

# The Church's Rich Blessings in Christ.

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[0:00] Good morning.

Good morning. Good morning. For those, good morning, pleasure.! It's a joy to be here. Finally, I know you guys have been praying. We've been praying. And it's just a delight to be here. Thank you for, I just want to say actually, before I get into my sermon this morning, I want to say thank you to you brothers and sisters in Christ for your prayers for us. The past month has been hectic. We're not there yet. We haven't even moved into our new home yet. So we're going to do that tomorrow. But we've, through the hecticness, through the turmoil of it, we've, Lisa and I, felt a sense of peace. I think it's because we know people have been praying for us. So I'm glad to be in a church, a praying church, where people believe in the power of prayer and they do pray for one another. And I hope that that is what we will continue to rely on as God's people, the power of God to move in our midst through the means of prayer.

[1:29] It is not up to us after all, is it? It is by the power of the Holy Spirit. He does it and he uses us. This morning, we'll be in the book of Ephesians, chapter 1, verse 1 to 14.

And it's actually, we're going to start a study through the book of Ephesians.

We'll be going through the book of Ephesians. There's a series of circumstances that is, all of it, under God's providence, I believe, that has led me to decide on preaching through the book of Ephesians.

Because Bishop Dave, about six weeks ago, asked about the Wednesday night Bible study if I would consider doing Ephesians because they were just finishing a book and we can start it in the book of Ephesians.

And I readily jumped at the opportunity to do that because this is my favorite New Testament book. Additionally, the New Testament reading for today is Ephesians, chapter 1.

[2:30] So spurred on by my desire and my intention for the whole church to go through this great book. And coupled with the fact that we are in ordinary time in our liturgical year, I think it's a great time to go through the book of Ephesians.

By the way, ordinary season in the liturgical year is everything but ordinary. It is a wonderful time in the church year for the people of God to enter into a consecrated time of discipleship.

And I hope this is what this season will be as we head forward to Advent. As you also say, so really what I'm saying is that we'll be going through the book of Ephesians and in our Wednesday night Bible study, we'll also be going through the book of Ephesians.

You might say that might be overkill, but I don't think it is. So one of the things we'll be doing, I'm plugging the Wednesday night Bible study here, is that we will be going more slowly through the book.

And I think it will actually help us because we've heard the sermons. We've ourselves, hopefully, have been studying and going through the book. And then we can come and bring our questions to God's word and also be able to dive further in.

[3:48] So I think that will be a marvelous time. And this book is rich. And I think even though we're doing that, we will still not exhaust what God asked for us in this.

And if you have a question about that, you can talk to Bishop Dave. He ran the Wednesday night Bible study. And if you're wondering why I'm preaching through the book of Ephesians and we're going through a series through it, you can talk to Bishop Dobbs because I asked him for permission and he gave it to me.

So this is why I love Bishop. You can be your fall guy. So that's great. So why Ephesians? It's a book that recounts God's saving work in choosing a people for himself.

It's a book that talks about God reconciling people who are alienated from him unto himself and also unto one another.

And I think the book of Ephesians was not written to a specific church despite the name Ephesians. I think it was written by Apostle Paul as an encyclical letter.

[4:57] It's meant to be distributed. Now all of Apostle's letters were distributed, but this one is written with this express purpose. Why do I say that? Because he wrote to it. He was in Ephesus for three years.

And it is the most impersonal of all his letters. There was no greetings to anyone. If you go through the book, there was no particular greetings to anyone. He opens it by telling us who he is and that he's the one writing it.

And then he writes to the church broadly. So I think it's actually very applicable to us because I think it is a letter to the church of Christ wherever they may be, in whatever time or century they may reside.

It's an epistle to which every church should pay heed. And I hope and pray that God the Holy Spirit will bless our time in it and will be our teacher as we go through it.

And in so doing, I hope that God will mold us more and more into the image of our Lord Jesus Christ. There are three things I want us to keep in mind as we go forward in this book.

