

Our Inheritance In Him

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[0 : 00] Ephesians chapter 1, Paul's editor to the Ephesians in chapter 1. I'm going to continue in this chapter for the time being. I'm not quite sure how long to continue it for, but that depends on a number of things. But we'll continue for the time being. We've looked at verse 3 down to verse 7, or just verse 6. Then we've looked at verse 6 down to verse 10. And now I want to take up the reading again at verse 11. So Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 11, page 1174, where Paul says, In him, that's in Christ, we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of 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.

One of the things they tell ministers if you're preparing a sermon is to read the passage over and over and over, before you even look at a book, to read the passage over and over and over again. And it's a very good practice. Sometimes it feels a bit tedious because you're reading the same thing over and over, but it's amazing how if you read something over and over again, then eventually things come to you from the passage that you've never noticed before.

And as I've been trying to read this passage over and over again, you know, it's not even what Paul says, but it's the whole atmosphere of how Paul is speaking and he's writing.

[2 : 09] You can sense that there is a joy in Paul. It just seems to leap off the page to you. You can almost close your eyes and picture him thinking about what he's writing.

And it's almost as if, I guess, he was using a secretary. They did that in those days. In fact, there's evidence that Paul had to use a secretary. But he's kind of just, the words are spilling out all the time.

And the secretary can't keep up with him trying to write all that's coming out. In fact, that's why if you ever notice, if you read the authorized version, that half of this chapter is one long sentence.

That's all. There's no break. It must be the longest sentence in any piece of literature in the world. From three all the way down to 14 is one sentence. And that gives an idea of the sense of the spirit and the enthusiasm and the joy which was in the apostle.

He couldn't contain himself as he was writing these things. Now, I'm asking this evening, what is it that gives the apostle such joy? And why is it that he's so full of what he's writing with?

[3 : 24] And why is it that I don't have this joy? You see, as I compare my own self and what's in my own heart, and what I see around me, perhaps, of the modern church, and I'm not criticizing any other church.

We have to start putting our own house in order. And our own house starts with ourselves and what we are individually. There's no point in pointing the finger when we are not in the right condition ourselves.

But when I come back to the Bible and I compare the sense, the spirit in which Paul is speaking, and he's writing these words, I ask myself, why is it that that same sense of enthusiasm and vigor, and that same sense of fervency, is not in my heart tonight?

And my prayer is that the Lord will bring me back to that same sense of fervency and bring us all back. Because one of the questions we frequently ask, quite rightly so, is why are we not the way we should be as a church?

Why are we not living as Christians the way we ought to be living? Oh, we can point to our riches and the fact that we're well off in this world, our materialism, we live in a modern Western world, and there are so many distractions.

[4 : 40] All these things are true. But what's also true is that God is able to overcome all these obstacles and challenges. But what I think also is true, despite whatever our surroundings is, that somehow or other we've lost sight of what we are as God's people and what we've got as God's people.

And the preciousness and the value of what our possession is as God. Now, Paul never lost sight of that. That's why he was driven his whole life to share the gospel.

He wanted more than anything else for other people to have what he had. Why did he have such desire and longing for other people to have? And why don't we have that same desire?

And I hope we do. I hope that I'm not quite telling the truth when I say, I hope, I hope that we haven't lost sight of it altogether. And I hope that I pray that the Lord will bring us, bring us to see what is written here.

Because whatever is wrong with us, whatever is wrong with me, there's an answer to it in the Bible. God doesn't give up on us. We need to think, oh, well, God has turned. I hear people saying, oh, God has hidden his face from us.

[5 : 51] Well, I don't even know what that means, hidden his face from us. The Bible tells me that nothing can separate me from the love of God and that God's purpose today is the same as it always was and that the gospel is the power of God and salvation.

I'm not, perhaps we're living in a day of small things. That's fine. That's fine. That's God's purpose. But at the same time, it doesn't give me an excuse to live a sub-rate Christian life.

