

Sealed with the Holy Spirit

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Preacher: Rev Kenneth M Ferguson

[0 : 00] I'm reading again verses 13 and 14. In him 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.

One or two thoughts on these marvelous words. I always feel and have felt for a long time the depth of the writing, the theology that the apostle is sending to this church in Ephesus, regarding the glory of Christ and the glories attaching to the blessings that come through faith in him.

Ephesus was a very busy and populous city at the time the apostle visited there.

Visited there about the year 55 AD. And we must remember that Ephesus was part of the Greek culture.

And the society there was a society that bowed the knee to at least 12 different gods. They had a focus on a pantheon of 12 Greek gods to whom they prayed and for whom they showed subservience and obedience in their own minds.

[2 : 17] And in Ephesus there was also the temple of Diana or Artemis. And the temple of Diana was famous architecturally as being one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

It was also famous or infamous, according to some, as a place where religious prostitution took place on a regular basis.

So Paul comes into this area of present-day Turkey. And he is surrounded by this kind of atmosphere where there are so many different gods calling upon the affections and calling the attention of the population.

According to Wikipedia, if you look it up, maybe 225,000 up to 300,000 people in Ephesus at that particular time.

But Paul goes in with the gospel. And what a privilege these people had to have the apostle of Christ among them.

[3 : 37] And it says in Acts chapter 20 at verse 31 that he was there for three whole years. And they also had the privilege of having the ministry of Apollos.

And the Bible says of Apollos that he was an eloquent man and a man mighty in the scriptures. What a wonderful privilege these people had in Ephesus to have these men of God present preaching to them.

And what privileges we as a community and as an island and as a nation have had down through the years. Having had faithful ministers of Christ declaring the whole counsel of God to us.

Even you yourselves in this particular congregation over the past 20, 30, 50 years. You remember a succession of faithful men who declared the unsearchable riches of Christ to you.

And we see the way he begins his letter. At the very beginning he says, he writes to the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus.

[4 : 57] And verse 15, I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints. So the ministry of the apostle and Apollos was not in vain in Ephesus.

There were converts in Ephesus. People into whose hearts and lives the power and the blessing of the Holy Spirit came. And it's now in description of these people and their experience of God's grace that we have mention made in verses 13 and 14.

And under three headings I want to highlight a few things. First of all, what they heard. In verse 13 it says, you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.

That's what they heard. And secondly, what they did in response to hearing that word of truth, the gospel of their salvation. It says, you believed in him.

That is, in verse 12, in Christ. Having heard the truth, the response of their heart and life was they believed in Christ. And thirdly, what happened when they believed?

[6 : 21] Well, it says here that they 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.

Along with them exercising faith, instantaneously and simultaneously, they were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.

So these three things. What they heard. What they did when they heard the gospel. And what happened to them.

They were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. Firstly, what they heard. In him, he says, when you heard the word of truth.

They heard the word of truth. Well, they wouldn't have heard many words, if any words of truth, from that pantheon of 12 Greek gods.

[7 : 28] And they wouldn't have heard any saving philosophies from the philosophers among them in Ephesus. And they wouldn't have heard any direction towards holiness of life and faithfulness to God from the activities at the temple of Artemis, the temple of Diana.

Isn't that the way it is when we reflect on our own society today? There are so many avenues into which people allow their minds to go.

And so many things drawing your attention. This philosophy, this point of view, this focus. And all the time the word of God is left aside.

To gather dust may be on the shelf in your home. Whereas the word of God speaks truth. Because it's authored by the truth. Even God himself who is truth.

Don't underestimate the value of God's word. However much it may be looked down on by many nowadays. It is the word of the living God.

[8 : 43] And you can trust your whole life and your eternal condition to what the word of God says. When Paul was calling the elders of Ephesus at a later time.

You find this, I think, in Acts chapter 20. He called them to Miletus when he was on his way back to Jerusalem. And the elders of Ephesus came.

