

Hearing with the Heart

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[0 : 0 0] The New Testament Scriptures and the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians and Chapter 1.
The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians and Chapter 1, reading from the beginning.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus, grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace, wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him, in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things, after the counsel of his own will, that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ, in whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power, to us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which ye wrought in Christ, when ye raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.

And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head, over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him, that filleth all in all.

[3 : 5 5] Amen. And may God bless to us that reading from his word, and to his name be all the praise. It is further sing to his praise, this time from Psalm 119, and at verse 57.

Psalm 119, verses 57 to 60, these four stanzas, Thou my sure portion art alone, which I did choose, O Lord, I have resolved and said, that I would keep thy holy word, with my whole heart, I did entreat thy face, and favour free, according to thy gracious word, be merciful to me.

I thought upon my former ways, and did my life well try, and to thy testimonies pure, my feet then turned and I, I did not stay nor linger long, as those that slothful are, but hastily thy laws to keep, myself I did prepare.

These stanzas of Psalm 119, verses 57 to 60, to God's praise, Thou my sure portion art alone. Amen. Thou my sure portion, are God alone, which I did choose, O Lord, I have resolved and said, that I would hear thy holy word, with my whole heart, I did entreat thee, thy face unfiltered thee, and glory to thy gracious word, be merciful to thee.

I took care, I took care, for my former ways, and did my life well try, and to thy self-share, O Lord, and to thy rue, and to thy■, myHer■, and never led thee, and that I, that I gave, In our shame are ignorant, m■ asked those that sought out and heard history I lost to give myself my day prepared.

[7 : 33] Now, as the Lord enables us, let us turn to consider the words we have in this portion of Scripture we've read together. The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians in chapter 1.

And reading again at verse 13. Reading verse 12 into 13.

That we should be to the praise of his glory who first trusted in Christ, in whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

The city of Ephesus, which was in Asia Minor, present day geographically it's southwestern area of Turkey.

That city of Ephesus was visited by the Apostle Paul on his missionary journey. The city itself was a fairly large city at the time.

[9 : 11] Expositors think it had a population maybe of up to 300,000 people, maybe something of the size of Aberdeen, or one of these Scottish cities.

But it was a very busy place as well. It was on the east-west trade route, and of course trade coming from Rome, going to the east, and coming from the east towards Rome.

And much of it was passing through Ephesus. And beside it being a very busy city from that point of view, it was a Greek culture.

And a Greek religious culture prevailed. And you know that the Greeks bowed the knee to 12 different gods.

And in Ephesus was the Temple of Diana. It was, it's named as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

[10 : 24] Magnificent building, evidently. But what was going on within its walls wasn't in any way magnificent. It was a hive of idolatry and uncleanness associated with idolatry.

Nevertheless, the Apostle Paul and Apollos, Apollos is mentioned as an eloquent man and mighty in the scriptures, are both led to preach the gospel in Ephesus.

And I'll read a couple of verses from the account we have in the Book of Acts, chapter 19, regarding Paul's visit to Ephesus.

And it says, chapter 19, verse 19, that many of them who used curious arts brought their books together and burned them before all men.

And they counted the price of them and founded 50,000 pieces of silver. And verse 20 says, Such was the power of the gospel in the hand of the Spirit in Ephesus, that place that was so worldly busy and that place that was so full of sinful activity and idolatry.

[12 : 04] the gospel prevailed among them to such an extent. And about 10 years after the Apostle had been there and he spent three years in Ephesus, he writes this letter to them.

And part of the burden that the Apostle has in this particular letter is that he wants to make sure that there isn't a division developing between Jewish believers and Gentile believers.

The Jews embraced the gospel, of course, at the day of Pentecost in a very marvellous way. But as the Apostle was preaching the gospel among the Gentiles, the Gentiles also were embracing the word of God.

And in verse 12 here in chapter 1 it says that we should be to the praise of his glory who first trusted in Christ, reference to the Jewish communities, who first trusted in Christ.

But then in verse 13, in whom ye also trusted, Gentiles, people in Ephesus, people who belonged to the Gentile world, who weren't Jewish, of origin.