[6:04] Number one, Paul's goal. And I mean as we go forward, not only in this sermon, but as we go forward in this series, in this series of sermon in the book of Ephesians. The number one thing I want us to keep in mind is that Paul's goal was to explain in detail the role of the church, the body of Christ.

And he wants to explain it in relation to God himself and then in relation to the world at large.

Number two, it was written to a primarily Gentile church.

And it's to remind them that they've been enfolded, enfolded into God's plan of redemption. A plan that was previously only accessible to Jews.

So let's keep that in mind that this is a largely Gentile church that Paul is writing to. And then thirdly, I want us to see through this book that salvation is all of God's grace.

And it's received by faith. I want us to see that the main actor in our salvation is the triune God.

[7:16] God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. They are the main actors in this work. And we are, of course, involved. But our involvement is passive.

We are merely beneficiaries of God's great work. These three things will help us to see the internal logic of Paul's instructions. And especially as we go through the first 14 verses this morning, it will help us to see what Paul is getting to.

So Paul begins the book with a salutation. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God. Paul writes as one sent by God.

That is because he was sent by God. He was personally commissioned by Christ to bring the good news of the gospel to Gentiles. And it is because of this gospel in particular, and the salvation it has wrought in the life of the people he's writing to, that he can extend the greetings, grace to you, and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

The grace of God has reached out to them. And the peace of God is theirs precisely because of the gospel they believed.

[8:41] Do you know that only those who are in Christ can truly lay claim to that kind of greeting? Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. It is only in the church that we can say we have peace with God. Because by grace he has transformed us from enemies and he has made us friends.

The world cannot lay claim to such a relationship with God. And then he goes on in the remainder of this section, verse 3 to 14.

Paul goes on and he expresses, it's actually this part of Paul's epistle is unique to Ephesians. In fact, it's unique to all of the New Testament.

Usually Paul introduces himself and then he goes on and he offers a thanksgiving. I thank God for you, so and so. He does that in Colossians. He does that in his first and second letters to the Corinthians.

[9:52] But here he starts off by blessing God. It is a profound eulogy of praise to God for the blessings that we enjoy as Christians.

And he says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us. Now, we first ought to distinguish here between God blessing us and our blessing him. So, we have nothing with which to bless God, do we? He needs nothing and wants of nothing. He is all sufficient. Now, although the same word is used of God's action to us, he has blessed us, Paul says.

And our response to that blessing is that, blessed be God, although they're the same word, they're vastly different in their content. The similarity is that they're both expressions of approval.

God approves of us in his blessing us, and we approve of what he has done by blessing him. Let me explain it this way, further. Imagine the current richest man in the world.

[11:05] I think according to the people who tabulate these things, it's currently the guy that owns Amazon, Bezos. Imagine he walks in right now, and he says to us, Good people of this church have come to bless you with \$10 million.

Oh, yeah. It's far-fetched, isn't it? Imagine he does that, and we, in gratitude, we say, Jeff, Mr. Bezos, how generous of you.

Bless you, sir. Bless you indeed. Now, he's blessed us with \$10 million, and we've said bless you, but we are not, we're not telling him we're going to give him anything, right, when we bless him. We're not offering him anything. We're just offering him praise. We're merely praising him for his generosity and goodwill to us. Well, God is a million times over more generous than Jeff Bezos. He's given us that which all of human wisdom, all of human wealth, and all of human might cannot buy. God, in his mercy, condescends to bless us.

[12:20] Us. This is particular. Us being the church. Right? It's not the world. It is the church he's condescending to bless in this particular way that Paul is talking about. God is condescending to bless us.

And then Paul, in response to that, in this long sentence, in the Greek, it's actually one run-on sentence that's been gratefully apportioned into verses for us.

But Paul, in this next long sentence, offers an infusive praise to God for all that he has done. In other words, when we bless God, we are praising him.

We're worshipping him. And that's really all we can offer to God, isn't it? That's all we can offer. And in doing so, we are doing what we were created for as God's people.

God's gifts, unlike Jeff Bezos, or any other gifts that we can have in this world, God's gifts does not depreciate. It is eternal.

[13:27] And so, the church, recipients of this great gift, because of these spiritual blessings, we can praise God and worship him. And we will be doing it for eternity.

