idea of that seal was significant:

Number 1—It attests to the genuine character of something, and its authority. Esther Chapter 3 and Esther Chapter 8 both have examples of that evidence of a seal.

Number 2—It also signifies a finished transaction. Jeremiah 32:9 and 10 uses it that way. The seal signified that the transaction of buying a field was completed, so it's a done deal.

Number 3—It is a mark of ownership. It's used that way in 2 Timothy 2:19 (cf. Gen. 38:25; Hag. 2:23).

And then, Number 4—A seal is a protection mark against tampering or harm. In other words: it's a guarantee of security, and that meaning is used several times in both the Old and the New Testament (e.g., Dan. 6:17; Matt. 27:66). We sang about it this morning! "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?" (Rev. 5:2). It was sealed at seven intervals along the way, sealed by the authority of God—you *had to have God's authority* to be able to open that, and only the "Lamb" that was "slain" (Rev. 5:6) has that authority (cf. Matt. 28:18).

So, if you put your faith in Jesus Christ as Lord of your life, you have from God a "sealed" inheritance, and the seal is the "Holy Spirit" who lives in you (cf. 2 Cor. 1:22). So, if you take all those levels of significance of the seal—the Holy Spirit—it means that you are "genuine"—Romans 8; it means that your salvation is a "finished transaction"—Hebrews 10; it means that you "belong to God"—First Corinthians 6:19-20, that we looked at last time, or Second Timothy 2:19; and you are protected forever in the security of your relationship—we'll see that when we get to Ephesians Chapter 4, Verse 30 (cf. Jn. 6:37b).

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Let me show you a parallel passage that describes almost all the things that we've been seeing in Ephesians 1:3-14. It's over in Romans Chapter 8—a *pivotal* chapter in the New Testament, defining what it means to be "in Christ." Paul gets down to the end of that, and he says this: "For those whom He foreknew"—we've already met "foreknowledge" in Ephesians, right? "Those whom He foreknew, He also predestined"—we've met predestination in Ephesians Chapter 1—"Those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified" (vss. 29-30).

Do you understand: No one gets lost at *any point* in that sequence! *Every single one* that He predestines, He calls effectually to come to the Son (cf. Jn. 6:37, 44; Acts 13:48; 16:14). *Every single one* that He calls is "justified," and *every single one* that He justified is "glorified." And notice: they're all past-tenses. Now, how many of you are glorified? I'm not! That's a literary device where you use a past tense because it is so certain, even though it's in the future; it's certain because it is guaranteed by God (Jn. 6:39; Phil. 1:6). He's the One whose will is being played out in history.

And notice what the Holy Spirit is called in this section, back in Ephesians 1: "Having also believed, you were sealed in Him with *the Holy Spirit of promise*, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance" (vss. 14-15). He is called "the Holy Spirit of *promise*." This is a reflection of the many promises that Jesus gave that the Holy Spirit would come—John Chapter 14, John 15, John 16, Acts 1, Acts 2—He is the Holy Spirit who was promised, but He is also the Holy Spirit who *guarantees* the promise of God (Rom. 8:26; 1 Jn. 4:4).

Oh, and by the way: Do you know what the name of the Holy Spirit is? The *Holy Spirit*. His first name is "Holy"—kind of, you might say that. In other words, He is the source of holiness for believers (Ezek. 36:27; cf. Deut. 30:6). If you think you can't live a holy life, well, *you're right!* You can't. But you have *in you* "the Spirit of holiness" (Rom. 1:4), who is also "the Spirit of promise." Only the Holy Spirit can enable you to live the life that God wants you to live, and *He* is the one who *empowers you* to make the right choices to be holy (Phil. 2:13). File that thought for Ephesians Chapter 3, Ephesians Chapter 4—we're going to see that thought over and over again.

But here's a summary, in Galatians Chapter 5, Verse 16, where Paul says: "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh" (cf. Eph. 5:18). That's the context where he says "the flesh" and "the Spirit"—"these are in opposition to one another" (vs. 17); that's why there is such a battle (Rom. 7:19).