[13 : 29] And the Apostle in verses 13 and 14 here, he focuses particularly on the way the Gentiles embraced the gospel.

I'd just like to say one or two words, first of all, in relation to the way the gospel was embraced by them. It says here, verse 13, in whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth.

That's the first point I want. They heard the word of truth from Apollos and from Paul. Secondly, the effect accompanying the gospel having been heard by them.

It says here that they believed, in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.

The faith that they had was a saving faith and accompanying that saving faith they had the seal of the Spirit of God.

[14 : 52] I just want to say two or three words on each of these headings. First of all, the fact that they heard the word. In whom it says ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth.

I want to say a word or two about these words word of truth. As you know the Greeks were famous for oratory and philosophical reasoning and philosophical thinking and the opinions of people counted a lot especially people who were ranked highly among philosophers.

but the word of God comes into such an environment and into such a climate as the word of truth.

The word that is the benchmark of truth. It's the truth concerning the being of God. God is a spirit our catechism sums it up infinite eternal unchangeable in his being wisdom power holiness justice goodness and truth.

and when you turn to Acts chapter 20 when Paul is addressing the Ephesian elders you can read this after you go home he tells them that when he was with them he didn't hold back anything from them but preached unto them the whole counsel of God all the counsel of God he would have spoken about election spoken about God's holiness and that he cannot bear to look upon sin he would have spoken about God's providence and God's way of salvation in Christ and the perseverance of the saints you name it the apostle Paul didn't leave anything that was of edification to these people he didn't leave anything out he gave them the truth of the gospel he spoke to them

[17 : 19] I am sure about the depravity of human nature that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked who can know it he would have spoken to them about the one way of salvation in Christ Jesus and Jesus says come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest and there is rest in no one else no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved and the apostle gave them the whole of the truth of the gospel isn't it amazing as he writes to this young church in Ephesus the depth of theology that he brings before them I mean if you look he goes all the way back from verse 3 onwards to the election of God when he says blessed be the

God and Father of our Lord Jesus who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ according as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before him in love having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will to the praise of his glory of his grace and so on in whom we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace the apostle brought the full gamut of the truth of God before these people and we have to be thankful don't we that we have had ministries in our congregations where the whole truth of God has been brought before our people God will bless his truth as he has blessed it to these people in

Ephesus after they heard the word of truth the gospel of their salvation then they believed and it says here after that they heard it well first of all those who had physical hearing they heard the word they heard Paul and Apollos preaching and we have been privileged to hear many ministers of the gospel maybe from this pulpit you've heard many from the pulpits of our island and of our land and even in these days when you're able to go on zoom you can hear people preaching in other parts of the world but there is hearing and there is hearing the

Lord Jesus said you who have ears to hear hear that word is a commandment it's not an option for those who have ears to hear let them hear it's an imperative we'd better hear give attention to what the word of God is saying but you see there's another level of hearing and that's the level at which the Holy Spirit makes the word of God effectual to our souls it's as if I can use the picture he opens the ears of our soul to hear the word of God so that it does business with us right in our hearts and in the depths of our being so that we acknowledge and agree with what the word of

God is saying about God that he is the God with whom we have to do that he is the judge of all the earth that he is all seeing and all knowing and he knows us through and through and that at last we thought and word and action that we have had in our experience while during this life we've had in the world and we realize that we are lost sinners the Bible says that so clearly all have sinned and come short of the glory of God but only those whose spiritual hearing is attuned to the word of God only they will take that to heart we are lost by nature and unable to save ourselves we are on the road to destruction as we are by nature and the gospel speaks so clearly to those who realize that that's the road they're on and the gospel says look unto me and be saved all the ends of the earth even people in

[22 : 51] Ephesus to the Jewish mind Ephesus was at the ends of the earth but the people in Ephesus heard the word and the word dealt with them in their souls and they realized their lostness and their need for eternity and God who opened their spiritual hearing worked in their hearts in such a way as to give them the grace of faith not only did they believe the historical word the written word but they believed it in such a way as to commit themselves to the God of the word as their own God and as a God who is able to save them from their sins I suppose looking back over the years you've sat in that seat on many many occasions and you've heard many a sermon from this pulpit and maybe you've got a good memory a retentive memory you can remember people maybe preaching on these words

