

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Praise God for The Sealing Spirit!
Ephesians 1:13-14

Keywords: Praise, Thankfulness, Faithfulness, Blessings, Heaven, Gospel, Faith

PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

SermonAudio Blurb:

CareNet Walk is coming soon! Prayerfully consider giving to those who ask!

The walk will take place Saturday morning, September 20th.

If you are interested in walking, gather together a team of up to six walkers. Have one representative with your team's roster come next week to see John Herrin, who will give them the donation sheets.

If you have any questions, please contact John Herrin.

I. Introduction.

- A. Today we finish up this wonderful section that introduces the whole book by seeking to establish in each Christian a sense of the glory of God's transforming grace toward each of them.
- B. Throughout this section we have been called repeatedly to be a people of praise and thanksgiving because of what God has accomplished on our behalf.
 - 1. All through grace.
 - 2. All for His praise.
 - 3. It is my hope that this is beginning to transform how you approach God in prayer and how you consider God's hand in your life. May each of us grow in this regard!
 - 4. My mind often goes to 1 Peter 3:15, ". . . sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence."
 - a. Always ready to make a defense. In other words, give an answer.
 - b. But an answer for what? The hope that is in you.

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- c. The assumptions are huge here by Peter.
 - (1) First assumption is that a Christian is hope-filled.
 - (2) Second is that this hope is tangibly seen by non-Christians which means we live among them and engage "life" with them rather than avoid them.
 - (3) Third is that this hope is a kind that is utterly different from any hope a non-Christian might have.
 - (4) Fourth is that we are to be capable of explaining what our hope is.
- d. And if you have paid careful attention to this whole section you have more than enough to cause you to have a world-tilting hope. And you have more than enough information to explain it to others.
- C. Though we have seen how God the Father blessed us in His sovereign plan from before time and we have seen how the Son has made full provision for that plan, we have not yet considered how to appropriate it as a person. Today we do as we consider the final part, the Spirit's sealing us.
- D. We are not going to deal with this in the order that we read it. First I want to deal with the blessing itself, being sealed with the Holy Spirit. Second I want to speak specifically to how and when each person must enter into these blessings.

II. We praise God for The Sealing Spirit.

- A. Note first of all that Paul speaks of what happens when we believe the good news of Jesus Christ.
 - 1. I will enlarge on this in a bit but understand that this is the setting.
 - 2. This is not some point of theology or theory. It is in space and time. It is part of our personal experience.
- B. Notice also the "in Him" for it speaks of Jesus Christ. As we have seen over and over in this section, these blessings don't just "happen." The Father has ordained that every blessing comes through our union with Jesus Christ.
 - 1. This is where our salvation is found, in Jesus.
 - 2. This is where our hope is found, in Jesus.
 - 3. This is where our purpose comes from, in Jesus.
- C. Because of our union with Jesus Christ through believing the gospel we are sealed with the Spirit.

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1. This has various ways that it can be understood.
2. Some see it as being closed with a seal to show it is secure, such as an envelope. Some see it as a seal that shows authentication. Similar to that is that it is proof of genuineness. All of these are ways that the term "sealed" is used.
3. But the best sense of the term in our passage is that of identification. More specifically, identification of ownership.
 - a. Remember from last week how we looked at verse 11.
 - b. Instead of seeing it as focusing on an inheritance that we have coming to us, I showed that it spoke of us being God's inheritance or possession.
 - c. It is a position of privilege for God has chosen us to be His possession. It hearkens back to the Old Testament where God declares to Israel that they were His possession and inheritance.
 - d. So part of what God is doing in the world is gathering those who are His inheritance.
4. And this is what is taking place in vs 13-14.
 - a. When we believed in the gospel we were sealed with the Spirit.
 - b. Our identity was forever changed. We were now identified as the "inheritance of the Lord."
 - c. This should give you utter peace and hope for you are eternally secure in Jesus because of this present ministry of the Holy Spirit.
5. Notice that term "pledge" or "guarantee". It what we would call a down payment or a deposit.
 - a. It is making that down payment that is designed to guarantee that the rest of the payments would follow.
 - b. I think the best way to get a sense of how beautiful this idea is would be by looking at 2 Corinthians 5:5 where it is used as well.
 - (1) Start in vs 4.
 - (2) Then point out the "therefore" of vs 6.
 - (3) The pledge of the Spirit is not something that rescues us from suffering and hurting in this age. But it is what gives us that hope in this age.

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- (4) It is the sure deposit of our God who is faithful that enables us to walk with by faith and not sight, looking to that day when all is new and right and good.

