

Sealed with the Spirit

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Preacher: Rev Donald M Macleod

[0 : 0 0] together in a word of prayer. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for this time together. Help us, Lord, to come together just now with a spirit, with a right spirit understanding.

We come to this place of worship, this time where we come before a living God, a holy God, a sovereign God. Help us then to conduct ourselves in our minds and our hearts in a way that is appropriate.

Not coming here with a full sense of humility, not seeking just to look the part or to act the part. Help us to truly come here today with our hearts and our souls bowed down before you, confessing that we have nothing in and of ourselves.

We come to the one who has given us everything in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you for that giving. We come just now confessing that in and of ourselves we have little to offer, that in and of ourselves we have no holiness, we have no goodness, we have no righteousness, and of ourselves we have no hope.

But we come today to one who gives us all life, who gives us all hope. Help us, Lord, we ask then to rely on him. Help us this day to find our only hope and trust placed on him.

[1 : 1 6] We ask that it be true for your people here today. Help us as we begin this new week, to begin it, Lord, seeking to serve you in every way possible. We pray just now for our various spheres of influence.

We pray just now for ourselves as a congregation of your people, as a family gathering. Help us to love one another. Help us to seek to build one another up in hope and in truth, to encourage one another.

Help us to pray for one another. Help us to see and regard one another as brothers and sisters, regardless of how we might feel or think about one another. Lord, help us first and foremost to be reminded that we are called to serve you, and we're called to love you, and as we do so, we're called to love our brothers and sisters in the Lord.

We pray for ourselves in our family, in our own homes, in our immediate family circumstances. Help us to be salt and light. Help us to be a witness to them. As often we confess, Lord, that the hardest place to witness is at home with those who are closest to.

Give us, Lord, the patience, and give us the opportunity we ask, and give us the faith to keep on going, even when we see, as I were, no response from our loved ones.

[2 : 3 3] We trust that you are the God who brings your people to yourself, in your time and in your way. We pray for our wider family. We pray, Lord, for just now, for those of us who go out to work day by day, those who work in the community and who work further afield.

We pray, Lord, for those who are seeking to be a witness to you in the workplace. You'd give them the words to say and help them, enable them to be yours, to be yours publicly, and to proclaim in their actions and proclaim in their words the truth what it is to be known and to know the saviour of the world.

We pray to those who study also. The same would be true for them. We know we live in a world that is changing quickly, and those who study and those who work are facing workplaces and places of study that are increasingly against the word and against the gospel.

Give them, Lord, wisdom, we ask. We pray for all of us as we engage in village life. Lord, give us, we ask, gospel opportunities to share naturally the hope we have within us.

As we go to the shop, as we spend our time outside our house, as we walk around this village, as we interact day by day, Lord, give us the opportunities and give us then the wisdom to lay hold on these opportunities and give us the words to say.

[3 : 51] Lord, we aren't crying out to be great apologists. We only cry out that we would be able to share our love for our saviour simply and clearly, with no shame, with no embarrassment, as we proclaim the risen saviour.

As we pray that for ourselves, we also pray for the wider gospel cause in our island, across our nation. Lord, we give you praise that you have your people across this island and across this nation, across all the denominations, across all the churches, but seek to worship you in spirit and through, Lord, we ask you, bless your word as it goes out.

We remember just now, as we pray each week, we pray each now for Stirling Free Church. We pray for them in that transient place where students are coming and going month after month, where there is so much work to be done, where there is so much work to be done getting to know people who are there for a short time, only to go away again.

Lord, you bless these interactions. Bless your people in that place as they seek to serve you, as ministry for them looks perhaps so different to ministry for us, but the same gospel call is there, the same gospel goes out, the same good news is shared, and as one family, we rejoice together as it goes out.

We also pray for ourselves once more. We thank you for this family gathering. We thank you for the years of witness in North Tulsa of this congregation. Lord, we thank you, Lord, for the years of ministry.

[5 : 18] Lord, the last 60, 70-odd years of ministry, we thank you for that. Lord, we ask that you would encourage us here as your people. We do pray as we look forward to the weeks and months, and if you will it, Lord, the years ahead, days of renewing and days of growth.