So, note the nature of these blessings, according to Paul. He says, Praise be to God who has blessed us with every spiritual blessings.

Now, the fact that the blessings are spiritual does not mean that they are immaterial or abstract. In fact, if you possess these blessings that Paul talks about, they will impact every aspect of your life. physical, mental, and spiritual. They are spiritual blessings, however, because they are brought about or effected to us by the Holy Spirit.

These blessings cannot be received and cannot be enjoyed without the controlling activity of God the Holy Spirit in our lives. The second thing that he lets us into is that these blessings are enjoyed in the heavenlies, he says.

[14:35] Or as the ESV puts it, in the heavenly realms. There is more to say about this as we move forward in our study of Ephesians. But the first is to say for now that the scope of this blessing that Paul is talking about is cosmic.

The realities of these blessings goes beyond what we can grasp with our minds and our eyes here and now. Truly, eyes have not seen and ears have not heard.

So Paul goes on. Paul goes on and to tell us and he lists these blessings, these spiritual blessings. He goes on to show in the following verses that these blessings are one, election to holiness, adoptions as sons, redemption and forgiveness and the knowledge of God's plan and will.

The gift of the Holy Spirit and the hope of glory. We will try to go through all of those things briefly. Paul talks about election to holiness in verse 4.

He says, even as God the Father chose us in Him before the foundation of the world. Who is He that chose?

[15:54] And what does it mean to be chosen in Him? What Paul is saying is that God the Father chose us look at the word before the foundation of the world. In whom?

In Him. That is, in Christ. Now, that's in Christ. That's the word, that phrase appears a lot in the New Testament.

Especially in Paul's writings. And I want you to note that the fact, the fact that all the blessings listed in these few verses are listed in Christ or through Christ.

Now, what's the significance of these two words? In Christ. It's perhaps the best self-description of New Testament saints in the first century.

Remember that the word Christians was coined by outsiders to refer to followers of Jesus. It was likely actually meant originally as a term of disparagement.

[17:04] Those are the Christians, the people that followed that guy that was crucified on the tree. Of course, it is stuck and is now a badge of honor. But the first century Christians refer to themselves as in Christ.

That's the self-description they often use. And oftentimes, apostles, in their writings to the church, they will often say, they refer to the followers of Jesus in Christ.

No less than seven times Paul uses the word in Christ or in him to describe and remind us that all the spiritual blessings that we get, that we've been given from God can only be taken and enjoyed in Christ.

as one theologian of the 16th century puts it, we must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us and we are separated from him, all that he's done, all he's done for our salvation remains useless and of no value to us.

In other words, these blessings for which we ought to worship God are only attainable in Christ. Why? Because he, Jesus Christ, is the chosen one of God.

[18:27] He's the beloved son and if we are to have any right standing before God, it has to be in him through the Holy Spirit.

This is a wonderful concept. We cannot fully enjoy salvation, brothers and sisters, without first understanding this doctrine of union with Christ. And it is no less than what I'm sure all of you will confess as Christians, that you are in Christ.

But I think sometimes we function, we act as functional unbelievers. Not that we are believers, we confess Jesus, but the way we act sometimes makes us no different than the rest of the world. What I mean by that is that we can fall into the routine of progressing in our Christian life and thinking we're doing it on our own merits and by our own efforts.

If only we would remember that once we are saved, we are saved into Christ. Christ, this will help us tremendously in our walk with God.

[19:42] If we understand it well that this truth will be such a comfort to us in troubled times, let this be an encouragement to you brothers and sisters, that once you've come into Christ, you are in Him.

You are cocooned, for lack of a better word, in Christ. You are in Him and He is in you. And so Paul continues, he says, God has chosen you in Him.

He repeats that so much that it becomes almost easy to sort of wave away as you reach through Ephesians. But I don't want us to. Because he lists all the blessings and he says it is in Christ or in Him or through Him.

It's really vital for us to grasp that. And he goes on, he says, you've been chosen by God from before the foundation of the world. And for what purpose were you chosen?

