

Life shared with God

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Date: 15 May 2022

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[0 : 00] If you're turning your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 1. Ephesians chapter 1.

And we'll be reading from verse 11 to verse 14. So Ephesians chapter 1 beginning at verse 11. And finishing at verse 14. In him we have obtained an inheritance. Having been predestined according to the purpose of him.

Who works all things together according to the counsel of his will. So that we who were 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 your salvation. And believed in him. Were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.

[1 : 19] Who is the guarantee of our inheritance. Until we acquire possession of it. To the praise of his glory.

Let's ask the Lord for his blessing upon his word. Father God as we sit under your word now. We would ask that you would enlighten our minds.

With a view of forever changing our heart. That we would become more like Christ. That we would see your word as we are meant to see it. Hear it as we are meant to hear it. Follow it as we are meant to follow it.

Father God we would ask that this is the reality. Which we do not see in the world with our eyes. But which we fully comprehend in faith.

And through your word. So we ask Father God this morning to be guided. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. You might want to keep your Bibles open.

[2 : 18] These few verses. If for no other reason than just to follow. The order in which these words are written. The order here is really quite important.

And we understand the order in the same way. We understand the difference between unity and harmony. Now I've used this illustration with you plenty of times before.

Normally when it comes to a couple getting married. That you have unity and harmony. Unity is where you have all the white keys alongside the black keys on the piano.

But harmony is when those keys are played in order. And if you want to know how important order is. Then you would simply let Ian play a song to you.

And then let me play the same song to you. And the difference that you would find. Is that I could probably press all the same keys that Ian did. But what I could not do. Is press them all in the same order.

[3 : 21] For the same length of time and so forth and so on. So harmony in terms of sound out of a piano. Is knowing what order you play the unity of the board.

Quite simple. Well here in Ephesians. The order of Ephesians is important. So that you would understand the harmony that comes out of that.

Between you and God. Now over these last couple of weeks. We have seen the importance of the resurrection for the gospel. But over the last two weeks in particular.

We have seen what it means for us to be guarded. Through faith in our Christian life and walk. That as you live your Christian life. You will go through various trials.

So that you can appreciate more and more. The gifts that God has given to you. Namely faith. So in 1 Peter. The various trial that you go through. Is so that you can appreciate the gift of faith.

[4 : 25] Guarding you. Through trials. Then last week we saw that grace. Doesn't just pick us up when we are down. It stops us from falling in the first place.

So grace is not just the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff. That you give to people to give them a boost. Or to pick them up when they are down. That would be a one-sided and misrepresentation of the fullness of grace.

When grace is also the fence at the top of the cliff. Which stops you from falling. It trains you in godliness. To say yes to God. And to say no to sin. But here in this passage. We move on to our relationship with God. Not just the gifts that God gives us. But our relationship. And there is probably no better way. At least how I read Ephesians. When it comes to understanding your relationship with God. As a shared life. So rather than seeing your relationship with God. As you being down here.
[5 : 25] And God being up there. That the life that you have is shared. It's not entirely your own. And now as you think about that.

You can think about the involvement of God in your life. Why don't things go my way? And they go a different way. Well because your life is a shared life. And God has the controlling stake. If I can put it that way. In your life. It is yours. But it is shared with God.

And therefore we must never think that our life. Cannot ever be under God's influence. That if this is God's life. As much as it is mine. Or if it is God's life more than it is mine. Then what happens next. And what I go through. And where I end up. And the path that I take. Is not just determined by me.
[6 : 23] But it's actually determined by the Lord. Irrespective of me in some respects. I have a shared life with God.

It's not that I just belong to God. And I can do as I like down here. Rather the very life that I live now. God has taken possession of. In the person of his Holy Spirit. So I want you to think of your life this morning with God. As it being shared. And instead of your life being shared in the sense of. 50-50.

Where you control half. And God controls half. I want you to understand that God permeates everything. And has the deciding say over everything. But you have come to share in him. So the issue here is not that God has entered into your life. To share your life with you. It is in fact the other way around.
[7 : 26] That you have entered into relationship with God. And now sharing his life with him. That's the way we are meant to see our converted life.

Now the Christian knows that the relationship they have with God is a triune God. That God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And the focus here is not just on the Holy Spirit. But it is on the Father and the Son leading to the Holy Spirit. That our relationship with God is with the triune God of scripture. To put it simply. That God the Father out of love. Sent his son who died on the cross. Who then left in order that we might receive the Holy Spirit. There is the relationship between the triune God and us. That God the Father set his love upon us. In such a way that he then sent his son to die on the cross in our place.
[8 : 25] And the son had said himself that he must go in order for the comforter to come. The Holy Spirit. So our relationship with God is relationship with the triune God.

That at every point in our relationship we've experienced God sending. God saving. And God sharing. Or in this case sealing us for the promise that he has for us ahead of time. So here's the summary of the verses which we have read. In what sense does it mean that we have actually come to share in God?
Well one of the things we notice here is that what God has planned from eternity. Works his way out according to plan in history. History is time. Eternity is outside of time as we know it. So what God has planned throughout eternity. Then works his way out in history. The time that we live in.
[9 : 26] According to the plan of God. That's verse 11. We have obtained. But we have not yet received. We have obtained an inheritance in Christ.

By virtue of being in relationship with God. Look at what we have obtained. But we haven't yet taking hold of it. That is something which is yet to happen. In other words when we receive God. We receive all the benefits that actually belong to God. Because of what God the Father has done through God the Son. Verses 12 and 13. So we who are the first to hope in Christ. Might be to the praise of his glory. This is something that God has done. Verse 13. In him you also when you heard the word of truth.

