

Blessings From The Spirit

Ephesians 1:13-14

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Follow with me as I read Ephesians 1:13-14. Paul says, “In whom,” the end of verse 12 is a reference to Christ, “ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed,” again, that’s in Christ, “ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,” there’s our subject tonight, the Holy Spirit’s sealing work, “Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

Remember in Ephesians Paul is taking the first three chapters and telling us doctrinal truth about our position in Christ. Before he tells us how to walk, he wants to explain our wealth. You can’t use what you don’t know you have. One of the great needs in the church today is for people to know who they are in Christ, they need to know the blessings they have in Christ, they need to know that they are in Christ, and in Christ they are blessed. Go back to verse 3. I’ll show you the key to this section. He says, “Blessed,” which is a eulogy, praise “be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ,” or in the heavenlies in Christ. Notice that He has, past tense, blessed us, these blessings are in Christ, and they are in the heavenlies. He goes from verses 3-14. We actually finished that one long sentence in the Greek. It starts in verse 3 and ends in verse 14. It’s one long sentence where Paul talks about blessings from God the Father, blessings from God the Son, and blessings from God the Spirit.

These blessings that God the Father planned, our salvation by electing us in eternity past, that God the Son purchased us in history by dying on the cross in our place that we have redemption, and now tonight God the Holy Spirit presents it to us or He applies it to us. Someone actually said that God the Father drew salvation’s plan, God the Son brought it down to man, and God the Holy Spirit applied it in your life, we’re going to see tonight, by convicting, converting, indwelling, sealing, and baptizing you by His Spirit. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all working together for our salvation—it was planned by the Father, purchased by the Son, and presented to us by God the Holy Spirit.

Today, our focus is on the believer’s blessings by the Holy Spirit. Let me just say this real quick. This thought just popped in my brain, and I don’t want to miss it. It’s not in my notes. We’re going to be talking tonight about what theologians would call the gift of the Spirit. That’s different from the gifts of the Spirit. The gift of the Holy Spirit is just that, God gives you the Holy Spirit. Once the Holy Spirit comes and regenerates and indwells you, and we’re going to see tonight seals you, that He then gives you gifts of the Spirit, but He gives them as He wills. We don’t determine what gift we get. We might be able to ask for it, but the Holy Spirit, being God and being sovereign, distributes those gifts to each individually. We’re not talking about the gifts of the Spirit tonight, we’re talking about the gift of the Holy Spirit. Notice in the passage that He’s called the Spirit of promise. We’re not going to dwell a lot upon that, but it’s because

Joel in the Old Testament and other prophets promised the Holy Spirit would come and be poured on all flesh. Jesus promised that He would send another Comforter, that He would abide with us forever, and then it was fulfilled in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon the believers there in the upper room. We're talking about the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is undoubtedly the least understood Person of the Trinity. We have a concept of what a father can be like, and we really know concretely what God the Son was like, because of His incarnation we can relate to Jesus the God-man; but the Holy Spirit is a little harder to wrap our minds around, comprehend, and to understand. Let me ask just two simple questions before we unpack the text. The first is: Who is the Holy Spirit? The answer simply is that first of all He is a Person. That may sound kind of basic or elementary. Believe it or not there's a lot of people confused. They think that He's not a Person because He's called the Holy Spirit, but personal pronouns are used for the Holy Spirit. He's called, "He will come," "He will comfort you," "He will lead you," "He will guide you," the personal pronoun *ekinos*,

The Holy Spirit is a Person. Write down John 14:16. Jesus said, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." The word "another" means another of the same kind. Not only is He a divine Person, but He is indeed a Person. He has intellect, He shows feelings, He has a will, He guides us, He intercedes for us, He can be lied to, resisted, grieved, blasphemed, or disobeyed; so we want to be aware of the fact that He is a Person and can be grieved and subject to personal treatment.

Secondly, He is a divine Person. All the same divine attributes that are possessed by God the Father and God the Son are possessed by God the Holy Spirit. There's one God, but there are three Persons in that Godhead. This is what we call the Trinity, or the triune nature of God—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, one God. All the same divine attributes possessed by God the Father and God the Son are possessed by God the Holy Spirit—He's omnipresent, He's omnipotent, He's all powerful, He's omniscient, He knows all things, He's omnibenevolent, He's all loving. He could not be divine if He did not possess the same attributes as the Father and the Son.