As we pray for growth and increase in numbers for ourselves, we're not doing it for our sake, Lord, you know that. Not for our fame, not for the fame of a ministry, not for the fame of a correction, not for the fame of a congregation, but for your name's sake, for your glory, that you be glorified in North Tulsa.

As we pray for our own growth, our own increase, our own fervorance of the gospel in our midst, we also pray the same for our brothers and sisters next door. Though, Lord, in some ways, perhaps we note difference in how we may see things and do things, we understand that we are brothers and sisters before the throne.

We pray, Lord, for them in their time of vacancy, what feels perhaps like an impossible vacancy, Lord, as their numbers shrink in terms of men they can call, Lord, we do ask you to provide for them one who would lead them and who would guide them.

We pray for our own students in college, Lord, those men who have undertaken what is a great, but also a solemn privilege of training to share the word.

[6 : 41] We pray for men who have families, wives and children, men who have great burdens, responsibilities outside of our college work, Lord, we ask to be with them. We pray for all the students just now, the students who are coming to an end of their time in college, Lord, you prepare them for the reality of ministry, the reality of the great, but real burden of having a congregation to love and to look after.

We do ask you to raise up new workers. We ask that especially for our own presbytery. As we see, as currently, publicly, no new names coming forward, we do ask that you would raise up men who would diligently and faithfully answer the call to serve you and to serve you in this mission field.

Help us, Lord, to be in prayer for that. As we pray for ourselves in that way, we also pray for ourselves individually as we share the gospel truth and the gospel light to a dark and dying area.

Give us, we ask, every gospel opportunity. Help us then, we ask, to lay hold on these opportunities to share the gospel and to do so clearly and to do so faithfully. To remember we are called to be salt and light.

We are called to be ambassadors of the gospel. Not called to maintain a closed fort. We are called to go out to share, to be missionaries in our homes and missionaries in this place.

[8 : 07] Lord, help us, we ask, as we face the attacks of the world, but also the attacks of the enemy. For we do not fight against flesh and blood, we fight against the evil we see in high places.

The spiritual reality of our ongoing warfare, Lord, we bring that before you. As the evil one, as we seek, as we see encouragements in our own congregation, as we see many encouragements, Lord, we understand that the evil one, that he hates it.

And he is doing, and he will do, all in his power to disrupt and distract and distress us as your people. Lord, keep us from that. Keep us, Lord, from disunity.

Keep us from falling apart. We give you praise now for our unity that comes only from you. Lord, we ask you to kill any squabbles and kill any disunity that is not glorifying to you, that is not essential.

Keep us, Lord, with one mind and one heart, seeking after that one reality. that North Tolstair would ring, Lord, from the Glen down to Gary with the sound of your praise, with the prayers of your people, with your word going about door to door and house to house until we see that day of refreshing, these days of revival.

[9 : 27] Help us to serve you in the day of small things we find ourselves in. Keep us faithful, Lord, we ask. As we pay for our own faithfulness, we give you praise for the faithfulness of brothers and sisters across this world who are suffering at this point in great persecution.

Lord, be with them and encourage them. We can't even begin to enter into their reality, but you know them and you have them and you love them. We bring them before you. Pray once more for Steadfast Global, Lord, for Malcolm and team as they do their work across the world.

Lord, we ask you to be with them just now. Keep them safe, we ask, from the attacks of man but also the attacks of the evil. Give them wisdom. We would see your gospel flourish across the world.

Keep us faithful, Lord, we ask. Keep us relying on you and you alone. And give us this day, we ask, a sense of the glory of the Lord which we worship, who has sealed us and sanctified us in the Spirit who keeps us, looks after us, protects and loves your own.

Asking all these things in the precious name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen. Let's turn to read in God's Word.

[10 : 49] We'll turn later on back to Ephesians, but for our reading just now, turn to 2 Corinthians and chapter 1. That's on page 906 of our church Bibles.

2 Corinthians, chapter 1, page 906. 2 Corinthians, chapter 1, page 906.

Let's hear together the Word of God. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God and Timothy, our brother, to the church of God that is at Corinth with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we're afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation.

[12 : 08] And if we're comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you also share in our comfort.

For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the afflictions we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself.

Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death, but that was to make us rely not on ourselves, but on God, who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us.

On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom, but by the grace of God, and supremely so toward you.

[13 : 23] For we are not writing to you anything other than what you read and understand, and I hope you will fully understand, just as you did partially understand us, that on the day of our Lord Jesus, you will boast of us as we will boast of you.

