

Sealed

Eph. 1:11-23

What we see here is an amazing picture of what it means to be a Christian.

This passage is incredibly rich.

Paul is describing who we are, as Christians, and he is helping us by holding up a “theological mirror” so that we can examine ourselves on a number of levels ...

... So, if you think you are a Christian you can look here and see if you really are

... Or, if you really are a Christian you can see if you are living consistently with who you are.

But there is one more way in which this passage helps us ...

... There are people who say they have rejected Christianity ... but they really haven't ...

... Because when you ask them to explain what they believe Christianity is ... and it isn't Christianity at all!

... This passage shows us clearly what Christianity is, and what it means to be a Christian.

So, if you are someone who is uncertain about your salvation, someone who is inconsistent in their faith, or even someone who believes they have “rejected” Christianity.

We are going to look at three things:

- The security of the gospel
- The greatness of His Power
- The value of His Inheritance

1. The Security of the Gospel

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, (Eph 1:13)

This verse is a wonderful definition of one becomes a Christian.

Paul says that becoming a Christian doesn't start by you doing something, it starts by you hearing something.

What do you hear? ... The Gospel.

Paul says to the Ephesians, **“You heard the Word of Truth”** ... and two things happened:

- You believed **IN** Christ
- And you were sealed **WITH** the promised Holy Spirit [Not sealed “BY” but “With”]

... and then Paul goes further to describe the Holy Spirit ... **“who is the guarantee of our inheritance.”**

What is it mean to believe “IN” Christ?

What is the truth of Christianity?

Simply put, it is the Gospel.

The word “gospel” is an announcement of something that has happened in the past.

The Bible says a lot about how Christians should live.

... but what the bible says about how you ought to live **is based upon** what the Bible says about what has happened in history.

Other religions start by saying, “this is how god wants you to live, and if you live this way you’ll be saved.”

Christianity starts by saying, “here is what God has done in history to save you.”

The gospel is not good advice about what you should do, it is good news about what has been done.

Every historical part of the Bible has been recorded and preserved so that you can know what God has done for you.

Hearing the truth about what Jesus has done for you generates faith ... faith comes by hearing ...

You heard the truth and believe ... what does it mean to believe?

Look at verse 12 ...

... here Paul speaks of his **“hope in Christ”**

In the Bible the word **HOPE** is another word for **Believe**.

You see the word “hope” in the bible means something very different than what it means in today’s society.

In English the hope means ... “I hope so” ... I’m not really sure, but I hope it’s true...

However, in the Bible the word **“hope” means an unwavering certainty about the future.**

... its really a strong way of saying how much you believe.

Paul says to the Ephesians, even before you heard the gospel we had “hope (or we believed) in Jesus Christ.”

Human beings are unavoidably hope-based creatures.

We need something to hope in ...

... we need the assurance that something better is coming.

... and we live our lives based upon what we believe (or hope) about the future.

We are unavoidably hope-based creatures.

... how you live in the present is unavoidably shaped by what you believe about the future.

Let me illustrate:

Imagine putting two people in the same room to do the same miserable, difficult, horrible job, all day long.

... but before they start you whisper into the ear of one guy "at the end of the day we will pay you 50 dollars" ... and the other a million dollars.

I can promise you they are going to be mentally and emotionally processing their circumstances in very different ways.

[The first guy, "I don't need this!" ... the other guy is going to be humming and singing all day long.]

... Why? Their different futures mean they will process their present circumstances very differently.

Now apply that to two guys going into Hardees tomorrow morning.

One is lost, "I don't know if there is a god or not, there is not heaven or hell Etc."

The other person is a Christian who believes that when all is said and done, he will be with God forever and at the end of time God will come to earth and put everything right and defeat all evil.

Here is two people with two absolutely different hope/beliefs about the future...

Inevitably, those two futures will affect how they live ...

... your hopes about the future will either slowly and surely brighten and strengthen your life or darken and weaken you.

What you believe about the future will either sweeten your life or sour it.

Paul says a Christian has heard the truth and has hope in the future the gospel guarantees ...

... what exactly are you hoping in?

Paul gives us one more thing about the Christian.

Paul tells us that when we were saved, we **were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance (Eph 1:13-14)**

Do you know what this word **“guarantee”** means? ... It means “first installment.”

The Holy Spirit that comes into your life when you believe in Jesus Christ is actually a first installment of the final glory that we will experience when we see Jesus face to face.

... It is in you now!

Paul is saying, “I want you to know you have received the Holy Spirit as a deposit of your future inheritance ...

- This guarantees your glorification
- It is God’s promise and proof that one day you will be just like Jesus.
- This is guarantee is an assurance that one day God is going to wipe you clean and fix everything that is wrong with you,

... This revolutionary.

God has not come into your life to make a few tweaks and minor upgrades ... God has come into your life to transform you.

... God is going to make you into something greater and more wonderful than you could even imagine.

Can you imagine all the implications of this glorious truth?

If this is true, and it is, you should give up your small ambitions.

You need to be aware of and realize all that you are in Christ ...

... the Holy Spirit is in you NOW ...

... He entered into you the moment you believed.

So, why do we live plagued by fear, anxiety, doubt, ego, pride, bitterness?

Too many of us are like Esau.

Esau gave up his birthright for a mess of porridge ... in fact in the Bible he says to Jacob, "what good will my birth right be if I die of hunger."