Thirdly, as I said in verse 13 of our text, He's called the "Spirit of promise," and I love that mentioned there. I read John 14:16 where Jesus promised the other Comforter. The word is *parakletos*. That means someone who comes alongside of you to comfort and strengthen you. He is the promised Spirit.

What is the Spirit's work in salvation? I want to point out six things the Spirit does to bring us salvation. You need to follow this tonight. It's all under three headings—there's going to be six subpoints under three headings. (It'll appear on the screen. If I don't use the screen, it gets a little confusing to follow. I'll make my points clear, and then the subpoints I'll number one through six.) The three headings are seen in verse 13. Look at verse 13 in your Bibles. Look at the phrase, "ye heard," my King Jimmy has, then he says, "ye believed," and then he says, "ye were sealed," or you were sealed. Notice those three statements—you heard, you believed,

and you were sealed. Underneath those three headings, “you heard,” that is, “the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation;” “you believed,” that is, Jesus Christ by faith trusted Him; and then “ye were sealed,” that is, by God the Holy Spirit.

The first heading, verse 13, is “You Heard.” He says, “In whom also ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.” This statement, “ye heard,” in verse 13, points out that the Spirit of God used the Word of God to convict them (that’s going to be my first point, I don’t want to get quite ahead of myself yet), but hearing the Scriptures, the Spirit of God then brought conviction. I wanted to point that out. It’s kind of implied there. He says, “... ye heard,” what did you hear? “...the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.”

I wish, I wish, I wish, I wish that the church, that more Christians and pastors, some of them I know, would have a better appreciation of the fact that the Spirit of God works through the Word of God. Too many times we want to push the Bible to the side and get into the deeper things of the Spirit of God and the power of God. Sometimes they emphasize the Spirit and like to use the old King James “ghost” for Him, like there’s almost a different Holy Ghost and the Holy Spirit, “We’re into the Holy Ghost,” kind of like Casper the Friendly Ghost. That’s just old King James for Spirit, “ghost.” They fail to realize that if you want the Spirit of God to work, then focus on the Word of God.

It’s amazing to me how often in the Bible the Spirit of God is coupled together with the Word of God. Take the armor of God in Ephesians 6 (we’ll be getting there in many months from now), he says, “And take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” If you don’t have the Word of God, you don’t have the sword of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God.

J. Vernon McGee, bless his dear heart, who taught and still faithfully teaches the Bible on a daily basis even though he’s in heaven, (his voice is heard by more people every day in the world than any other voice on planet earth) basically said that the Bible is like a track and the Holy Spirit is like the train. The Holy Spirit runs on the track, the Word of God. If the train jumps the track, it doesn’t really work properly. So, it’s the Spirit of God using the Word of God. The more we fill our hearts with God’s Word, the more the Spirit can work in and through us. It’s more fuel in our hearts and lives. The more we share God’s Word, the more the Spirit can work and speak through us. It’s so very important there, the tie together, “that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation,” was obviously the preaching of the Word of God.

If you’re taking notes, again, under this one heading there’s only my first point: “Convicting.” This is what the Holy Spirit does when we hear the word of God, He convicts us. This point isn’t drawn from my text. I’ve put it in to create a systematic kind of flow here for the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in our salvation. The first thing He does, He comes to the unregenerated, unsaved person and convicts them of their sin. Write down John 16:8-11 where it says the Holy Spirit “...will reprove,” convict, “the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” Praise God for the day that someone shared the Word of Truth—the gospel, God’s Word—and the Holy Spirit went to work in your heart. You couldn’t have been saved without that.

I was a senior in high school and just started coming under conviction of the Holy Spirit. My younger sister, who was a believer following the Lord, left her paraphrase Ephesians Living Bible on my bed in my room. It wasn't even compiled in a whole Bible yet, that's how old I am. It was just separate books of the Bible. I picked up that dog-eared, wrinkled little paperback and began to read. The Spirit of God began to convict me of my sin. A few years ago my sister sent it to me. She said, "I think you should have this and keep it because of how God used this little paperback to work in your heart and bring you to salvation." God can take even a paraphrase of the Word of God and the Spirit of God can work and bring salvation. It's a blessing when God shows us that we're sinners, when God shows us that we need Christ. We are undone without Him.