I don't know on many other texts but the question is has it permeated into the depths of your soul in such a way that you're just you're hearing it for your soul rather than just for your physical hearing are you hearing it and receiving it these people they heard the word and also it says secondly that they believe because it was the gospel of your salvation it was so pointed it was so relevant to the state and to the situation in which they found themselves under the preaching of the word the gospel became so relevant and appropriate it was personalized to them and they received it for themselves what does it mean that they believed well if you look at the catechism and the confession of faith it highlights that the essence of saving faith is a trusting in the

Lord Jesus Christ for your salvation a leaning upon him just as the church in the wilderness comes up from the wilderness leaning upon her beloved you find that in song of Solomon chapter 8 who is this that comes up from the wilderness leaning upon our beloved oh it's the people who have heard the gospel it's the people who have identified Jesus as a suitable saviour for them and they have left every other hope for eternity but him and they hold on to him and rely upon him and trust in him for time and for eternity what is true of those who rely upon Jesus and trust in him in that way well you find that the scripture speaks of them as those whose sins are now forgiven whose iniquities are cleansed who are in a new relationship with

God who no longer condemns them but who receives them as sons and daughters into his family what an amazing experience that must have been to these people who had been practicing the black arts as we see here in Acts chapter 19 those who had used the curious arts they brought their books and burnt them counted the price of them 50,000 pieces of silver what's that in comparison to salvation for my soul they were so glad to get rid of that lifestyle so mightily grew the word of God and may the word of God mightily grow in North Tulsa and in your heart and in my heart to such an extent that we're willing to turn away from every known sin and come into ourselves to Jesus who's the only sinner saviour the sinner saviour and he was receiving sinners then 2000 years ago in Ephesus and he received sinners still when you go back in the

Old Testament it's interesting when you read the account of the saints in the Old Testament in that summary we have or that list we have of men of faith and women of faith in Hebrews 11 you go back to a man called Noah and Noah heard the word of God regarding a coming flood and it says of him that he feared and he set about building an ark for the saving of his own life and the life of his family he believed what God said and he acted on what God asked of him he had faith and then you come to discuss what it says about Abraham he was the friend of God and then you discuss what he what the scripture says about

[29 : 19] Moses who was brought up in the court of Pharaoh having access to all the education of the Egyptians and they were very far advanced but then it says about him that when he came of age he didn't want to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter rather he chose to suffer affliction with the people of God than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season he was looking to something better he had heard the word and he had laid the word of God up in his heart and he acted upon it knowing the truth of the word and the truth of the promises of God and he looked for a city whose builder and maker is God and it says here that these people believed and then it says at the end of verse 13 you were sealed with that holy spirit of promise it says that faith and the sealing of the holy spirit happened at the same time what does it mean to be sealed with the holy spirit well in the olden days you may remember they used to have a document that was going to be an official document and some words or something of that nature melted and dropped on the end of it and an impression was made on the words an impression made to signify the genuineness of the document and the authority of the one who was signing it the lawyers very often had things like that something like what we had years ago the kite mark on something that was approved came up to a certain standard that was a seal a sign that the thing was genuine and this is what we have here regarding the people of God that they were sealed with that holy spirit of promise it's as if the Lord is saying about them they're the genuine article and as proof of the fact that it is a genuine article that they are genuine believers

I have given them my holy spirit to dwell within them do you remember the scripture says elsewhere you the Christian community you are the temple of the holy spirit the holy spirit came down into the temple when Solomon was praying at the dedication of the new temple in Jerusalem filled the whole building so it is through here also with every child of God sealed with that holy spirit of promise they must show though by their lifestyle that they are the genuine article if you have the mark upon you the mark requires that it that you show yourself that the mark is genuine and that you are the genuine article according to the mark that's on you

I mean by that is what I mean by that is those who have the holy spirit they will bear the the gift or the fruit of the spirit in their lives love joy peace long suffering and so on you find them in Galatians that fruit of the spirit is clearly obvious in the life of those who are sealed with that holy spirit of promise in other words those who have the holy spirit they are spiritual and godly people they show forth the praises of him who called them out of darkness into his marvelous light they show that their children of god by the way they talk by the things they do by the places they go by the company they choose remember the way