Because I was sure of this, I wanted to come to you first, so you might have a second experience of grace. I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia, and to come back to you from Macedonia, and have you send me on my way to Judea.

While I was facilitating when I wanted to do this, do I make my plans according to the flesh, ready to say yes, yes, and no, no, at the same time?

As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been yes and no. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not yes and no, but in him it is always yes.

For all the promises of God find their yes in him. For that is why it is through him, but we utter our amen to God for his glory. And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us, and who has also put his seal on us and given us his spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

[14 : 47] But I call God to witness against me. It was to spare you that I refrain from coming again to Corinth. Not that we lord over you in faith, but we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith.

And so on. Give praise to God for his holy and his perfect word. Let's again sing, this time from Sing Psalms and Psalm 139.

Sing Psalms, Psalm 139. It's on page 180. It's Psalm 139A. Psalm 139 on page 180.

Psalm 139, on page 180. We can sing verses 7 down to verse 13 of the psalm.

Psalm 139, verse 7. Where can I from your spirit flee or from your presence go? If to the heavens you are there or in the depths below, if I should take the wings of dawn and dwell beyond the sea, there also you would be my guide, your right hand holding me.

[16 : 00] Psalm 139A, verses 7 to 13 to God's grace. Where can I from your student flee or from your blessed soul?

If to the heavens you are there and fall in the depths below, if I should take the wings of dawn and dwell beyond the sea, then also you would be my guide, your right hand and hold me.

If I should spiritually look high, will I be on your side?

when on the lights alone with me we come trust our last night.

Yet even darkness is no guide to you in any way.

[17 : 47] our darkness is a sight to you the night will shine like day.

Are you so Lord be in me you who hold me on you my in most be you have part within my Father's soul.

your soul. Let's turn to the book of Ephesians chapter 1. Ephesians chapter 1 page 917.

Carrying on the series we're looking at the doctrine of union of Jesus and Ephesians that were united in him. Ephesians chapter 1 we can read verses 13 and verse 14.

Ephesians 1 verses 13 and verse 14. in him in Jesus 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 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it to the praise of his glory.

[19 : 20] So we're carrying on this series throughout this month looking what it means to be in Jesus the glorious doctrine of unity in Jesus.

We saw the last few weeks we saw first of all in Jesus we were chosen we were known in Jesus. Last week we saw we are redeemed we are set free in Jesus.

Well today for a short time we can see the glorious truth that in Jesus we are sealed with the Holy Spirit.

So, so far in him chosen in him redeemed and now in him sealed. Before time chosen and then in time we are set free we are redeemed at the same time we are sealed with the Holy Spirit.

We will spend the majority of our time for the Lord's help on what it means to be sealed but verses 13 and verse 14 there is a progress in these verses. There is a journey we have to follow to help us understand what it is to be sealed in the Spirit.

[20 : 35] So quite simply we have two questions to look at and to answer today. First of all what happens before we are sealed sealed and what does it mean to be sealed?

What happens in the lead up to us being sealed by the Holy Spirit and then what does it actually mean to be sealed by the Holy Spirit?

First of all then what happens before we are sealed? Verse 13 Verse 13 It is all in Jesus In the back of our minds it is all in Jesus all in Him In Him Verse 13 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.

So what happens before we are sealed? Well first of all we hear In Him we heard In Him you also when you heard the word of truth.

Before we are sealed brothers and sisters we first of all we heard. Well how do we hear? How do we hear the good news this good news of the word of truth?

[21 : 48] And this is just to encourage us as we seek to share the gospel through North Tulsa we have to think well how do we hear? And then are we then sharing the same way so that others would hear how we heard?

How do we hear the gospel? This gospel which led to us being sealed how do we hear it? We heard it first of all do we know it often through people not speaking just in terms of sermons we'll get to that we heard it through people didn't we?