Probably a journey of 60 miles from Ephesus to Miletus. That they might meet the apostle Paul once more.

And that was the last time he met them. And he says to them, When I was among you, I declared to you the whole counsel of God. Not just a narrow strip of doctrine.

Focusing on one aspect of theology. He gave them the whole thing. He started probably about the election of God. And the foreordination of God.

[9 : 59] And God's sovereignty in the work of redemption. And he would focus then on man's responsibility in the work of salvation. And so on and so on and so on.

He didn't hold back from any aspect of the theology of the word of God. I preached to you the whole counsel of God.

And that's what these people heard. When they heard the word of truth. I'm just going to focus on two things that they heard.

They heard first of all the truth concerning themselves. And that's what the Bible tells us about ourselves.

You go back to the Garden of Eden. You go back to the fall of Adam. The fall of man in Adam. We sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression.

[11 : 01] The Bible makes absolutely clear all the way through. That each one of us is sinner by nature. And a sinner by practice.

And each one of us is unrighteous. In fact the Lord says there is an unrighteous. No not one. We have all sinned. And come short of the glory of God.

And every sin deserves God's wrath and curse. Both in this life. And throughout eternity. In the life that is to come. The Apostle Paul wouldn't mince his words.

He would tell it just as it was. We are lost sinners by nature. And they believed it.

When you read this in the original. You heard the word of God. It's as if he is saying to you. They heard it.

[11 : 59] And they said yes. We hear you. We hear what you are saying about us. We hear what you are saying about me. What the Bible says about me.

Is what the prophet Nathan said to David. When he was accusing him. And highlighting to him the sin of his life. You are the man. And the Ephesians said.

We hear you. We are lost. Sinners by nature. But another thing he would have told them.

As an aspect of truth was. That Jesus Christ came into the world. To save sinners. What an amazing statement that is.

And the Apostle Paul. Is eloquent. In his references to Christ. As a saviour. He is a mighty saviour. He is a willing saviour.

[13:00] Saves to the uttermost. All who come unto God by him. He is qualified. As a mediator.

Set up from all eternity. The mediator. Who came into the world. As the saviour. Of his elect people. And he came. And lived a perfect life. No one could point a finger at him. His life was perfect. And his obedience to the commandments.

Was fulsome. And glorious. And complete. And he went to the cross of Calvary. And there he paid. The ransom price.

He paid it with his own blood. That his people might be freed. From the power of sin. And condemnation. And he rose from the dead.

[13:59] On the third day. To justify them. Who believe in his name. That's exactly what you've been hearing.

In this congregation. Down through the years. Isn't it? Exactly the same material. Exactly the same material. Because it's from the same text. The same book.

Written by the Lord through his servants. Whom the Lord's spirit inspired to write infallibly. And inherently. Inherently. This word of truth.

And the Ephesians said. We hear you. We know that we are undone. And we know that there is only one way of escaping.

The wrath to come. And that is to embrace. The one Savior. Who calls us. To himself. We've heard the other day.

[15:10] Of passing of. Reverend Billy Graham. In America. Every time I think of him. I think of that hymn. That they.

Sing. When he makes his. Altered call. Shall we say. Whether you are in support of that or not. I'm not going to say. But these are.

The opening words of that hymn. When he invites people to come to Christ. And the choir sing. Just as I am. Without one plea.

But that thy blood was shed for me. And that thou biddest me come to thee. O Lamb of God. I come. I come.

And that's what these people. In Ephesus did. Surrounded by a bankrupt society. A society that was. Ethically filthy.

[16:09] And impure. Nevertheless they heard above the din. Of this world. This still. Small. Sweet voice of Christ. Christ. And they said.

I come. I come. In the song of Solomon. Chapter 2. Verses 10 onwards. We find.

The Christ. Christ. As the bridegroom. Calling his. Bride to come. Arise. My fair one. And come away.