Romans 10:17 says, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Do you know that statement literally means a sermon preached about Christ. It's talking about the proclamation of the gospel being preached. In John 6:44, Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him," so "...ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation," and the Holy Spirit came to convict you. It takes these two things, the Word of God and the Spirit of God, to bring about salvation.

The second heading in verse 13 is: "You Believed." I think that there is an important order to note—first you heard and then you believed. The reason you believed is because you came under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, which I happen to believe is resistible. You don't have to necessarily believe, but if you choose to put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ, then you will indeed be born again. We don't get regenerated in order to believe, we are saved or born again because we believe. Write down the word "faith." This is what we're going to talk about. You heard the Word and you believed. Faith is simply trusting in Jesus as your Savior and Lord. It's putting your faith and trust in Him.

What happens when we believe? Here's the second blessing under this heading, you are regenerated (or in my notes regeneration or regenerating). You are born again. Regeneration is the technical term which literally means given new life. We are most familiar with the term used by Jesus in John 3 for Nicodemus saying, "You must be born again." It's the same thing. The Holy Spirit is what regenerates us, gives us new life.

Look over at Ephesians 2:5. Paul says, "Even when we were dead in sins, hath," here's our word, "quickened," or regenerated "us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)." Again, another old English word in my King James Bible, the word "quickened" because they thought that if you were dead, you weren't very quick; if you get new life, then you can be quick or you can move, so they actually used the word "quickened." "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened," or made alive, "by grace ye are saved."

Write down Titus 3:5, one of my favorite verses using this word "regeneration," "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Listen to me very carefully. This is what constitutes a person being saved. You're either saved or you're not; you're either a saint or you

ain't; you've either been born again or you haven't been born again. Sometimes people kind of, "I don't know if I'm really a Christian. I don't know if I'm really born again. I'm kind of semi-born again. I'm in the process of being born again." You're either born again or you're not. If you're here tonight and you are not sure that you are born again, that's your great need. You can't go anywhere without knowing you have been born again. Sometimes we'll talk about a friend or a co-worker and say, "I don't know if they're saved. I don't know if they're born again. They go to church, they might read the Bible, they might even believe in God." You can go to church, you can read the Bible, you can believe in God, and you can say you're a Christian, but that doesn't mean that you are. Just because you come to church doesn't make you a Christian. You must be regenerated.

A Christian has been defined...I heard this definition years ago and latched onto it. A Christian is someone who has the life of God in their soul. It's the life of God in the soul of man. If you haven't been regenerated and given new life, then you're dead still in your trespasses and sins. We'll look at this in a few weeks when we get to chapter two of Ephesians. Again, Jesus told Nicodemus (John 3), "You have to be born again. No one can enter into the Kingdom of God without being born again."

Here's the third thing under this heading, "You Believed," that the minute you are regenerated, the Holy Spirit indwells you. Every Christian is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Some people get confused, "Well, I'm a Christian, but I don't know if I have the Holy Spirit." You can't be a Christian if you don't have the Holy Spirit. He indwells, and I believe this is a permanent indwelling. All Christians have been regenerated. All Christians are indwelt. Write down 1 Corinthians 6:19. Paul says, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" In Romans 8:9 Paul says, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." This is the mark of a true believer: He has the Holy Spirit, and His Spirit "...beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the," true "children of God."

Here's the fourth (and it should appear on the screen), that is, you are baptized the very second that you're regenerated, you're indwelt, and the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit by taking you out of your position in Adam and transferring you into the Kingdom of God placing you in Christ. I would venture to believe that this is probably the greatest area of ignorance in the body of Christ, this one truth about what the Holy Spirit does.

Let me give you the key passage, one of many I could give you, 1 Corinthians 12:13. I'll read it for you. Paul says, "For by one Spirit," this is the Holy Spirit, "are we all baptized into one body," this is clearly talking about believers all in one body, that's the church, the body of Christ. He says, "...whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." If someone asks you as a regenerated, indwelt believer, if you have been baptized by the Holy Spirit, my conviction is (and I grow more convicted of this all the time) that yes you are. You were baptized by the Holy Spirit the moment you were regenerated and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. That's not to say that you're living a Spirit-filled life, that's a whole other issue. You can have the Holy Spirit, but does the Holy Spirit have you, and being a Christian means that you are placed in Christ.