At home your parents your siblings your spouse at work perhaps workmates I know we all have different stories different testimonies those of us who know the Lord the Lord you heard it through people as people as people interacted with you quite normally as parents as you heard parents pray for you perhaps year after year as parents asked you and perhaps at times begged you or pushed you to going to church or as you sat there at home sick of hearing parents talk about your need to believe or perhaps sick of hearing parents talk about their love of a saviour you heard from friends friends who knew the Lord who the Lord had saved and perhaps you're of a generation where the very word of the quorum was so terrifying you're almost scared you're almost scared to catch this disease that was going around and your friends were catching you thought oh no if they're catching it

I might be next and friends shared to you and you saw friends you saw their their changed lives you saw those who once perhaps went to the pub and now perhaps didn't who once lived the world and now perhaps didn't I won't look up from the pulpit but it's a fascinating thing when we cleared out the hall for the the TCDL hall for the the carol evening there was of course that Viking longship in the hall that was once in a a pub in town we won't give names and details but the amount of of brothers who had memories seeing that at the time it's you think that's quite funny but actually it's a testimony at once a brother saw that and I I showed some some members of press the cemetery and they also had plenty of memories of that Viking longship now why is it important?

because how did they get from there to where they are now? people shared the gospel with them people shared the good news quite freely with them we heard the good news from people from friends from family brothers and sisters we are the friends and the family we are the community of those who are yet to hear the gospel we have to be engaged in gospel sharing how else do we hear how else do we hear the gospel?

[24 : 41] of course through sermons through the word as it went out week after week perhaps through enjoyable sermons long sermons unenjoyable sermons forced church attendance free church attendance happy church attendance not so happy church attendance either way the word went out and you heard the word and the glorious truth is brothers and sisters the word goes out it has an effect as we heard the word it has to be heard now we praise the Lord that the efficacy the power of the word it's not bound up in the power of preaching itself it's not dependent on how many hours of study I put into the sermon this week of course every minister we seek to study well and that is our job to faithfully study the word and break it down as best we can but the results of the word are not based on my study neither have I based on my preaching we praise the Lord for them

I can I'm sure turn it on if I wanted to and I can go arms and legs and wax lyrical I can share and rhyme every second word I can I can go the full gospel exclamation but I won't save anyone you're not saved by the words I'm saying you're not saved by my preaching style although it's beneficial we try and be interesting and intriguing as we preach we're saved through the word God's word as it goes out brothers and sisters not one person here who knows the Lord brothers and sisters not one of us who's ever saved through a minister we're saved as a minister opens up what?

God's word now we like ministers and we appreciate them and some of us have very strong ties to those whose sermons the Lord used and we give praise to God for that but they didn't save us and they'd be horrified to think that's the way we think no, God through that man used his word to speak to you so we heard the word from other people we heard it perhaps from sermons also our upbringing quite naturally of course we grew up many of us in homes if not Christian homes homes at least saturated with the gospel and from that alone we grew up hearing the word a reminder to us that there are many in Tulsa today many around us today who have not grown up in homes saturated with the gospel and we think well how are they going to hear the gospel sure they've got some beginning in it they don't we said before next door quite often it's not that people are rebelling against the gospel because they know it and they hate it many of them have never heard it in the first place there are countless people in North Tulsa today who have not the beginning of a clue what the gospel is now that's not putting down on them there are smart people here intelligent people but they've just never heard it they've never heard the good news and it's not that they don't come to church it's that they don't know they're invited to church it's not that they don't like the gospel they've never heard the gospel we heard it in our homes we heard it from our families many people around us have not so we heard the gospel from our people from sermons from our upbringing what happens then?

what do we hear? what do we hear? what do we hear the gospel is faithfully preached to us? well we heard the message of sin didn't we? that every one of us were born in rebellion were born hating God were born set for a lost eternity well we heard the truth of that we heard the reality of hell the reality that if we don't come to Christ we're lost we have no hope we have no help as we heard last week we heard that gospel message we also then I hope heard the gospel hope of salvation that yes without Jesus we're lost and helpless and hopeless but with Jesus we have hope eternal sure hope that all who come to him would know and receive that hope for themselves we heard about the joy of repentance I hope that when you come to him as you feel your burdens being lifted off you you feel the freedom you have in Jesus to live a free life in him with full of love and hope and gospel future expectation you heard the free offer of the gospel the gospel is for those who come without without merit the gospel for all those who come without any caveat any caveat it's for all that come to Jesus cry out for that saving grace from him that mercy from him that salvation from him he hears and he saves in him we heard all these things and then in him we believed didn't we in him when you heard the word of truth in all these different ways and believed in him in him the Lord used these methods he used his word however it came to us he used the gospel message however we heard it and he caused that to form in us a belief a salvation what caused us to believe well ultimately of course it's the spirit but that's our second point but what means is God used for preaching perhaps the people but it's the spirit not one Christian is here today as a Christian because of our superior intellect not one of us some of us here are smarter than others in terms of our book knowledge some of us have more ability and others about that there's no doubt that matters nothing when it comes to matters of salvation if you know your Bible off by heart if you don't if you can interpret the most complicated of the theology if you can't if you think that Christians become Christians just through our learning alone you will never be saved because you'll never learn enough they'll never know enough they'll never know enough