And I want to come back tonight and I want to appreciate and to value what I have. You know the same way as you value the things that are in your house sometimes.

You know, you go up into the attic and you haven't been there for 40, 50 years and you come across a painting and somebody's with you and they say, you know, I think that painting's worth something. And you think, oh, it's a horrible thing.

I've thrown it out ages ago. Let's take it to the valuer. So you take it to the valuer. You take it to one of these Sotheby places or whatever and they'll put a value on it. It might be worth half a million for all you know.

[6 : 49] But you've got to take it to the valuer in order for you to, and I tell you, if it's worth half a million, it won't be up in the loft for much longer. It'll be down on public display so that you can appreciate its value.

I remember reading a newspaper once of a family who went to this exhibition of vases once and they came across this vase and it was encased in a bulletproof case and it was a Ming vase from China and it was from the Ming, one of the only ones, there was a handful of them in the world and its value was over a million pounds.

This is true. And the wee boy said to his mum, that looks like the vase that's in our living room. And the mum came across and she, sure enough, it looked exactly like it. She says, it must be a replica. But in any case, we'll get the vase valued.

So off they went to the valuer and sure enough, would you believe, the very thing that's been sitting as a common item of furniture on the piano or on the shelf is a million pounds.

I think that's what's wrong. Because the gospel sits in our hearts as a common item of furniture, we're perhaps so used to it. Some of us are grown up, me included, from the time that we were young.

[7 : 57] And the fact is that familiarity has bred contempt. Perhaps not contempt, but it's bred lethargy amongst us. And that's why it's so important to come back to a passage like this in which Paul, having been saved by grace, in which he's recounting, he's counting his blessings, he's counting his money, as it were, his treasure.

He's viewing his treasure. He's going back to it. And he's valuing it. And he's treasuring it. And he's relishing in it. And he's reveling in his treasure.

And I hope that tonight that that should be the same with us. That we never, ever lose sight of what God has done for us. Look at what he says. He says, first of all, that in him, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places.

That's why the apostle Paul was able to say, I have learned to be content whatever my circumstances. Why? Because the circumstances were easy. No, they weren't. He was shipwrecked.

He was persecuted. He was imprisoned. He was impoverished. He didn't have a penny to his name sometimes. And yet he's able to say, for me to live is Christ and to die is gain. I have learned to be content. Why?

[9 : 07] Because he knows that God has given him everything. He has everything in Christ. He goes on. And he tells us that in him, even as he has chosen us, in him before the foundation of the world, look at the spirit in which he's saying, it's not some kind of theological mystery which he's trying to unravel and trying to, the problem is, of course, that throughout the ages, throughout the centuries, Christians have divided over this.

And you know what we've done? We've tended to ignore it because we're such nice people. We don't want to fall out with one another. Well, of course we don't. But that doesn't mean we ignore what God has said plainly in his word.

There it is, black and white. God has chosen. We saw this a few weeks ago. It's black and white. God has chosen those who are going to be his. Now, don't argue about it. Just enjoy it.

And accept it as the truth. And don't use it as an excuse to say, well, if God has chosen those who are his, I'm not going to come to Christ. That's not the point of the passage at all. Because as we'll see in a few moments time, it's not supposed to be an excuse.

On the one hand, as we saw, God has sovereignly in his sovereignty chosen those who are going to be his. On the other hand, the gospel is an offer. It's a free offer to you.

[10 : 21] And God is saying to you tonight, take my gift. Jesus died for sinners. You are a sinner. You need Christ. Come and believe in him and trust in him.

And I am genuinely coming to you. And I want you to come. That's what God is saying to us tonight. At the same time, he's sovereign. I don't understand it. We said this a few weeks ago.

But Paul is absolutely ecstatic. When he thinks of somehow, he's sat down and he's thought about how God has before the foundation of the world chosen him of all people, of all people, to be his son.