In a lot of preaching these days, it would make you think that He really is the "Jolly Spirit," or that everything in Christ is all fun and joy and health and wealth and happiness and success—and that is approximately, exactly *wrong!* (see Jn. 16:33; cf. Ps. 34:19; Acts 14:22; Rom. 8:17). It's not a thing about *this world*—your inheritance is in *the next world!* Now, we just read from Proverbs about how much better it is to live righteously than unrighteously; yes, there is wisdom you can apply that *will* make your life in this world better, but don't make the mistake—this is *not* it! (1 Cor. 15:19; Heb. 11:16)

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As I've said many times: No one who understands the Gospel could ever write a book for Christians and call it: "Your Best Life Now." That is a *bald-faced lie*! You can't say *that* unless you're *going to hell*! (Ps. 17:14; Lk. 16:25) Your "best life" is—*oh, my word*—it is *with God*, in the presence of the Lord! (Ps. 16:11; Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17; Phil. 1:23) It's in the "new heaven" and the "new earth" (Rev. 21:1-4).

So you can "walk by the Spirit" and you *will* have victory over sin, you *will* have blessings; but *part* of the blessing is that, if you look like Jesus, the world is going to treat you like they treated Jesus—and they hated Him (Jn. 15:18-19); so, "Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Tim. 3:12)." That's in *this* world! But because you are "sealed for the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30), you have the power to face what comes to you in this world because of your commitment of faith to Christ (Phil. 4:13).

Notice again the beginning of Verse 14, starting with the last part of Verse 13—"Having also believed, you were *sealed* in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a *pledge* of our inheritance." Now, "pledge" is a really cool word. It means something like a "down payment"; or, if they had the concept that we have of an "engagement ring," this is the word that would best fit it. A man can say to a woman, "I love you. I want to be with you. I would like to spend the rest of my life with you." Now, that's great! But, if it's accompanied by a *diamond*, it means more. God has done just that for you: He has given you something to say, "I don't *hope* you make it—I *guarantee* you make it! *I am* the guarantee!"

If you've ever bought a house, you had to make an offer; and just to make the offer, you had to give a chunk of money, and it was held—it would be held toward the purchase, if it comes through—but you had to give a chunk of money to validate that your offer was "for real." In our world, we call that "earnest money." Well, go read the King James Version and see what they translated this word as, in Elizabethan English: "the *earnest* of our inheritance"—the one who guarantees that the one who is making the promise will come through. That's *exactly* what God has done: He is committed to you, and He gives you the guarantee of the full inheritance. He chose you, He saved you, He sealed you, and He empowers you all the while by giving you the down payment on eternity—who also provides the power for you to live for His glory right now (Eph. 3:16).

What about your inheritance? Well, you've seen The Benefactor, The Basis, The Purpose, the Requirement Of The Heirs, The Guarantee. Now, The Substance Of The Inheritance. It's in Verse 14—"who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory." Now, think this through: The previous little section that we studied was on the Doctrine of Redemption—that *we have been redeemed*; Christ went and *paid the price* to set us free from our slavery to sin, so that we can now, by our own choice, follow Him in love (Gal. 1:4; 2:20). Well, *now* he's saying—even though he *just told you* you're redeemed—that the Holy Spirit "is given as a pledge...*with a view* to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory." Here's how you put that together: There is *still another step* in your redemption. The price is paid, the deal is done, the guarantee is irrevocable—but there's still a final phase—as a matter of fact, we usually call it "final redemption."

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That *final* redemption is when you are set free from what Romans 7:24 calls "the body of this death." You're set free from *all* of your links to the evil world system through your own flesh (Rom. 8:23)—that's all severed, and you're given a new body which is sinless, perfect, deathless, and perfect for being in the presence of God forever (1 Cor. 14:42; 15:53; Phil. 3:21; 1 Jn. 3:2).

So you have Justification—you've been declared righteous. You've been redeemed. You have Sanctification going on; God already sees you perfectly holy in Christ (2 Cor. 5:21), but as you mature in your walk with Him, you grow in sanctification (Phil. 3:12-14). But *this* is talking about Glorification—that final step (Heb. 12:23b).

Justification is yours now; Sanctification is in process; Glorification is coming. And the Holy Spirit is the guarantee that Sanctification *will be finalized*; Glorification *will occur* (Heb. 2:10). That's all wrapped up in "the redemption of God's own possession."

What is "God's own possession"? Well, God gave to the Son a Bride (Jn. 6:37; 17:2). The Bride is the Church (Eph. 5:25-32). This is talking about the final glorification of those people whom God has called together in the Church (Acts 2:47)—the "body" of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:24)—which is also the Bride of Christ.