Christians become Christians because we achieve a certain level of knowledge that's a world of you that's like the masons we're not a secret club where we gain knowledge and to achieve different levels of special knowledge there's no secret handshakes there's no secret knowledge it's a simple gospel that's how we grow it's all work of the spirit it's not by how much we know it's not even how perfect and how well we live our lives brothers and sisters and friends we all know that as Christians we make a mess of things and if you say and look at Christians and think well if I have to live a holy life to be saved then I can never live a holy life well you're right you can't it's not about how much you know or how holy your life is the gospel is not try and live a better life first then come to Jesus because that way you'll never come you'll never come because your life will never be holy enough to come to Jesus the gospel is come to Jesus in your unholiness in your darkness in your rebellion in everything you have come to Jesus in your lack of knowledge in your zero knowledge come to Jesus it's all a work of the spirit we hear the good news we understand the good news at a high level of knowledge at a low level of knowledge with all the intellect or little intellect we understand the gospel that's why the good news is applicable to children and to adults when we did a children's talk when we prayed for the salvation of the boys and the girls it's not a hollow prayer the gospel can save them my own story not to bring a personal thing into it but just to encourage you brothers and sisters my own story is

[33 : 15] I was probably saved at 11 or 12 I say 12 because I realised but I was probably saved before that in fact I couldn't really tell you when I was saved it was young did I grasp any of it?

not in the slightest did I understand the complexities of any of it? not in the slightest does that matter? not in the slightest the gospel is for all who believe in Jesus young and old able and perhaps less able Jesus does the work through the spirit we heard the word we believed the word and the second we heard the second we believed we are then sealed with the Holy Spirit verse 13 and 14 once more in him when you heard the word of truth the gospel your salvation and believed you heard and believed you are then sealed with the promised Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of our inheritance and so on what does it mean then to be sealed to be sealed with or by the Holy Spirit brothers and sisters how often do we feel unsure?

just think to yourself this past week this is the last time we gathered here how unsure have you felt? unsure in your own faith? unsure perhaps in your ability to serve the Lord?

lacking assurance as to your own salvation? questioning the promises of God and so on and so on we often find ourselves perhaps looking for evidences looking for for tokens of God's love for us and often they can be found but that is not the correct or the helpful way for us to have our belief we are also looking for breadcrumbs not looking just for tokens they were to encourage us yes but that is not supposed to be the basis of our faith how do we know we have heard?

how do we know we have believed? we have had a rubbish week a long week a trying week perhaps a testing week and we think well how do I know that I know? how do I know that I have truly heard?

[35 : 35] that I have truly believed? when our assurance is so small and just so lacking what is the answer? in him we have been sealed with the Holy Spirit that is the very source of our assurance not how we feel how we think brothers and sisters myself with you all I assume together we at times lack assurance don't think for a second your elders and ministers and the whole presbytery doesn't have the same feeling the same thoughts I spent the last week there a week with 45 odd ministers there is not one issue not one problem not one concern in the Christian journey that these faithful brothers have not or are not going through same as the rest of us we are all on the same journey together what happens when we lack assurance we find no evidence perhaps in our world no evidence in ourselves when we worry and concern our hope is not on us not on our feelings or our thoughts it is in the reality but we are sealed in the Holy Spirit the wording there is that of a signet ring on a letter you have got a wax a letter from a king and it has been closed and a signet ring has been dipped in the wax and it has been sealed tight sealed closed and on that letter you have the king's evidence the king's stamp which encloses all the letter contains within it that is the wording being here the Holy Spirit is like that seal that he is like the seal of the king which closes down onto us all the truth and keeps within us all the hope we have which shows us quite simply we are his when our own assurance is lacking when our own evidence is lacking when our thoughts betray us when we feel low and slow and far away the truth is brothers and sisters you and I we have been sealed whether we feel it or not or think it or not it does not change the reality in Jesus we have been sealed with the Holy Spirit once we are saved the Holy Spirit he makes his home in us and we will have a whole series looking at the Holy Spirit