And to be his instrument to reach others with the gospel. He just can't get over it. Words cannot express the sense of joy and thrill that the apostle has.

But he goes on. And then he describes his possession again. And he says, it's redemption. You remember how we said last time, how redemption means someone who's set free as a slave.

[11 : 24] He's set free. And when Paul thinks of his own life and how many attempts, how much, how imprisoned he was, he was trapped as a slave to sin.

And yet when he met with Jesus, the guilt of that sin was released. And he was taken out of, as we say, the fearful pit in Psalm 40 and the mighty clay. God rescued us and set our feet on a rock and put a new song in our mouths and gave us new life and a new beginning and new salvation.

And he's raised us to newness of life. And how God's plan was to bring earth and heaven together. And I said some things perhaps last time or a wee bit, wee bit controversial.

But that's okay because they, because they set our minds questioning, questioning, asking, well, is this true or is it, is it not? What does the Bible say? What is a new heaven and a new earth?

God forbid that preachers should be boring and not controversial and not take it to the edge. We were talking this morning in the Gaelic. We're talking about that great verse in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 how God made him who knew no sin to be sin.

[12 : 34] And I was trying to discuss with him what does to be sin mean? It's not just a sin offering. It's not just the sacrifice. But you have to push it to the very edge itself in order to try and grasp the profundity, the depth of that meeting, of that teaching and what Jesus suffered for our sake on the cross at Calvary.

Well, that's a long introduction. What is Paul talking about tonight? He's talking about in verse 11.

This is another way in which he's looking at his own possession and he's saying this.

You have, we have, I have an inheritance. Verse 11. We have obtained an inheritance. That's what I'd like us to look at this evening.

Our inheritance. Now, I want you to imagine that tomorrow morning you open the mail and amongst other things there's a letter, a very important looking letter from Edinburgh, let's say, and it's, by its very look, it looks like something that it says private and confidential and you open the letter and sure enough it's from a solicitor in Edinburgh and he is telling you that you are, have an inheritance. Some relative or something has left you in his will and you have an inheritance. Now, let me tell you something. I don't know what you do with your mail.

[14:00] I sometimes throw most of it away because it's all junk mail but I can tell you something. If you get a letter like that it would not be thrown in the bin.

I can tell you if unless I, either I am completely mistaken or else you are completely stupid. You would be on the internet 30 seconds later making your flight reservation with Flybe and you would forget, you would be forgetting your ADS number because it wouldn't be important anyway and the first opportunity you would be in Edinburgh.

Am I right or am I wrong? Of course I'm right. You'd be in Edinburgh. And you would be making an appointment as soon as that solicitor could possibly see.

You'd be one to find out. You would be one and it would not you wouldn't be able to think of anything that day. You'd be spilling the milk. You'd be burning the soup.

You would be making all kinds of mistakes in the house. You probably wouldn't be able to go to work. You wouldn't sleep at night. You would the whole thing would fill your mind wouldn't it?

[15:14] And you would live in the anticipation of that question well how much is it going to be? How is it going to change my life? My life is all of a sudden going to I'm going to be able to afford the things I could never afford in the past and my life is going to take a turn for the better and so on and so forth.

That's true isn't it? why is it tonight when God writes us a letter and he says to us we have obtained an inheritance that we're looking at our watches and we're thinking I wonder who's won X Factor tonight and I wonder who's going to win the World Cup or our minds are going everywhere and anywhere apart from these words it's really intriguing isn't it?