We're going to see in a moment that we're sealed by the Holy Spirit. All this is true of all Christians. If people understood that, then they would understand how secure their salvation was in Christ. Write down Galatians 3:27. We covered it on Wednesday night, but in verse 27 Paul is talking about the Holy Spirit. He says, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have," notice the statement there, "put on Christ." That is not a reference to water baptism, it's a reference to Spirit baptism; and that Spirit baptism is putting you into Christ. There's no such thing as a Christian that hasn't been regenerated. There's no such thing as a Christian that hasn't been indwelt. There's no such thing as a Christian that hasn't been baptized by the Holy Spirit, and you can translate that with, in, or, by. It's the little Greek word *en*. It's translated any way you want to but depends upon the context. We are taken out of Adam and placed into Christ. Again, we're given the Spirit of promise. He's the baptizing Holy Spirit.

We now come to the third heading: "You Were Sealed." So, "You Heard," "You Believed," and now, "You Are Sealed." This is the main teaching of this section of Ephesians. Notice verse 13. He says, "In whom ye also trusted," in my King James Bible the word "trusted," is italicized, so it's not there in the Greek. It's put by the translators to create a continuity of thought. You might have a modern translation that omits that, so it reads, "In whom also, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed," there's your faith, "ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." Actually, this is the one blessing that Paul is communicating that we have by the Holy Spirit. There are numerous blessings from the Father, a number of blessings from the Son, but there's one blessing all wrapped up in this fact that the Holy Spirit seals us. We're going to break that down in just a moment.

By the way, Billy Graham (and I've recommended this book for many years, I don't always recommend books as I'm teaching) wrote a great book on the Holy Spirit. It's not very known, and people don't read it much today. It's got a great title. The title is: The Holy Spirit. There's a good chance it's out of print, but if you search and find that book and read it from cover to cover, it's one of the best books on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit that I've ever discovered. I have about four shelves full of books on the Holy Spirit. It's one of my favorites. He said this, "One of the most thrilling thoughts that has ever crossed my mind is that the Holy Spirit has sealed me." I love that! This is why I referred to the gift of the Spirit, He's the promised Spirit.

All Christians have been regenerated, they have been indwelt, they have been baptized, and they have been sealed. You don't have to ask God to seal you. You don't have to ask God the Spirit to baptize you, it happens automatically. You don't go up to some Christian and say, "Yeah, you've been a Christian for a while?" "Yeah, I'm a Christian." "Well, have you been sealed, yet?" "Oh, I don't know." "Well, dude, you better get on your knees and ask God to seal you, man." It's not in the Bible. It happens to you. This is where a lot of people are confused, too. They're seeking, praying, and asking for things that they already have. What a sad thought that I would go through my whole Christian life praying, "God, seal me with Your Holy Spirit." He's like, "You Dumbo, I did it the moment you were saved." He doesn't talk like that, but I'm just expressing myself (maybe a little unsanctified humor, God forgive me). There are Christians praying for, seeking, asking for things that they've already been given. I think that

breaks the heart of God. You need to know what you have in Christ. You have been sealed.

When are believers sealed? Let me break it down. The answer is: The moment they are believing in Christ, they were sealed by the Holy Spirit. The order here is important. Like I said, you heard, you believed, you were sealed. In reformed theology they teach and believe that a sinner, because he's dead in sin, has to be regenerated in order to believe in Jesus Christ. I don't find that teaching anywhere in the Bible. I don't believe that regeneration precedes faith. I believe it happens the moment you trust in Christ that you are regenerated, you're given new life, you are taken out of Adam by the Spirit and placed into Christ, you are indwelt by the Holy Spirit—all of them happen simultaneously, instantaneously to all believers. In verse 13, Paul says, "...in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed," so that happens the moment of your faith in Christ.

Why are we sealed? What's its meaning? The word "sealed" speaks of ownership and security. Today in my study, though I preached this a thousand times, I read some commentaries I hadn't read, and wrote down about seven different descriptive terms that they used. I haven't brought them with me to read to you tonight, but my favorites are that they are ownership, which speaks of authenticity, that you genuinely belong to God, and security. I think that in the context here, both of those are implied. The idea of being sealed with the Holy Spirit means God owns you. He labels you. You are His. It also speaks of security—you're sealed, we're going to see, until you get to heaven, which is the day of redemption.