The rain. The rain. The rain is over. And gone. The flowers appear. On the earth. And the time of the singing of birds.

Has come. Arise. My fair one. And come away. And that was the response. Of everyone. Who came to Christ.

[17:08] From the beginning of time. Until now. They heard his voice. Convinced of their need. And convinced at the same time. Of his.

Truthful. Description. Of himself. And promise. I will receive you. And save. You from. Your sin. That's the first thing. They heard the word of Christ. Christ. And I've really. Come on to the next point. Without knowing it. That is. That they believed in him.

They believed in him. Now. There are. Various proofs. Of their faith. In Christ. They're given to us. In. For example. Acts.

In chapter 19. When it says there. From. Verse 19. To 20. Of chapter 19. In Acts. It says. A number of those.

[18:04] Who had practiced. Magic arts. Brought their books together. And burned them. In the sight of all. And they counted. The value of them.

And found it came. To 50,000. Pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord. Continued to increase. And prevail. Mightily.

It's just one example. Of the change of life. Accompanying faith. In Jesus Christ. What is.

Faith anyway. When it says here. You believed. The gospel. Of your salvation. Believed in him. Well.

Faith has. An aspect of. Knowing. The object. Of your faith. They were made. Aware.

[19:01] Of who Christ was. And what he was able to do. For them. But also. The Holy Spirit. Giving the grace. Of faith. He works.

Faith. In us. That is. Not only. Is it to do with. Knowledge of Christ. And who he is. And what he's able to do. But also. An ability. To yield. One. To him.

To him. And lean. Upon him. Alone. For salvation. As he is offered to us. In the gospel. It is. Leaning upon him.

Trusting in him. Relying upon him. Alone. As he brings. His glorious. Work of salvation. Before us. In his word.

Have you believed. In Jesus? You know. I believe. Every other religion. That you may call.

[19:58] A religion. Is based on. Man's efforts. Man's own works. Trying to fulfill. A set of rules.

Trying to do this. That. And the other thing. Building up. A kind of a credit. With God. So that at last. He might receive us. On the basis.

Of how well we have done. Living your life. In this world. But that's not. What the Lord. Commends. At all. That's what the Pharisees.

Were doing. But what the Lord. Says. Believe. On the Lord. Jesus Christ. And you will be saved. Some were asking.

The Lord. At one point. What. Shall we do. In order that we will work. The works of God. And the answer.

[20:52] The Lord gives is. This is the work of God. That you believe. In him. Whom he has sent. They asked.

The question. Thinking of. A multiplicity. Of works. In the plural. That we might work. The works of God. But Jesus focuses. It right down.

To the singular. And he says. This is the work. Of God. That you believe. In him. Whom he has sent. Faith.

Without faith. It is impossible. To believe. To please him. Without faith. These people came. In their need. With an awareness.

Of their need. Of salvation. And they heard. A gospel. That fitted. Exactly. The plight. They felt. That they were in. A word. In season.

[21:49] To their soul. And they believed. In him. He believed. When Paul was. In the prison.

At Philippi. The jailer. Having done. His worst. To make. Their. Stay there. As miserable. And uncomfortable. As possible. Having whipped them.

And having put. Their feet. In the stocks. In the innermost prison. At midnight. An earthquake. Came. And the doors. Of the prison.

Opened. And so on. But an earthquake. Came into. The jailer's experience. And he came.

Trembling. And he said. Sir. What must I do.

To be saved? Believe. On the Lord. Jesus Christ. You. Jailer. Who was. Full of hatred. And the roughest.

[22:42] Man. In this. Jail. You can be saved. And he believed. And he was saved. Maybe you think. That. Your sins.

Are. Especially sinful. And especially. Repugnant. And especially. Shameful. Well. Maybe they are. But if you come.

In repentance. You will find. That the Lord Jesus. Will receive you. Heartily. And give you a blessing.

Come unto me. All you who labor. And are heavy laden. And I. Will give you rest. So the Ephesians. They believed.