What is your inheritance? It's the fulfillment of every single promise of God, "to the praise of His glory." How many times have we seen that here? Two in these four verses, and one other time already through this magnificent sentence here (vs. 6).

In Ephesians 1:3-14, you're told that "every spiritual blessing" is yours "in the heavenly places in Christ" (vs. 3). And then Paul elaborated by telling us about Election—this is the eternal plan of God from "before the foundation of the world" (vs. 4). He's told you about "redemption" (vs. 7)—the eternal plan of God worked out *in history*, where "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor. 15:3). And then, the "inheritance" (vs. 11)—the eternal plan of God with a guaranteed *future* (1 Cor. 2:7).

There's another place that says all of this. I mentioned to you last week the similarity between the beginning of Ephesians and the beginning of First Peter. Well you know what? Peter and Paul knew each other; they interacted with each other; they both mention each other in their writings (Gal. 2:9; 2 Pet. 3:15); they overlap in the Book of Acts by four or five chapters; and before God even called Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, He used Peter to open the door to the Gentiles, to make the point to the Jewish believers that, "This isn't just *your* ballgame! Jew and Gentile together—in Christ you are all one" (Gal. 3:28)" (see Acts 10:44-45; 11:18).

And I love the way Peter says the same things that Paul said, so you understand: It was one and the same message. First Peter Chapter 1, Verses 3 through 5—"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"—now, we read that far and you say, "Wait a minute! Is he reading First Peter, or is he reading Ephesians? *Exactly the same words!*" "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again"—Jesus introduced *that* concept to Nicodemus!

Sermon Title: Your Inheritance Is Guaranteed
Scripture Text: Eph. 1:11-14 (Ephesians #6)

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 6-6-21

"Nicodemus, what do you need in order to get into the kingdom of heaven? Something you *absolutely can't do*: You need to be 'born again' (Jn. 3:3)." You can't do that! You can't crawl back into the womb—Nicodemus figured *that* out (vs. 4). But, God "has caused us to be born again to a living *hope*"—same word—"through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an *inheritance*"—but now, Peter went a little bit *further* in describing some things about this—"an inheritance which is *imperishable* and *undefiled* and *will not fade away...*" (see Matt. 6:20) Okay, well, I know the *inheritance* is safe, but how do you know I'm going to get there? Look at the next part: "reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." Go listen to our sermons on First Peter 1—that is a *glorious, glorious* parallel passage to Ephesians Chapter 1.

If you were to look at Number 403 in your hymnals, you would find some famous words from the pen of a woman named Fanny Crosby. Fanny Crosby lost her eyesight at the ripe old age of six weeks; she had an eye infection, and it was mistreated by a doctor.

I thought of Fanny one day. I was getting ready to come to church on a Wednesday night, and one of my contacts was all gunky, so I took it out and I rinsed it; and I always use artificial tears to wash things out and make it a little more smooth when it goes back in; and as things were a little bit blurry, I reached down, I grabbed the bottle, I tilted my head back, I quickly put in two drops, and *then* discovered I had grabbed the bottle of contact lens cleanser! Praise the Lord, I didn't come out like Fanny Crosby, but *I thought of her!* I really did remember her story when I wondered, "Will that eye ever work again?" I even made it to church that night; I didn't wear my contacts, and I had one bright red eye.

But understand: *Totally blind*, and yet she saw *countless* truths from the Word of God, and put them into words. Do you know that woman wrote over *8,000 hymns!* Think about how many days there are in a year. If you wrote *one a day*, it would take you a little less than three years—let's say three years, because maybe you'd take off Christmas and Easter; maybe you might even take off Sundays—so it would take three years to write one thousand, *if* you wrote one a day! She just kept pouring it out. And you know what? That lady knew Ephesians Chapter 1. I don't know if it was read *to her*, I don't know if she read it in Braille—oh, but it was in her heart!

You know her words: "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." You have the assurance of a guaranteed inheritance! Let's pray:

Oh, Father, our hearts just soar with looking at this portion of Your Word. Thank You for that inheritance! Remind us of it when we are being buffeted by a world that rejects You, and doesn't like those who stand with You. And Father, please, if there is anyone listening or watching this morning, who isn't certain of the guarantee of their inheritance with You, oh, may this be the day that You open that heart and open those spiritual eyes, that they might see the riches of the glory of all that is ours in Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.