We are so incredibly stupid aren't we? Because whatever inheritance we might ever have in this world when God says you have an inheritance surely the very first thing we're going to do tonight is to listen to it and to take it seriously and instead of that you gloss over it and by glossing over it you're putting it in the bin that's what you've done all your life with the Bible and there is what it says in him we have obtained an inheritance what the Bible is telling us Paul is telling us is I am rich you're rich and if in Christ we will all become rich it's not the kind of riches that we get in this world that's what Jesus said he said don't lay up for yourselves treasures on earth because what's going to happen is they're only going to get rusty they're going to grow old they're going to disappear at some point you're going to reach the point where you're not going to have them anymore and where you might have them but you'll leave them behind when you die you'll leave them for someone else that's not what we're talking about we're talking about an inheritance that never ends that goes beyond this life into the next but one which will give us immensely more joy than anything anyone can give us or any money we're going to come into in this life and it's going to change our lives accordingly you know you hear about it all the time people who get rich and how it changes their lives sometimes for the better sometimes for the worse but there's no question but that that does it does it does change a person of course it does but God's inheritance changes us even more God's promise is that we that not only he gives us his riches but that he will give us a new life a new life altogether I'm going to move swiftly on I'm going to say the second thing that Paul tells us about this inheritance is that we have been chosen to receive this inheritance look how he goes on follow with me in this passage having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will now we looked at that word predestined if you were here three weeks ago and we saw that what this meant was that God chooses not at random God is not a random God he's not some kind of computer that just chooses a certain number of people regardless of who they are and where they live and so on that's what computers do God does not like that he knows us personally now I don't know about you but I've lost count of the number again I'm comparing it with the kind of things that we are faced with very often in this well I've lost count of the number of times somebody's phoned me up and tells me that I have been chosen you've been chosen you've been selected you ever had that kind of phone call it's dead annoying isn't it it really is because it happens every night at tea time five o'clock you've just put the tea on or you're just about to sit down and somebody phones you that's the time they choose deliberately to tell you that you've been chosen and if you listen to the words carefully it's you've been chosen to take part in not you've been chosen to get anything but you've been chosen to take part in and of course they couch it in such language as you feel you've come into money and so the idea is for you there to attract you or you get a letter

I've lost count of the number of letters I've got your address has been chosen to take part in this incredible competition in which you may win half a million pounds and here are the other prizes that

you might win and here's what you have to claim your prize now watch this the writing gets small you have to go to the end of the page and the writing's tiny you can hardly read it phone calls cost £1.50 and the phone call will last eight minutes do you know how much you spend on that phone call £12 that's the catch that's the catch I remember somebody phoning me up once and saying you've been chosen to receive a prize I can't remember how much it was I said that's great send it to me in the post fantastic they said it was not quite as simple as that well I said in that case it's not a prize if it's not as simple as that then if there's catches it's not a prize and the guy was a bit floundered nobody had ever said that to him before I think everybody had been so excited about the phone call he said well all you have to do is to we're going to make this date and you're going to come into this office and we're going to get the chance of I said I'm not I said you're not getting my time my whole afternoon just for the chance of winning a prize

[20 : 46] I said if it's a prize send it thank you very much it's great thank you very much I'll send you a letter of thanks when he said well that's just not the way it works away he went that was it it wasn't a prize at all it wasn't a gift there was a catch to it but look at what Paul is saying here about our inheritance he's saying not that you've been chosen at random he's saying God in his own mysterious purpose I don't understand this but he knew who we were he knew he knows you know it's one of the most profound solemn things to think about tonight that God tonight knows everything everything about us I don't know if you've ever sat down and really given that enough thought you maybe believe that there is something in heaven or someone in heaven or I don't know the extent to which you're prepared to accept what the Bible tells us but the Bible tells us that God knows us in all our entirety there there is nothing about us that he doesn't know he knows our ugliness and I'm not talking about from the outside I'm talking about on the inside he knows our guilt he knows our filthiness he knows the worst thing that we've done he knows our weaknesses he knows our sorrows he knows our joys he knows our families what we've said we've thought you know that Psalm 139 does it not make you feel uncomfortable oh