Paul says that we were chosen that we should be holy and blameless before Him. This is the ongoing work of salvation.

[20:54] You've been saved from sin and justified before God. Jesus has taken your guilty verdict and its punishment. upon Himself.

And He's given you His righteousness so that you can say before the throne of God on the day of judgment, my plea is that I am justified because there, there is the risen land.

He has made an end to all my sins. He is my righteousness. righteousness. Of course, if you're willing to be honest with yourself, though, you and I don't presently feel holy and blameless.

Do you? No. But God is working in us by the Spirit of Christ, the Blessed Holy Spirit, working in us to progressively conform us more and more into the image of Christ.

Christ. This is the promise of God for those who are in Christ. This is the promise. And Paul expounds on the manner in which God's choosing takes place in verses 4 and 5.

[22:05] He says that it is in love, God's inestimable love, it is in love that He is predestined. The word predestined, another word for it is foreordained.

Foreordain us, for adoption. I want you to observe the train of thought in Paul's language in these two verses. God chose us. When did He choose us?

Before the foundation of the world. Before you were conceived in your mother's womb. Before you could make any contribution to anything. He chose you for ordaining you to sonship.

That word sonship or adoption as sons, is a technical language actually. And it refers to all those who are in Christ. So, male or female, you are all sons of God in a technical sense.

With full rights of inheritance. Do you get it? Because in Paul's time, only sons can inherit. So when he's writing to the church, he says, you are by adoption, sons.

[23:16] sons. You have rights of inheritance. Right? Again, notice that he's writing to a Gentile church. So there's so many elements. He's writing to people who have been alienated from God, outside of the promise.

And he's saying to them, you are sons of God. You have rights of inheritance. So when Paul says, he calls them, he calls them sons, right?

So we've been adopted into Christ as sons, adoption as sons. Election and predestination. These words are loaded, sometimes perennially debated topics in the church.

Many will say, oftentimes, when we talk about these things, what about my free will? Well, Paul says, God freely chose and predestined those whom he will adopt into sonship.

He goes on in verse 11, we'll get there. But he says, it's according to the purpose of his will. He freely chose according to the purpose of his will. So do you then mean to place, if you're questioning God in doing so, do you then mean to place your will, man's will, over against God's free will?

[24:39] That's oftentimes what we do when we do that. Yes, all of us, every man and woman, boy and girl, is responsible for their actions before God. But as Paul will later tell us in Ephesians, and as he did in depth in Romans, all that we did with our will is to choose rebellion, to go against God.

God had to act to change our trajectory. Spurgeon, he says this about predestination, he says, if you cannot find fault with the thin itself that God does, in the name of reason, common sense, and scripture, how dare you find fault with God's intention to do it.

What he means by that is that if you don't question, if you're a believer in Christ, if you don't question the fact that God, in his mercy, has saved you, and you believe it, that you're saved and you're in Christ, if you don't question the fact of your salvation, then why will you question God's intention to do it?

from before time. So, Paul goes on, he says, remember earlier that we said, we said that the purpose of God's choosing a people for himself is for them to be holy and blameless.

But that's just, that's just the proximate end. I mean, but that's just the immediate reason or cause of God doing that.

[26:27] Paul highlights for us numerous times in this book, and it's fairly in these verses, that the ultimate end of God's work of salvation is spelled out for us.

And he spells it out most explicitly in verse 6. He says, it is to the praise of his glorious grace. He repeats that again in verse 12, and he repeats again in verse 14, so that we will remember salvation ultimately is to this end to glorify God, to the praise of his glorious grace.

That might seem to, I've heard people say this, unbelievers say, well, it sounds like God is egomaniacal. everything is about his glory and his praise.

Well, if that were you and I, of course, if we function as if all our action is to get people to praise us, that would be right to say that that guy is an egomaniac.

But this is the Almighty. He is God. There is none like him. there is none like him.

[27:50] He is the fountain of love and all goodness. So, it is only sensible, in fact, it is the ordered way, what I mean by that is the created way, that all things, all things in heaven and earth should redound to his glory and praise.