One of the things I do with all the books that are in my library is I put my name in them because sometimes people will borrow (I'm not encouraging you to do that) and forget to return them, so I'll make sure my name is in them. I'll put my name in a little secret spot so I'll know that's my book. God does the same for you. He puts His name on you. He puts His seal on you. You are sealed by the Holy Spirit. It's God's mark of identification. It's an indication that you are truly a child of God.

James Montgomery Boice said, "Sealing with the Holy Spirit answers all our needs. It assures us of God's favor. It shows us that we belong to Him. It renders our salvation certain." It speaks of ownership and security. The implications are what's kind of frustrating me trying to teach this tonight. The implications of this truth are staggering, are amazing. If you really understand what it means that God seals you the moment you are saved, you're certainly going to be able to say, "I'm His," and "I'm secure," and "My salvation is sure," and "I'm going to go to heaven," no doubt, "because I'm sealed by the Holy Spirit." That was used as often was the case with the signet ring pressed into hot wax. Many times they would use it on a package they would ship or on a letter. They would actually heat the wax, take their signet ring and put a seal on it, and ship it. Ephesus was a port city, so they would receive the shipments in the port and you would know that was your shipment because of the seal. You have been sealed, and you are on your way to heaven.

The third thing I'd like to say about the sealing of the Holy Spirit is how long it lasts. Notice Ephesians 4:30, where you have another clear reference to this work of the Spirit. Paul says,

“And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” There’s no way to get around that statement. It’s definitely clear. Consistent with the idea of being sealed speaks of security that when you are born again and sealed with the Holy Spirit, God will see you safely to heaven. God has sealed us, and it would take someone stronger than God to break the seal. You know, whenever you sent a letter or a package with a seal, only two people could break the seal—the sender or the recipient of what was sent. In this case, God is both—God is the sender, and God is the recipient. We’re in transportation on our way to heaven, so it’s a clear reference to redemption.

Write down also 2 Corinthians 1:22. Paul says, “Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest,” or downpayment, “of the Spirit in our hearts.” Those are the three references in the New Testament to the working of sealing the believer by the Holy Spirit.

When does it take place? The moment of salvation, the moment you believe—you hear, you believe, you are sealed, you’re indwelt, you’re baptized. All of that happens *carte blanche* the moment you are saved or regenerated. I pointed out how long it lasts, until the day of redemption. Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

You know, Christians argue, fight, and debate over what they sometimes like to use the term, “once saved, always saved.” If you want to get Christians riled up, just introduce this subject. Most preachers would avoid it, and I’m thinking right now, I should try to avoid it. But do you know what the implications of being sealed is? It’s that once you’re saved, no one can break the seal. You can read this verse and that verse and argue with me as long as you want. I know because I’ve argued the other side. I’ve been on the other side of the argument. But I’m absolutely, totally convinced from Scripture that this doctrine of being sealed by the Holy Spirit guarantees safe passage to heaven. You want to call it, “once saved, always saved,” I’m fine with that. You want to call it the security of the believer, I’m fine with that. All I know is that I can never be lost from my relationship with God. I’ve been sealed unto the day of redemption.

Number six, last one, is under the same heading. It’s in verse 14. It’s guaranteeing. He just finishes the end of verse 13, talking about the Holy Spirit, he says, “Which is,” this is “...that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest,” there’s our word, “of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession,” and it’s all done, “unto the praise of his glory.” Again, this implies that this sealing of the Holy Spirit is also a guarantee that one day I’ll get to heaven. All these verses speak of the security of the believer. It starts with God’s grace and ends in glory—what begins with grace ends in glory. I love this passage where it speaks of the earnest.

What does “earnest” mean in my King James Bible? Some translations have pledge, some have guarantee or guaranteeing. It actually speaks of a downpayment. It was used in the commercial world as what we would simply know, and this is the easiest way to illustrate it, as the downpayment. How many of you have ever bought a house? Very few people pay cash for a house. I know people are buying houses cash right now, but most people have to put a little money down, as much as they can to get in, and then keep paying every month for the rest of

their lives! Shwooo! You talk about mortgage, I mean it just keeps coming.

This is what the Holy Spirit is. It's the downpayment that God is earnest, that's why the word "earnest" is used. He's sincere. He makes a pledge that He's going to finish the purchase of His possession. Money that's put down on a house or a car is called the downpayment. It's also called earnest money. "Do you want to secure this car? Do you want to buy this car? For us to keep it for you, you've gotta put some money down." "Do you want to buy this refrigerator, this boat," or whatever it might be, "you've gotta put some money down if you're really earnest." God puts His money down. He gives us the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God's downpayment of what He's going to continue doing.