And thirdly. Exactly. At the same moment. As. They believed. They were sealed. With the promised.

[23:40] Holy Spirit. They were sealed. With the promised. Holy Spirit. What does this really mean.

I'm going to say a word or two. About. Sealing. First of all. If you set your seal. To something. You do something. To it.

If you seal. A package. You. Do something. To it. That. Shows a number. Of things. First of all. It shows. That it's a package. That is especially. Precious. And needs to be held.

Securely. Another aspect. Of sealing. Is. That it shows. A mark. Of ownership. And thirdly.

[24 : 39] Another aspect. Of the sealing. Is. It attests. Whatever is sealed. As. Genuine article. The genuine article. Now these. Believers. In Ephesus. They had this wonderful. Blessing. And they had the faith. Of Christ. Faith in Christ. And they had this. Sealing. Experience. They were sealed.

With the promised. Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit. Came. Into their lives. As a. Seal. Showing. That the work. That had gone on. In their hearts. And souls. Was. The work of God. God. They were.

[25 : 36] Blessed. In such a way. That God. Showed forth. That they were his. And that they were blessed by him.

Now. Now. How does this. Sealing. Or seal. Show itself.

Well. The Lord. The Lord says. Writing. In the writing of Paul. To the Corinthians.

That these people. Were the temple. Of the Holy Spirit. He had come. And. Dwelt. Within them. So that their life.

Now. Was. Visibly. A godly life. That was. The visible. The visibility. Of this. Sealing.

[26 : 35] Of the Holy Spirit. They were living. A godly life. Outwardly. And inwardly. They were also. Consecrated. To God. God. Our holiness.

Of life. Is the clearest. Proof. Of our union. With the Lord. And that is. As it were.

Visible. To those. Who look at our life. They see. That we have changed course. We don't. Any longer go. To the places.

We went to. We go to new places. Where the Lord. Is honored. We mentioned. Earlier. Of what. The apostle. What David said. I should say.

In Psalm 27. One thing. I of the Lord. Desire. And will seek. To obtain. That all days. Of my life. I may. Within God's house. Remain. That I.

[27 : 31] The beauty. Of the Lord. Behold me. And admire. And that I. In his holy place. May reverently. Inquire. This is. Outward proof. Of.

The change of life. And the change of direction. Of his life. But also. Of course. Inward proof. Of this.

Sealing. Oh. How I love. Thy law. It is my meditation. All the day. No one can say that.

But someone who has been sealed. With the promised Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has come. And he is. He is working mightily.

Within our hearts and souls. Giving us. A desire for holiness. A desire for living. To the glory of God. Oh. How I love thy law.

[28 : 26] I delight in God's law. After the inward man. Paul says in Romans chapter 7. This is my delight. Day and night. And it says in Psalm 40.

To do thy will. I take delight. O thou my God that art. Proofs. That the Holy Spirit has come in. And that he has given us.

A new appetite. An appetite for spiritual things. To live our life. In secret. And in public. To the glory. Of his great name. And the Lord. Acknowledges. That seal. And that mark upon us. To be of his own making. Because it doesn't come.

Through human effort. To have that. Desire. And lifestyle. But then he goes on. You are sealed. With the promised Holy Spirit.

[29 : 25] Who is the guarantee. Of our inheritance. Until we acquire possession of it. He is the guarantee. Of our inheritance.

Inheritance. Or as some translations have it. He. The Holy Spirit. Within us. Is the first installment. Of the inheritance.

That is ours. In glory. Through Christ Jesus. When he comes with his Holy Spirit. Makes new people of us.

It's as if he has come. And said. Well. That's the down payment. The inheritance. In all its vast glory.

Awaits you. At the end of life's journey. An inheritance. That is incorruptible. And undefiled.

[30 : 26] And it is. Set apart for you. In heaven. And you yourselves. Are kept. By the power of God.