All things should be about his glory and praise. Do you know that when it is not, that is when things fall out of order. That is when things are destined for destruction and there is turmoil and personal in our own hearts and in the world that we live in.

It is when we don't acknowledge that all of life ought to be about his glory and his praise. so Paul goes on, he goes on and he continues to list the blessings, right?

We've been elected, right? To holiness, we've been adopted as sons, right? Brothers and sisters in Christ, you have right to inherit it, adopted as sons.

And he goes on to say that you've been redeemed and forgiven in him. in him, that is, in the beloved one of the father, Jesus, you and I have redemption.

[29 : 16] In the fullness of time, what God had proposed and intended in eternity past was accomplished in the fullness of time by Jesus on the cross.

And Paul praises God for that. He says, we have redemption, he says, through his blood and forgiveness of our trespasses. We know this, that without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins.

This is true in God's economy. It's always been true in God's economy, even in the Old Testament, since the fall of Adam in Eden.

Without sacrifice involving the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. But it is supremely in the shedding of Jesus' blood that secures our redemption.

His blood shed for us once and for all, the author of Hebrews says, so that he was able to cry on the cross, it is finished, thereby satisfying the wrath of God against our sins for all time.

[30 : 33] This is the means by which we are redeemed. This is why our sins are forgiven.

Redemption and forgiveness, they are so intimately tied together in salvation.

In Christ, we are reconciled to the Father, God, and not only that, it is that we no longer live with the guilt of our sins dangling over our heads.

That is what Paul is saying here. You have been redeemed, but also your sins have been forgiven.

The guilt does not dangle over your head anymore if you are in Christ. This is what true freedom looks like, brothers and sisters.

You are redeemed, you are forgiven, there is now no condemnation for you because you are in Christ Jesus. So all of these riches or wealth of his grace, according to Paul, are in Christ.

Remember Jeff Bezos? I am going to go back to him as an example. He is what some might call the term young kids use this day, stupid rich.

[31 : 46] What they mean by that is that this guy is unimaginably wealthy. Right? But in truth, Bezos' wealth is not inexhaustible.

It is true that he has so much money that a hundred lifetimes he is not going to spend all of it if he has it. But he only has one lifetime. Right? The man himself.

So as big as his wealth is, he is going to die. He has one lifetime like you and I. And all of that wealth will be probably distributed to other entities. The point I'm trying to make is when Paul says that all of this riches of God's and wealth of God's grace, we ought to understand that it stems from a God who is inexhaustible.

The grace itself is from an inexhaustible wellspring. And it's from an eternal source. Right?

Our benefactor, our redeemer, is never going to die. His blessings that he's given us, the church, is never going to run dry.

[33 : 05] We get to enjoy it for eternity. And that's what Paul is trying to let us see here. And that's why he's praising God. Can you see when he says it's lavished upon us?

Paul's description paints the right picture for us, I think. All of God's attributes are infinite. All his blessings are also from this infinite source.

grace. So the idea that God lavished his grace on us, disclosing to us the knowledge of his will, that he has set into plan in Christ from eternity.

This idea, remember that he's talking, again, remember that he's talking to a Gentile church. He's saying, God has done this for you, for us. He's identifying with them.

God has done this for the church. So those who are far off, it is to them that God has now disclosed his plan, especially through the ministry of Paul himself.

[34 : 11] Right? It is especially through his ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles. He's saying, God has disclosed this plan to you. And in doing so, God has done something marvelous.

He's united us to himself. Right? He's united us in Christ to God. But not only that, he's uniting us with one another.

Gentile to Jew, as we will see later on in Ephesians. All that was disjointed and alien from God has been brought near. And they've been reconciled in Christ to God.

And now they've been reconciled to one another as family members. that's the picture he's painting. God's family, sons and daughters, siblings in Christ, being knit together by the merits of our elder brother, Jesus Christ.

So Paul is saying, Paul is effusive. I wish, I wish, you know, we can be there when he's writing this. [35 : 22] I'm sure he's like, you know, this is why it's one long sentence. He's just going on and on. He's being effusive about this. This uniquely Jewish form of praising God.