Lord thou hast me searched and known thou knowest my rising up and sitting down yea even my thoughts are known to you it's very uncomfortable isn't it but it's true and in within that knowledge Paul is saying God has predestined he has chosen he's not chosen the best he has chosen his people that's all we can say but it's unconditional it's not on condition that they do something it is a gift his salvation his inheritance is an unconditional gift to us according to the counsel of his will and sometimes you ask well what's the result of all of this what's the aim what's God's agenda what is God aiming at in all of this well he tells us you see

God doesn't have a secret agenda he doesn't keep secrets for us apart from stuff that we can't understand that of course there's there's there are things about God that we can't understand of course there are if that wasn't the case he wouldn't be God but he tells us exactly what he's doing in Jesus Christ he doesn't keep anything from us and here it is so that we now listen to this so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory that's what God is aiming at might be to the praise of his glory now what does that mean well think about it if there was one you read those words and if there was one word that encapsulates those words what would that word be and I'll tell you what it is it's the word worship worship now what does that word mean to you worship it might maybe be a negative as far as you're concerned well worship is for me having to go to church feeling that I need to go to church because pressure has been put on me to go to church and I'm here because well it's partly because I think it's the right thing to do partly because my wife or my husband wants me to be there or whatever but it's not someone if I had the choice and I know it's wrong to say this but if

I had the choice I wouldn't be here because worship is something really that is doesn't really mean anything to me well if that if that's the case that's not worship look at the difference between you and what Paul is saying Paul absolutely thrills in worship he doesn't use he doesn't say we might be the first to hope in Christ to the praise of his glory without meaning what he says and that's because he knows that worship is two things it's where we approach God in thankfulness lifting up our hearts and knowing that we are heard by God that we can pray to him for everything that we need in this world and that we can commit our lives to him knowing that he hears out every prayer even the little things we can take to the Lord in prayer we can come to him privately we can come to him in the night time we can come to him in the morning time we can come to him when we're driving our car and we can know that he is there and he is committed to us and he is tied to us bound to us he loves us with an everlasting love even if we're confessing the darkness of our own hearts the

sinfulness of our own hearts God is there accepting that and forgiving us but there's another word there's another word that means worship in the in the New Testament and that's the way we live we are to live in worship our life is to be a life of service to the Lord and it's partly that that's in Paul's mind when he says that we are to be the praise of his glory and he's virtually saying then that whether you're in church or whether you're working in the mill or whether you're working on the road or whether you're working in the kitchen you're there to the praise of his glory I want to ask this question tonight how much does our life reflect the glory of God in the way in which we work and live and move and act and do everything how much of

Christ do people see in us are we living with the awareness of who we are are we conscious of what God has done for us are we conscious of the love of God for us every single day not just when we hear it in the pulpit but as we live in that love you know when we are conscious it makes a whole load of difference to the way we live our lives and that's perhaps part of what's gone wrong as well that we're so caught up with our own gripes and with our own the things that make us grumpy in this world and we instead of seeing the joy of the Lord in a Christian's life they see his bad temper and the things that niggle him the things that so quickly make him lose his temper and the things that he doesn't like and when they look at the church all they see is the church what does it stand for and people I hear Christians all they want to do is to stand for this and stand for that fine if it's important enough to stand for it as a fundamental thing let's stand for it but if it's a wee thing if it's a thing of less importance then let's not make an issue especially if it's going to tell the world that instead of displaying the joy of the Lord we're only displaying our differences and what the world sees anyway does this reflect our lives that we are to the praise of his glory and that means do we continuously live in the knowledge of what Christ has done for us and live in such a way that we want others to see what Christ has done for us and we want to be able to share with what Christ has done for us and the first thing is they must see that there is something wonderful about our lives something joyful I use that word unashamedly it's a fruit of the spirit love joy joy is a central fruit of the spirit in other words there is something fundamentally wrong with your life if it's not a life of joy and mine as well and this is where the devil comes in of course and he spoils our witness and he spoils our sense of enjoyment of