... and Esau gave up his birthright for a mess of porridge.

I want to ask you ... What mess are you settling for?

Our lives should be characterized by love, joy, peace, hope meekness kindness ...

... but instead they are characterized by lack of self-control, fears, overwhelming anxieties, all kinds of things draining our lives ...

... it should NOT be this way.

There is not a thing wrong with you, guilt, fear, bad habit, whatever ... that the Holy Spirit of God in you cannot change and overcome!

Can you see how wonderful and powerful this is?

Paul is trying to remind us of what it means to be a Christian.

What is a Christian?

Someone who has heard, believed, and been sealed with the Holy Spirit of God for future glory!

You are sons and daughters of the king and that will never change because you have been sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,

2. The Greatness of His Power

¹⁸ having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, (Eph 1:18-20)

Paul doesn't just want us to have an abstract idea that God is powerful,

... Paul wants us to know God's power is for us.

According to verse 13 it was God's power, in God's Word that enabled you to believe in Jesus.

But here in v. 18-20 Paul goes even further ...

He says that if you believe in Jesus Christ, it is only because of the **immeasurable greatness of God's power ...**

... it is only because of the **working of His great might**

... and the power it took for you to believe was the kind of power that it took to raise Jesus from the dead.

Paul tells us that salvation is God's power coming to you ...

... that goes along with Romans 3 where Paul writes that **no one seeks for God**

Or John 6:44 where Jesus says, "**no one can come to me unless the father draws him.**"

The power of God is so great it can awaken the heart of sinner and make the vilest person long for the holiness of Christ.

God takes the initiative in our salvation.

People say that the church needs to be seeker sensitive because there are a lot of people out there that are seeking for God ...

... not according to the Bible.

People are looking for religion ... but they are not really seeking him.

Let me explain.

People are seeking a resource, a tool to use ... and they think if they are real good, go to some church, be religious, read the bible, and when they pray then God will give them what they want.

And when they do all of that, and God doesn't do what they want ... They fired him!

They weren't seeking God ... my proof of that is this...

A number of times in my ministry I've had people say to me, "I've lost my faith ... I used to believe in God ... but not anymore."

And when I ask why they have "lost their faith" they will say something like ...

I was doing all of these things, teaching, helping, working in the church ... I led the choir; I was a deacon ... I was doing more than everyone else in the church ...

... but then this happened to me, or that happened to me, and I prayed and it didn't get any better

... so, I have no use for a God who doesn't listen to my prayers.

- *They fired God!*
- *They weren't seeking God!*
- *They had God on retainer and when He didn't do what they wanted or expected they fired Him.*

Paul is saying that Salvation is God's work alone, and it takes the power of God to get a fallen, wicked, sinful heart to seek a holy God.

It takes a holy omnipotent God to bring life in to a dead sinner!

If you want God, if you long for Jesus, it is because God has opened your heart with the **immeasurable greatness of God's power ...**

But Paul says even more about God's power...

... ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ... (Eph 1:21)

Paul is saying that the power of God is being brought to bear on every circumstance of history ... for your good and for your redemption.

... past, present, and future.

As Paul says in verse 18- **THIS IS ENLIGHTENING!**

This alone changes how we view the circumstances of our lives because what we saw as meaningless events ... we now realize that everyone of these things was God working to bring us to HIMSELF!

The greatness of God's power has directed our lives, opened our hearts to receive His love.

3. The Value of His Inheritance

***18** having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, (Eph 1:18)*

Paul uses the word inheritance in verses 11, 14, and 18.

... the first two times Paul is talking about our inheritance **but here in verse 18** Paul is speaking of God's inheritance.

Paul is saying that you are God's possession ...

... and not just His possession but God's inheritance.

What is an inheritance? It is the family heirloom, the family jewels, the family's wealth and treasure.

God has the audacity to say, that although He has created the stars, the universe, EVERYTHING it is good

... but when He looks at you, he says, THIS IS MY INHERITANCE!!!

... this is my wealth ... my treasure ... my pearl of great price.

What are the pleasures of this world compared to this?

God looks at you and He willing to use all of his omnipotent power to rescue you and keep you safe ... no matter what the cost.

You are HIS inheritance!

If you don't bring that into the center of your heart and soul you are going to be just like everyone else ... miserable, moody, dissatisfied ...

... desperate for affirmation and praise

... hungry for one more "likes" on social media and devastated when they don't come.

... longing for approval from people

... laying in bed at night tossing and turning because someone insulted you or made some snide comment ...

... somebody didn't notice you

... somebody slighted you

... NO, NO, NO!!!

YOU ARE GOD'S POSSESSION!

How dare you nurse grudges and walk around with hurt pride ...

... get caught up in some major self-pity party.

... treat people differently just because they didn't do what you wanted or acted in a way you didn't prefer!

YOU ARE GOD'S POSSESSION!

You need to bring that into the center of your being!

.... God has a valuable and glorious inheritance ... and it is YOU!

This isn't Joel Osteen, health, wealth, and prosperity ... this is the WORD OF GOD!

- You are sealed with the Holy Spirit
- You are redeemed by greatness of His Power
- You are HIS inheritance!

Let me end by showing you the cost, the length that God went to, to make this a reality.

Ephesians 3:14-19