I worry perhaps we have often neglected that person of our Godhead as we are reading the other day about Calvin briefly when you think of Calvin perhaps we think of predestination and election we think of heavy theology what did Calvin write about the most in his academic writings in his scholarly writings it is the Spirit Calvin wrote so much about the Spirit and I worry that today we have thrown away from seeking to understand that glorious third person of the Godhead God the Holy Spirit we are sealed and the second we hear the second we believe he makes us home in us the Holy Spirit comes to reside in us and he never leaves us now there are times his presence feels close and far away there are times by our sin by our waywardness we grieve him and we know that and we feel that but he doesn't leave us he is in us and with us forever until the very end and then for all time he is a seal upon us think of ourselves when we are saved when we are saved it is like a letter that God has closed our salvation is that we are closed is the envelope and the Holy Spirit is the seal that is placed on top of it and our salvation is sealed by the Spirit and is there as an evidence for us that seal that he is with us never to leave us and despite how small how useless how far away we feel the seal does not get removed from us it is never ripped off it is never torn off it is never melted off it is there until our dying day we will see in a second it is there until we enter into glory so what then does this seal mean for us as Christians what does it mean for us in practice that we are sealed that we are kept that we are enclosed by the Holy Spirit if we come to a conclusion just four ways that matters the seal of the Holy Spirit on the letter of our lives it means that we are known the royal seal of the Holy Spirit it marks us out as one of God's people it reminds us and it shows us that for all the situations in life that we are indelibly unchangeably marked as the Lord's people regardless of your life regardless of your current condition your faith my brothers and sisters your faith may waver your family situation will indefinitely change your personal situation your mental situation your physical situation at times your spiritual situation all these things change they will all change as the years roll by what will not change is that mark you have as being kept and being known as one of the Lord's people so the seal of the Spirit tells us we are known secondly the seal means we are protected a letter that bears the King's seal it's a letter that no one can touch

I think of ourselves our own social political system we have embassies and we have those who work in embassies and diplomats and everything else and in theory they are untouchable as they do their job in this world they are protected as it were by their government brothers and sisters what are we called to be we will see this with the Lord's help this evening what are we called to be in this world we are missionaries yes we are also what ambassadors we are the embassy staff of this world as we do a better business we are the ambassadors every one of us as believers we are called to proclaim the goodness of God and the hope of the gospel as we do so we do it sealed under his protection and yes you will face the reality of living in a sin sick world your own sin the sin of others we all know that but ultimately you are protected brothers and sisters because of this seal in your life you will never know hell you will never know the destruction of your body and soul in the lake of fire you will never know that the righteous judgement of God kind out towards you you will never know that you never have to know that you never have to know that because you are protected even more immediately in life you will yes be buffeted and battered by the winds of this world yes the devil will seek to distress you and distract you and attempt to destroy you but he will never have you brothers and sisters you are eternally safe eternally protected now we said in our prayer and we have been saying it the last few weeks but we are covering this

God willing as we go on through the year looking at spiritual warfare brothers and sisters if you haven't filmed this already as time goes on I am more than certain that this year or next year we will all experience it Satan is making war against us as a congregation against us as individuals because the gospel is going out and he seeks to distress us and distract us and destroy us and it hurts and it is vicious and it feels awful at times and it is miserable at times as he attacks you and attacks you in various ways but he will never have you you have that seal on your life the Holy Spirit who protects you you will never be his you were his once you will never be his ever again you are sealed by the Holy Spirit your soul is safe from him the seal means we are known and protected it also means we will be kept until the very end kept until the end this seal on the letter of our lives the seal of the Holy Spirit is not removed you see that he is in verse 14 the Holy Spirit the seal of the Holy Spirit it is a guarantee of what?