D. How long does this sealing take place.

1. The answer is vs 14.
2. "With a view to the redemption of God's own possession."
3. It is what I have said repeatedly over these last several weeks. The ultimate time of redemption is when Jesus makes all things new.
4. When our enemies of sin, Satan and death are destroyed forevermore.
5. When we are kept safe from the wrath of God.
6. When we experience the fulness of what "eternal life" actually means.
7. When we are free from any stain or presence of sin.
8. Until that day we carry about us this seal of the Spirit. God has marked us out not for death, not for wrath, but for salvation.

E. Now how does all of this take place, here we return to vs 13.

1. Notice how the wording is done. After listening/hearing. . . . having also believed"
2. Two things that are necessary for this sealing to take place. We need to hear and we need to believe.
 - a. First, no one is saved apart from hearing and then believing.
 - (1) This is the cry of missions and it is the cry of missional living.
 - (2) They will not be saved by your good works, your kind words, your proper behavior. These things adorn the gospel. They carry the gospel in a sense, but never fool yourself into thinking they are the gospel.
 - (3) How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!" However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says,

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"LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?" So
faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of
Christ. (Romans 10:14-17)

- b. Second, faith is not the same as saving faith.
 - (1) Everyone has faith. Everyone believes in something, even if it is faith in non-belief.
 - (2) But what is saving faith.

F. A word about faith.

- 1. Faith seems to be a simple thing. "You just gotta believe." But then someone asks you, "But what is it that you believe in?"
- 2. Let's go back a few centuries to understand the issue of faith. The Reformers in the days of Luther and John Calvin wrestled with this issues already. There were three aspects, or elements of what is known as "saving faith." All three have to be present to make up saving faith.

a. Notitia.

- (1) Refers to knowledge. Faith is not equal to knowledge, but you can't have faith without knowledge. You can't believe in 'nothing.'
- (2) You can believe in ghosts, or believe that there is really a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow. But that does not mean you have saving faith.
- (3) This aspect of faith deals with the content of your faith. What it is that you actually believe in.
- (4) You say that you believe in Jesus. I say back to you, "ok, what is it exactly that you believe about Jesus?"
 - (a) The problem is that today, people don't want to worry about that kind of question. The only important thing is that you believe in Jesus.
 - (b) But that means nothing, except that you are still going to hell.
 - (c) The demons believe, but they are filled with a terror. Do you rightly believe in Jesus? Do you believe that He died on the cross to pay for sin? Do you believe that He really rose again from the dead on the third

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day? Do you believe that He is God in human flesh,
the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity?
What is it that you actually believe in?

(d) That is the issue of notitia.

(5) But the disease of minimalism is always nipping at this
issue.. This is where we try to trim away as much as we can
of truth without affecting truth—but, of course, that is
impossible.

(a) We love to talk about the personal relationship we
have with Jesus.

(b) And that is right and true. But it does not make the
fact that there is an actual body of truth about Jesus
that exists and must be believed.

(c) Now true, saving faith does not require that you
know everything there is about Jesus. But it does
require that you have a certain amount of right
information about Jesus.

b. Assensus.

(1) This speaks of giving assent to this body of truth about
something, in this situation, about Jesus.

(2) It is the confidence, the conviction, that something is actually
true.

(3) This is true in many things. You have been taught that
 $2+2=4$. When you say that you believe that you are
practicing Assensus.

(4) Let's talk about Jesus' death on the Cross. The Bible says
that Christ's death was a sufficient payment for sin. That
our sin was placed on Jesus and His Father poured out His
wrath upon Jesus rather than us.

(a) Now, let's say that I can prove it.. Does it mean that
you will assent to that fact? No.

(b) You may have be so prejudiced against all religion,
that you won't believe it anyhow. Or, you might be
very lazy in your thinking and so you don't care to
care take the time to study it.

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- (c) Or, you believe in it. But the reason you believe in it is based on really bad reasons. Your parents always believed it. You have heard it all your life. You wife or your husband believes it, so you do too. That is not assensus.
- (5) In Mark 3:11 it says about demons who would see Jesus, “And whenever the unclean spirits beheld Him, they would fall down before Him and cry out, saying, ‘You are the Son of God!’”
 - (a) Did they have the right notitia? Did they have the right content of faith? Yes.
 - (b) Did they have assensus? Was it their conviction that He was the Son of God? Were they confident that He was the Son of God? Yes.
 - (c) Were they saved? No.
- (6) But this is where so many people are today as well. They have the right content of faith. They have the confidence that it is true. But they are not saved.
 - (a) This is the point of James in 2:19, “you believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.”
 - i) To believe in these things about God is good.
 - ii) But all it really does is say that you are qualified to be a demon!
 - (b) He is showing his readers that just because they have the first two elements of faith, does not mean that they are saved.
 - (c) Listen to what he immediately follows with in verse 20, “But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?”
 - i) There is much more to this faith than what meets the eye.
 - ii) There is something more that right facts and agreeing with them.