[28 : 58] God because he overwhelms us with minor issues things that should never be issues at all and we lose sight of the gospel what God has done for us and we either replace it with our own personality quirks or we replace it with the minors we replace the majors with the minors and instead of displaying the praise of his glory people are only able to see a confusion of darkness so the next time we think about what are we going wrong perhaps come back to Ephesians chapter 1 and live Ephesians chapter 1 and know it and rediscover it and discover it time and time again you know Paul goes on and he tells us something else about this inheritance he tells us the way that this inheritance becomes ours surely if I'm talking about an inheritance surely the first question that that would arise in your mind I hope tonight if you don't have the inheritance is how can it be mine well he tells us he goes on in verse 13 and he says in him you also when you heard the word of truth the gospel of your salvation and believed in him that's the way to receive this inheritance if you can boil it all down you hear the word of truth whether it's preached or whether it's discussed or whether you read it you hear it some people are converted as they read

God's word they read the Bible some people are converted as they listen to a conversation with a Christian friend is sharing the gospel with them other people are converted as they listen to God as listen to the Bible being explained in the pulpit or in church as we're doing this evening but then as you hear he says you believe you believe in him and that's it believe in the Lord Jesus Christ of the apostle and you will be saved there were people who came to Jesus on one occasion and they said to a master what work must we do to to do what must we do they said to do the work of God and Jesus reply was the work of God is this to believe in him who he has sent believe that's what faith is faith is something that rests alone and trust that's what it says here you and where you in him you also when you heard the word of truth and believed in him that board believe means to trust entirely exclusively only in Jesus Christ as your Savior and it's to come to him and all your guilt and your sinfulness and darkness and to confess that sinfulness knowing that you cannot work your way or climb out of your sin only Jesus can remove as we saw last time by redeeming he came to redeem us and to set us free from the guilt and the power of sin well the last the last thing I want us to to look at this evening the time that's left is verse 14 and

Paul goes on to talk about the guarantee of this inheritance let's go back to that to that letter that we spoke about at the beginning you get the letter and where you open it and when you see that there is a guarantee there is a lawyer's letter the firm is there you can look up the the director and you see that this it is just not somebody winding you up it's someone this is definitely a genuine letter and even when you go down there you might think well how can this be true I don't know if I if I know this and the the lawyer will tell you he'll show you the paperwork and he'll say there it is black and white guarantee but you might also do this he might say you have some of it already as a foretaste of what one day you'll get and that's what God says to us I'm going to give you a new life already but that new life is going to be a foretaste of what I'm going to give you at the end of the world and that foretaste is what Paul talks about as the sealing now listen to this the sealing of the Holy Spirit he says when you believed in him you were sealed with the promise Holy Spirit now bear with me a few moments time till we try and get this one straight what does it mean for a person to be sealed with the Holy Spirit and I say this because there has been much confusion over how we read this in the authorized version those of you are reading from the authorized version you'll read that it's not when you believed it's after you believed and this has caused all kinds of confusion because some Christians have believed that at some point after they are converted maybe a year after maybe two years after maybe a week after that they go through a second experience in which they're filled with the Holy Spirit in which they have a sense of elation and a sense of invigorating and a sense of strengthening and a sense which they've never had before and they believe that that is the sealing or the baptism of the Spirit and what they say is you have to wait for it you have to pray for it and until that comes you're going to have to just wait until it comes and that's what God wants you to have and when it does come you will be strengthened in your faith you will be a more powerful witness you'll be a more victorious Christian you'll be able to overcome temptation much better than you are at the moment well I wish that it was that simple because as I read the New Testament I read Paul struggling against sin same way as I have to struggle against sin but I also believe that I have as a Christian the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling within me see that's one thing that God promises us he promises us that as soon as a person comes to faith in Jesus the Holy Spirit comes into that person and begins to open up their heart and their mind and lead them and guide them and to bring about his his will and his purpose in that person's life it's not after you believe it's when you believe and that's an important difference it's not some time after it's when you believe as you believe at the same time the Holy Spirit comes in I'm not denying of course that some Christians have unusual experiences of course we read about them all the time I'm not denying that for a moment but what Paul is talking about applies to everybody who believes when they believe they are sealed with the Spirit so that means what does the sealing of the Spirit mean? well what was a seal? well a seal was a mark of ownership same way as for example some of you have sheep in the countryside and you drive through the countryside and you find that these sheep have got marks on them and these marks are either on their ears or on their tail or whatever and you know by the mark who owns the sheep it's a mark of ownership it's also a way of keeping something in it's also something that preserve for example Pilate told the soldiers to put a seal on the stone that he put outside the grave of Jesus and by that seal it wasn't to be broken it was to keep the door there it was to make sure that officially nobody was to break that seal to keep the body of Jesus in it was completely a waste of time as far as he was concerned because he didn't account for the fact that Jesus was going to come straight through the stone in the first place he didn't need the stone to move but nevertheless he put a seal that's all that you can do isn't it? [37 : 27] when you're trying to put a stop to the gospel your attempts are nothing more than pathetic useless attempts and that's what he discovered now that's what the Holy Spirit is the Holy Spirit is sent to dwell within God's people as their guarantee their mark of ownership not necessarily a mark to the outside world because the Holy Spirit is invisible but the Holy Spirit is a mark to me a confirmation and as I notice my whole attitude changing you see there were many of us for example go back to verse 12 to the praise of his glory many of us in here tonight you wouldn't even have dreamt of coming to a place of worship you didn't want that's the last thing you ever wanted to do is to come to a place of worship and yet you're here tonight and you're here because you want to be here because why?