Ruth was challenged by Naomi after Naomi decided to go back to Bethlehem Judah she challenged her to go back to her people and to her gods but you remember that Ruth said entreat me not to leave you or to turn from following after you or your people are my people your god is my god where you go I go where you dwell I dwell where you die I die and there will I be buried she was making so clear that she had a heart attachment to this godly woman and so it still is those who have the holy spirit they see the spirit in other people it's as if they gravitate towards them there was a man we used to have him at our fellowship in cross once or twice he was there a man called some of you will know him will have known him we have him and he was saying that when he was first converted he was sailing merchant service and he was a shore in a foreign country and he saw this colored gentleman walking to him smiling and

Donoghue said well I don't know this man and he said to him I don't think I know you no he said but the Christ in me is smiling at the Christ in you I had never seen the man before and he felt that that was the Holy Spirit dealing with them both as it were children of the same father and the Holy Spirit gave them to gravitate together towards each other in that particular way that's an amazing story I think but it certainly illustrates what this is talking about those who are sealed with that Holy Spirit they know the company they like and it's the company of God's people the company of Jesus Christ that's why they pray so often they know what they like to hear that's why they're in church so often listening to the word of

[37 : 45] God expounded it feeds their soul strengthens their spirit as they walk on but then there's something else here they were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise in verse 14 that Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory that Holy Spirit it's an earnest of our inheritance now that word it talks about something that you give as part of a whole in the olden days if somebody was going to buy a piece of land and after inspecting the piece of land the man who's selling the land to him would get his spade and give him a piece of turf a piece of the earth and he would take this as an earnest of the inheritance this is part of it part of the land that I've bought and this is the

Holy Spirit with us here the earnest of our inheritance he has come into our hearts and lives to enlighten our minds in the knowledge of Christ to renew our wills persuading and enabling us to embrace Jesus Christ as he's freely offered in the gospel and he has come to stay he has come in a day of grace but the Lord promises that glory awaits those into whose hearts and lives the Lord comes in a saving way in a day of grace he giveth grace and glory and there is an unbreakable chain golden chain between the situation of grace in your heart and the situation to which the Lord is bringing you glory in glory if you are a believer in Jesus today it is absolutely certain on the basis of what

God says in his word that you will also enjoy glory grace is glory in seed and glory is grace in flower one of the Puritans wrote that and this is what was happening in Ephesus the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory the redemption of the purchased possession what possession is it well it is the glory that Christ has secured for all of his people and when that glory will be realised for you is at the end of life's journey the end of life's journey the apostle

John put it this way talking about what lay ahead of him he says we know not yet what we shall be but we know that when we see him we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is and when you read in Revelation chapter 7 you find that amazing company gathered there clothed with white robes and palms in their hands eyes and John says the lamb in the midst of the throne shall feed them and lead them unto living fountains of water and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and the prophet

Isaiah says their sun shall no more go down neither shall the moon withdraw itself their sun shall no more go down in this world we find that our sun of experience goes behind a cloud we find all kinds of temptations and all kinds of difficulties and trials and afflictions and heart aches until the sun is seen by us again I'm talking about spiritual blessings but there nothing shall hide the sun from us nothing shall keep the blessing of God from filling our hearts and souls and minds throughout the endless ages of eternity who wouldn't want to embrace

[43 : 34] Christ as saviour who wouldn't want to have this Christ as hope of glory who wouldn't want to be sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise who wouldn't want to enjoy the eternal inheritance that Christ has purchased for his people may it be true of all of us that we hear the word of truth as the gospel of our salvation and may it be true of us that we believe in his name and be sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession and to the praise of his glory amen let us pray Lord our

God give us to know the love of Jesus filling our hearts and give us to know the power of your love enabling us to walk in your ways we thank you Lord that your grace gives us strength to follow you and we pray that you would bless each one present here today remember the children in the Sabbath school and may the teaching that they receive there bear much fruit in their lives in the days and years that lie ahead we pray for your blessing upon us now as we send your praise in conclusion and forgive our sins which are many in Jesus name amen