the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it until very important we don't miss the we words there until for every second of every minute of every hour of every day of every year of our lives we are kept we are kept until the very end and the seal is never removed we are protected we are kept for all the terror and horrors of this world we are kept for all your and my waywardness we are kept for our times of backsliding to our shame we are kept as we go through this life limping and worrying dragging ourselves along we are kept all in all we are kept until the very end not in your strength or my strength one bout of flu and I've been not cold for a week our strength isn't real our strength fails so quickly in his strength in his strength alone we are kept until the end and finally the sealing of the Holy Spirit as verse 14 shows us quite beautifully the seal shows us that we have an eternal guarantee the Spirit who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it to the praise of his glory

[46 : 43] I don't know about yourselves but at times heaven feels pretty far away at times it feels as if the journey of our lives is difficult it feels complicated it feels as if we are just dragging our legs through the mud as it were the Spirit reminds us and his very seal in our life the seal in our life it shows us that we have in him an eternal guarantee at times hope is hard to find at times the days feel perhaps so long brothers and sisters you are sealed and set apart in and through the Holy Spirit through the finished work of Jesus and in him in Jesus with the sealing of the Spirit we have a guaranteed eternity the Spirit who is a guarantee of our inheritance what's our inheritance?

glory our eternity of the new heavens the new earth spent with our Saviour spent with brothers and sisters for all time that is our future and every day however we feel or think the Holy Spirit is our guarantee we are known we are protected we are kept and we have this eternal guarantee but one day we will possess for ourselves eternity and spend it with our Saviour my friends as we come to a conclusion this is of course all good news for the Christians here today this applies only to them it applies only to those being sealed by the Holy Spirit so the question is of course then what about you?

all the privileges we have heard today the privileges of what it is to be sealed in the Holy Spirit that that knowledge that you are known that knowledge that you are protected that you are kept of eternal glory you can't have any of that until you first hear and believe and again and again every week it is the same way we conclude because it is the same message we have in front of us you cannot and you will not have the benefits of Christ without first having Christ himself all these weeks last weeks it is all the benefits of loving Jesus the benefits of loving Jesus the benefits cannot be yours until you have him and know him yourself and once you know him yourself then you will know what it is to be redeemed in him and to be sealed by the Spirit in him until you first come to know him quite simply none of this matters come and know come and know what it is to be known by him protected by him kept by him and promised eternal life in him there is no barrier about yourself today you have heard the gospel once more come take receive believe knock and see the door open to you let's bow our heads in that a word of prayer

Lord we thank you once more for the glorious gift of the word Lord help us to understand what we have heard today we understand we are dealing with theology that has times quite complicated and quite deep for us Lord we give you praise that even through complicated theology we have a great promise that you keep your people and that you love us and through it all Lord we have a great promise that the Holy Spirit that he has sealed your people and because we are sealed we have these great promises that we are known and kept we will persevere that we are loved and that one day we will possess for ourselves eternally spent with our Saviour until these days come help us to be faithful I pray once more for our friends who as of yet don't have that seal in their lives Lord they would come to know what it is to be sealed and set aside with the Spirit for any here who do know that but who as of yet haven't made public profession of it we ask this year would be the year they make that public profession that they are those who are known and loved and sealed by the Spirit thank you Lord for the ones each week who lead the praise the sung praise we thank you for it we give you a worship Lord that you've given us songs to sing songs from your word help us then until they hold on these songs and to understand we come before you to sing your praise as we're doing so and what we're doing is of equal importance as the reading of the word the preaching of the word we're joined together in worship of our risen Saviour in his name and for his sake we ask these many things

Amen we can conclude with the psalm we had psalm 139a and sing psalms psalm 139a verses 14 down to verse 18 sing psalms psalm 139a verses 14 down to verse 18 because I am wonderfully made with all your praise I tell your workmanship is marvelous and this I know full well within the secret place my frame was made before my birth you saw my body yet unformed within the depths of earth psalm 139 verses 14 to 18 to cause praise please please because I'm wonderful in it with all your praise

[52 : 57] I tell you were you were my children's marvelous marvelous I know full well when in the sweet in this I live was given for my birth for my birth you saw my body yet unformed within the depth of earth and all the things that I should live which you are being for me where it is in your blue you are before they came to me before they came to me

O God how precious are your thoughts I scan them from afar and as I see to grasp them all how numberless they are when I took when I took pride then they would be for hundred things of sun when I awake I am with you I am with you to stay within your hands

In the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit both you now and forevermore Amen