He says, he's bringing it to a close in the latter verses. He says, he blesses God, again, for the assurance that we have. Right? We have elections to holiness, adoptions as sons and daughters, right?

Redemption of our sins, right? Being knit together into God's family. And then he says, he gives us assurance that we have through the gift of the Holy Spirit and the hope of glory.

He says to us, you have assurance of all of this, all of these things that has happened to you, that is happening to you, you being the church. You have assurance of it.

So you know, you have a tangible assurance of this through the gift of the Holy Spirit and the hope of glory. Again, this doesn't get old, brothers and sisters, and it shouldn't.

[36 : 37] It's a source of deep comfort for us. Because we've been predestined in Christ, according to God's will, we are God's chosen inheritance.

inheritance. Paul says, in verse 11 here, it says, the English verse in our ESV says, we've obtained an inheritance. But I think in the Greek, the verb is actually passive, meaning that the action was done to us rather than us doing the action.

So we weren't the one that obtained an inheritance, rather, it is that Christ has claimed us as God's inheritance. inheritance. We've been claimed as God's inheritance.

We'll talk more about this next week when we get to verse 18 in our study. Paul goes back to this theme. But notice again who it is that claimed, that does the claiming.

It is God. And it's because of our incredible, it's not, it isn't, it isn't because of our incredible good looks, or sunny disposition, or intelligence.

[37 : 50] I can keep going on, hard work. It's not because of our humbleness. It's not because of our grit. None of these things was due, it was due to nothing in us that we were chosen, that we were given this great blessing.

Paul repeats it in verse 11, it was according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will. It is his will that is preeminent.

He accomplished what he wills, and he wills what he accomplishes. And in doing so, God answers to no man, or takes any man's counsel.

It's humbling to think about that, because oftentimes we tend to think, well, I'm saved, I see God's working in me, and then we try to say, let me partner with God.

There's a way in which we partner with God in our work of holiness, but that partnering really is our surrendering to the Holy Spirit's work in our lives. God is God in our God in our efforts, or our actions, or anything in us that is good, you all have good things about you.

[39 : 12] In fact, that is the purpose of being in Christ, that God starts to make us more and more like Jesus Christ. And as we reflect and we see that, oh, by the power of the Holy Spirit, I'm becoming more and more like Christ, we should never then turn and say, well, look at me.

It is because of something in me. It is Christ working in us. It is according to God's purpose and will. It should humble us. Paul goes on.

I want to actually give us an example of how this work, because he goes on in the rest of these, in verse 12 and 13. He says something that is, that for the Gentile church, we might read it and not really notice it, but he's talking to a Gentile church, and he says to them, we were the first to be in Christ, referring to Jews.

He talks about, he alludes to the separation that was there before, and the God uniting them. He says Jews were the first to hope in Christ. We know this, both the Old Testament saints who believed in Jesus, in the promises of God, in Christ, and the apostles themselves, and the earliest converts to Jesus were Jews.

But Paul stresses in verse 13 that even though we were the first to open in Christ, you as well, you Gentiles, you've also heard the word, the gospel.

[40 : 48] you've also believed in this word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and now you've also been enfolded into God's plan. Paul is referring to what happens, what's happening in history,

in God's redemptive history.

he's saying that he took the move of the Holy Spirit among Gentile believers to give credence to their faith. Right?

And he's writing to them, this is proof that you are in Christ, the Holy Spirit being in you. It's proof to you, it is in fact proof to us who were Jews, that you were also in Christ.

Remember what happened with Peter and Cornelius? Remember that Peter, God says, go to the house of this Gentile Roman centurion. I think that might be the first time Peter ever stepped foot in a Gentile's house.

What's that? And what did Peter say, oh yeah, okay, I'll go have dinner with Cornelius? No. He reluctantly went.

[41:58] He obeyed, but he reluctantly went to Cornelius' house. And he starts to preach the gospel of truth, the gospel of salvation to Cornelius and Cornelius' house also. And what happened?

God actually invaded, right? And the Holy Spirit came on Cornelius' house also. And then Peter saw, yes, this is a new thing.