the Lord has saved you why? what's happened? well the Holy Spirit has taken away the scales from your eyes and he has placed within you a desire a longing and a love for Jesus and he's giving you to see what Jesus has done for you so you want to come here tonight to praise him and to thank

him for what he has done for you and to learn more about him but the Holy Spirit is also a guarantee the closest illustration I can use of that for that is an engagement a guarantee of something that is still to come it's like an engagement between a young couple who know each other well enough now to make a pledge and a promise to one another and I don't suppose we take that promise we don't take it seriously enough in our culture some cultures they take it much more seriously than we do and we go back to Jesus time and it was like you had to get a divorce a legal divorce if an engaged couple broke up it's very very serious and very solemn but in any case an engagement is a very serious thing and of course the girl is given a ring and by that ring once she puts that ring on her finger that's it she is in a different position altogether now you imagine you were a young man and you were hoping always to find a partner in life and you got into conversation with a girl and the conversation is going well the more he talks to her the more he feels attracted to her and he thinks things are going well there might be some opportunity to form a relationship and then she sees someone in the background and she lifts her left hand and waves to him and then the man sees this ring and his hopes are dashed his world collapses he's wasted his time why?

just because she's wearing a ring? no because of what that ring represents tells him three things it like preaches to him and it tells him first of all there is a man and that man loves me and I love that man secondly that man has promised me himself and I have promised myself to him thirdly there's a day coming when that man and me will be one in marriage and that is why the Lord has given us the Holy Spirit to tell us these three things there is a Jesus and that Jesus loves me and I love him and one day

Paul says we will possess in full that inheritance that is kept in heaven for you imperishable undefiled unfading kept in heaven for you how can that not change the way we are how can we not live in the light of that promise let's pray our father in heaven once again we praise you for your love towards a lost and a broken world and we ask Lord that as we discover more and more from your word and how relevant your word is and how it speaks to us in our language and with ideas that are so readily understood we pray that you will bless our understanding of it and give us to grow and as we grow in our personal knowledge of what

Jesus did for us we pray to grow in our relationship to him draw us to him then we pray and speak to us powerfully in Jesus name Amen we are going to see