The concept was also conveying what is known as a foretaste or a sample. It's like this: If I buy a house and I put \$100 thousand down, then that is a sample, or a taste, of a lot more money that's going to follow for a long time. The downpayment that we experience right now of the Holy Spirit in us is a taste of what is yet to come. It's a taste of more to come. When you're praying and you feel His peace, when you're singing and you feel His joy, when you read His Word and His peace and joy overflow your life, wait til we get the full dose! Amen? What til we get to heaven. It's like sometimes we gather and worship and say, "This is just like being in heaven. This is like a little taste of heaven." That's exactly what it is when you're gathered with the saints! That's why church is so important. It's like a forerunner of what's going to happen when we get to heaven.

I've met people, "Well, I don't go to church. I don't like to be around Christians, and I don't go to church because you sing too much." Well, you're going to really be bummed out in heaven because there's gonna be a lot of other Christians there, and there's going to be a lot of people singing there for a long time, so you might as well get in the groove right now. You might as well like it.

I love this concept of a foretaste, and here's a classic illustration from the Old Testament. Remember when Israel sent spies into the Promised Land to check it out and only two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, brought back a good report? Do you know what they brought back to show to their fellow countrymen that it was a good land and we should go to it? Grapes. They brought back the grapes of Eshcol. It says the grapes were so big that they put them on a rod or stave and put it over their shoulders to carry, one on the front and the other behind. They pointed to them and said, "Look at these grapes! Try one of these grapes! Taste one of these grapes! That's what's waiting for us!" It's a picture of we can sample what is ours and promised to us when we get to heaven, when our bodies are fully redeemed. It's a foretaste of what is waiting for us. It also means God is earnest, and He will finish it. He doesn't give us the Holy Spirit, take it away, and then decide, "No, I figured I don't really like you that much, so I don't want you in heaven." He gives us the Spirit. He seals us with the Spirit. It speaks of security as well as a mark of ownership.

It was also used another way, and this is glorious! This word "earnest" here in the Greek culture was literally used for an engagement ring. What a beautiful picture! Our salvation isn't

just a commercial transaction but a love relationship. God actually puts an engagement ring on you when He gives you the Holy Spirit. You are the bride of Christ, He's going to take you to heaven, and one day you're going to be reunited with Him. How glorious that is! This guarantee is for, notice verse 14, "until the redemption of the purchased possession," in other words He's already bought you, but He hasn't really taken you to heaven yet.

I've often told you salvation has three tenses: past, present, and future. It wasn't too many weeks ago, when we talked about redemption, that I said you can actually use this concept of redemption past, present, future—I've been redeemed, I'm being redeemed, and I will be redeemed. I've been saved, I'm being saved, I will be saved. You are not yet fully redeemed, and our bodies tell us that every day. Amen? Everybody over 60 says, "Amen! Preach it, brother!" The older you get, the more, "Lord, will You complete this transaction and give me a new body? I want to move out of this house." "...until the redemption of the purchased possession," so your body has not yet been redeemed, but one day it will be, and you will be like unto His glorious body. There will be a transformation that will take place. How glorious that is!

Ray Stedman said, "It is not we who acquire God, but He who acquires us. He has made the downpayment on our lives, the Holy Spirit, and that preserves us as His possession until He returns to claim His purchased possession." I love that! Charles Erdman said, "The sealing of the Spirit is designed to make us certain of the completion of salvation in which the future will bring."

Notice how this all ends, and I'll wrap it up, verse 14. All of it is, "unto the praise of his glory." Remember that statement is given in verse 6, "To the praise of the glory of his grace;" it's given in verse 12, "...to the praise of his glory;" and it's given in closing in verse 14, "...unto the praise of his glory." He starts with doxology and ends with praise, worship, and doxology. How marvelous that is!

The next section, Paul begins to pray for them, verse 18, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling." What begins with grace, verse 4, ends in God's glory, verse 14.

Here's a thought, and it's, I believe, based on this passage and many others, God's number one purpose in your salvation—electing you, redeeming you, and sealing you—is for His glory. It's all for the glory of God. Amen? The Father chose us, the Son redeemed us, and the Holy Spirit has sealed us—don't forget—until the day of redemption is when we go home to be in heaven. Let's pray.