This man, a Roman centurion, a Gentile, is now a family member. This is what Paul is saying. We were the first to open Christ.

We've seen, we've received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. We know we are in Christ and folded into his plan. We're seeing this plan taking form, but we see it also in you.

And you should know it, Gentile believers. You should know that the Holy Spirit in you is proof that you are in Christ, that you are part of God's plan of redemption.

[43:00] You've been folded into God's plan of redemption. redemption. So, I want us to notice the function of the Holy Spirit in this last part.

The Holy Spirit is sealed. He's also the guarantee of our redemption. Yesterday, we saw the bishop give me a license to be your rector. On that document, he affixed his seal on it.

It's an imprint of his office. The very action of putting a seal on something is to say, I've put the weight of my authority and my influence into this decision.

Now, think of God, the Father, and God the Son. They imprinted their seal of a kubah on your salvation by sending the Holy Spirit as a seal.

In other words, God himself is the seal. God, the Holy Spirit, is the seal of your salvation. That's what Paul is saying. When we come to believe in the gospel and trust our life to Jesus, God the Holy Spirit becomes the seal upon our hearts.

[44:12] As if God is saying, my seal is not merely a figurative symbol. That's what the bishop's silly. He's not going to be walking around me 24-7 saying, I approve of him being rector of this church.

It's a figurative, it's binding, it's authoritative, but it's figurative, symbol. But it's not the same with Christ. The seal of our saving, the imprint of the fact that we are in Christ, that we're saved, is the Holy Spirit himself living in us.

God is always with you. God is always by your side, reminding you that you are saved, you're in Christ. God the Holy Spirit is in your heart, reproving you of sin, and conforming you to your Lord Jesus Christ.

Lastly, Paul says that this gospel, God's word of truth, tells us of our future. When we receive it, the Holy Spirit is also, not just a seal, it's also a down payment of that promised future.

That's the guarantee. we just bought a home. And you guys know what that looks like when you buy a home, you have to put a down payment.

[45:35] They don't just say, oh yeah, you get the title to the house, you get the keys to the house, on a promise. You want to live there? Yeah. No, you've got to do something.

It's the same with buying cars, right? Or buying anything of value that is expensive. You put a down payment on it. Paul is saying to us that this is the down payment.

The Holy Spirit himself is the down payment of our salvation. And he's saying to us, he's saying to you, remember verse four when he says we're going to be presented to God holy and blameless, right?

We know we're not holy and blameless, right? But Paul is talking about what would happen. He's actually looking forward to our future. Even now, brothers and sisters, as you war against your weakened and fallen flesh, even now as you war against the powers and principalities of the world,

against the present darkness of this age, fix your eyes on Jesus, your Redeemer, who has given you a seal upon your hearts of the Holy Spirit, who has a seal of his perpetual presence with you, and a guarantee that he will accomplish that which he has started in you.

In fact, it's best for us to see this as in us, because Paul is writing now, not to personal individuals, he's writing to the church. So, church of the Holy Trinity, see this, fix your eyes on Jesus, your Redeemer.

[47:13] In whom and through whom are all the spiritual blessings in the heavenly places, salvation is of the Lord. It was intended by our God before the foundation of the world in his infinite wisdom, and all of it is towards this end, the praise of his glory.

This is our inheritance. This is what we get to revel and thank God for. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you for your work of salvation in us.

Thank you, Lord, that you have redeemed and called the people to yourself. Thank you, Lord, that here in this local body we are members of that body that you have instituted in your son, Jesus Christ.

Thank you for the many blessings you lavish upon us. Help us, Lord, ever to be aware of our status in you, the way you see us in Christ.

Help us, Lord, when the enemy comes and tells us his lies, to remember that we are in Christ. He is our righteousness. He has given us his salvation and we have the Holy Spirit helping us to be more and more like Jesus.

[48:40] Empower us by the power of your Holy Spirit, Lord, to live in a way that is committed to you, committed to your word of truth and the gospel of our salvation.

We pray all of this in your most precious name. Amen. Amen.