Through faith. Unto salvation. Ready to be revealed. In the last time. What an amazing. Inheritance that is. The Lord Jesus Christ.

He. Rejoices. When he. Sees people. Coming to him. Entering into. A faith.
Relationship. With him. And at last. He will receive them. Into glory. Do you remember. When the.
Children of Israel. Went into the land.

Of Canaan. In the days of Joshua. And it says. That the Lord. Divided. The land. For them. By lot.
[31 : 25] It's the Lord's doing. And each. Tribe. Got a piece. Of the land. Of Canaan. For that.
Particular. Tribe. Remember.

The land. Of Canaan. Was a land. Flowing. With milk. And honey. Well. That's just. A very. Feeble.
Picture. Of what we have.

Here. Brought. Before us. The inheritance. Of the saints. In light. The inheritance. That awaits. All of
the people. Of God.

In heaven. They shall be brought. With gladness. Great. And mirth.

On every side. Into the palace. Of the king. And there. They shall abide. You'll never be. Kicked out
of this inheritance.

[32 : 22] You'll never be ostracized. Or cold shouldered. At the gate. Someone was.

Assuring the people of God. In relation to. Their reception. In heaven. And somebody said.
Well. When they will. Arrive there. They will not be. Without welcome. And they will not be unknown.
They are known. By the Lord himself. And he welcomes them. Into. The glory. That he has
promised.

To give to them. In my father's house. Are many mansions. If it were not so. I would have told you. I
go. And prepare a place for you. And if I go.

[33 : 21] And prepare a place for you. I will come again. And receive you. Unto myself. So that
where I am. There you may be also.

To the praise of his glory. They will sing. The praise of God. Throughout the endless ages. Of
eternity.

They. Who were in Ephesus. Maybe living. The filthiest of lives. But they heard the truth.

About themselves. They believed it. They heard the truth. About Christ. They believed it. They
received faith. In order to trust him.

For their salvation. And at the very same moment. They were sealed. In that the Holy Spirit. Came
into their experience. And dwelt there. And.

[34 : 22] Sanctified them. Step by step. Until at last. Death closed their eyes. And then it says. In
the catechism.

The souls of believers. At their death. Are made perfect. In holiness. And to immediately. Pass into
glory. And their bodies. Being still united.

To Christ. To rest in their graves. Until the resurrection. And on the morning. Of the resurrection.

Believer. Shall be raised in glory.

And shall be openly. Acknowledged. And acquitted. At the day of judgment. And shall be made.

Perfectly blessed. In the full. Enjoying of God.

Throughout all of eternity. Surely. Having heard the truth. Of yourself and Christ.

[35 : 20] Surely it's time. If you haven't already done so. To close in with him. To embrace him by
faith. And to follow him.

Every day of your life. May God bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. Lord oh God. Have mercy
upon our souls.

Grant us grace to believe. And grace to follow you. In every detail of our lives. To the glory of your
name. And the eternal benefit of our souls.

Forgive our sins we pray. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. We'll conclude now. Singing
again from sync psalms.

And psalms 16. From verse 8. To the end of the psalm. Psalm 16. From sync psalms.

[36 : 19] At verse 8. Before me constantly. I set the Lord alone. Because he is at my right hand. I
will not be overthrown. Therefore my heart is glad.

My tongue with joy will sing, my body too will rest secure in hope unwavering. To the end of the
psalm, Psalm 16, Before Me Constantly.

Before me constantly, I set the Lord alone, Because He is at my right hand, I'll not be overthrown.

Therefore my heart is glad, my tongue with joy will sing, My body too will rest secure in hope
unwavering.

For you will not allow my soul in death to stay, Nor will you leave your Holy One To see the tombs decay.

[38 : 27] You have made known to me the path of life divine.

Blessed shall I know at your right hand, Joy from your face will shine.

Please give me an opportunity to go to the side door after the benediction. Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, The love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Rest upon and abide with you all, now and forevermore.

Amen.