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- iii) And this is where we can get into trouble. We ask people if they are saved. We ask them what they believe. We ask them if that really believe it. But that is not all.
 - iv) The Bible talks about a “full assurance of hope.” A “true knowledge of Christ.” A “full assurance of understanding.” A “full assurance of faith.”
- (d) You can have strong faith or weak faith. Listen to what Martin Luther said this, “It is, of course, true that I and you do not hold and believe the saving truth so firmly as St. Peter does. Yet we have one and the same treasure. Two persons may hold glasses of wine in their hands: the hand of the one trembles, the hand of the other does not. Two persons may hold a purse full of money: one with a weak hand, the other with a strong hand. Whether the hand is strong or weak, please God, it neither increases nor decreases the contents of the purse. So the only difference between me and St. Peter is the fact that he holds this treasure more firmly.” (Sproul, Faith Alone, pp. 81-82).
- (e) Or, you can have right faith or wrong faith. Listen again to Martin Luther about this. “Indeed, all three truths must be believed: that Christ is God, that He is man, and that He became man for us, . . . Conceived by the Holy Spirit. . . . If one item of this creed is lacking, all items must fall. Faith must be complete and embrace everything. Although it may be weak and subject to trial, it must in any case be complete and not false. To be weak in the faith does not do the damage, but to be wrong—that is eternal death.”
- (7) Now, these first two, notitia and assensus, are of the mind. They involve information and acceptance of that information. Without them, there is no saving faith.
- (a) This is the responsibility of the believer when he is witnessing. He is attempting to give proper

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information about Jesus and salvation.

- (b) God has designed it this way. Look at Romans 10:8-14.
- (c) We are to be proclaiming the gospel. We are to be telling people to believe in Jesus.
- (d) But just because we get them to agree to the basics of the gospel, even to pray a prayer for salvation. It does not mean that they are saved. Even if they really really mean it.
- (e) This is where the third element of faith comes in.

c. Fiducia.

- (1) This is a positive disposition, heart attitude about what you believe it. It is much more than merely agreeing to the facts of something. There is a gripping of your heart toward it. There is a passion, even a love for it.
- (2) I may agree that there are surgical operations that can be performed on the human body. I can agree that there are surgeons who do these operations. But I do not love surgery. I know about it, I agree that it is necessary, but I do not love it, like some surgeons do. There is no passion there.
- (3) Consider Satan. Satan knows in some ways better than any of us. He understand His identity and he agrees that it is true. He has notitia and assensus. But there is no fiducia.
- (4) He does not place any trust in Christ. He does not rest in Christ. He does not find Christ to grip his heart, to be filled in his heart with a love for Christ
- (5) There is knowledge, but there is no sweetness, no delight in Christ.
- (6) Now, for us, how does this come about? How do we find Jesus to be truly sweet to our hearts?
- (7) It comes through the work of the Holy Spirit. By nature, all of us are children of wrath, slaves to sin, dead in our sins, condemned by God, and enemies of God. There is nothing in us that is good, nothing in us that will ever truly find Jesus

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as our delight and hope of salvation.

- (8) But this is where the Spirit comes in. In John 3 Jesus says that to be saved you must be born again, you must be born of the Spirit. And this occurs not by anything we do, but only on the will of God.
- (a) He takes away our heart that is dead in our sin.
 - (b) He gives us a new heart that suddenly finds Christ to be lovely and sweet.
 - (c) All of the sudden there is a difference in our value system. Before we saw Jesus as just a tool to get us into heaven. Or we saw Jesus as a pain in the neck, who kept us from our fun and our rights.
 - (d) But now, it is different. We find ourselves loving Him. We find ourselves hoping in Him. Our heart has changed and we find Jesus to be our delight.

III. Conclusion.

- A. All three of these must be present.
- B. It is of no value to love Jesus but not know who Jesus is or what Jesus did. Just as there is no value of knowing who Jesus is or what Jesus did, but not trusting and loving Him.
- C. We are going to talk, Lord willing, next week about justification. The question is critical to us. How can we stand before a God who demands that we be utterly perfect at all times? How can we called righteous before a righteous God?
- D. There are two views on this. One says that you are justified by faith and works together. The other says that you are justified by faith alone. Which is it? We teach the second one.
- E. Heaven and Hell hang on this issue.
- F. But as you go, I ask you to think on one thing. Do you delight in Jesus Christ alone? Do you see Him as both man and God? Do you trust that He alone was sufficient to take away your sins so that you might stand before God the Father blameless and with great joy? Consider these three aspects of faith. Are all three evident to you?