The gospel of your salvation. Believed in him. There's Jesus Christ. We're sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. There's the Spirit.

[10:29] So what God has done for you. Is that he has acted. His Son has acted. And the Holy Spirit now acts. In the life of the Christian.

You have obtained every single blessing possible. Whether or not you have received every single blessing possible in the present. And therefore one thing that you are to notice as a Christian. Is the abundant blessings you have. Simply because your life is a shared life with God. That you have been created. In order to share in God.

In fact if any of you have done the Knowing Christianity course. You will know that the first thing on that course. Which is so important. Is that God is in need of nothing.

God needs nothing. God does not need you. God does not need you. And that is the best possible news that you could ever hear.

[11:28] Because why would God create anything that he doesn't need. Well because he wants. And as people.

I think you would much rather be wanted. Than needed. You'd much rather be wanted than needed. And so the shared life that you have with God.

Is because that's what God wants. And God wants that with you. So it is a good thing.

To be able to stand or sit here this morning. And say quite positively. God doesn't need me. And I'm thankful. That God doesn't need me. Because it opens my eyes to the fact.

That the reason why he has created me. And created new life in Christ. Is because this is what God wants. God wants us to come. And share in him.

[12:24] That means not only relationship with him. But all the blessings and benefits. That actually come with God. So we get everything else.

When we get Christ. And we have been sealed with. The promised Holy Spirit. Who is verse 14. The guarantee.

Of our inheritance. What's our inheritance? Well the inheritance. That we have already obtained in Christ. The Holy Spirit guarantees. That we will receive.

That inheritance. We will acquire. Possession of it. Now of course. Every Christian. Cannot help. But be moved by this. It would be impossible. For a Christian. To be bored. By these few verses. Because you're beginning to see. What is ahead of you.

[13:22] By faith. Which you cannot see. By sight. And so the guarantee. That you have. Is none other than God. Himself. The God who sent.

God the Father. Who sent the Son. And the Son. Who died on the cross. Is the same God. In. In the person of the Holy Spirit. Who now seals us. As a guarantee.

Until that day. We acquire. Possession. Of our inheritance. We have the inheritance. Because we are his children. And those who don't receive.

The inheritance. Are because they are not. His. Children. And so the content. Of our relationship with God. Are all of these blessings.

Both in the present. And in the future. To come. So what does it mean then. To be sealed. With the Holy Spirit.

[14:20] Well to put it another way. What does it mean. To actually have. This shared life. That God doesn't step into our life. Sharing. Our will.

But we. Have been born again into him. And now share in. His life. What does it mean to be sealed. Into that type of. Relationship.

One of the things that happens. Whenever. Anyone gets saved. And understands. Or at least. In basic terms. That they now have relationship with God.

Through God the Holy Spirit. And have this shared life. Is that. Everyone who is born again. Doesn't know anything. You are not.

You are not. Saved. By your knowledge of God. You are saved. By grace. Through faith. Your knowledge grows. You mature. You understand more. The older you get.

[15:19] If you have been committed. To the Lord. And his ways. There's a natural. Maturing. That takes place. As we saw last week. Because that's what the grace of God. Produces.

In the life of the believer. You can tell. That you are experiencing. God's grace. Because you are being trained. In godliness. And therefore become more godly.

That's the fingerprints of God. Of his grace. In your life. But sometimes. Christians. Who are not knowledgeable Christians.

But more. Determine things. By what they experience. And let's not forget. Even the devil can give you. Confirming experiences. That suit your will.

That suit your passions. That suit your desires. And the Christian. Is not always well equipped. To be able to tell the difference. Between the confirming desires. That the devil gives us.

[16:16] And that which is actually. Of the spirit. Without a standard. By which we can judge. Both. Now several weeks ago. I wrote a lesson.

It was more than several weeks ago. For the bible class. In which I gave them. The shepherd's tables. Does anyone remember. The shepherd's tables. In the mass lesson. No. It's where two tables.

They're drawn. Entirely differently. They're shaped. Differently on the page. One is faced. At one angle. The other is faced. At the other angle. And when you look at them visually. The two tables. Look completely. As though they are. A completely different size. From each other. And what you do. Is you take the dimensions of one. And you simply hold them.

And you move them across the page. Onto the other. And you begin to realize. That the tables are exactly the same. They're exactly the same. Shape. And size. They're exactly the same dimension.

[17:12] But your eyes cannot see it. Your eyes just cannot see it. What you need. Is an external measurement. That is then placed upon it.

So that you can see. With a ruler. That they are in fact. The same size. And that's the way. That it works. With the Holy Spirit. In the life of the Christian. The experiences themselves.

Are very hard. To distinguish one from the other. Sometimes. Because the devil. Is the father of lies. And can. Convince you.

That what you're feeling. Is good. And right. And just. To get you into a place. Where you ought not. To be. And so. Our understanding. Of the spirit. And how the spirit.

Works. Must always be shaped. By the standard. Of God's word. Not by our perception. Of what we experience. This is. Crucially.

[18:08] Important. For us all. And the reason we know this. Is because if you were to look down. Into verse 17. Just as a way of confirming. What I'm saying. It says that the Lord.

God. Of our Lord Jesus Christ. The father of glory. May give you the spirit. Of wisdom. And of revelation. In the knowledge. Of him.

In other words. As the spirit. Comes. The spirit. Confirms. That which the word of God. Has already. Taught. And said.

Christians are to grow up. In their knowledge. And in their wisdom. They are to be perfected. In the truth. As Jesus says. In John. 17. And so.

One of the things. It means to be sealed. With the spirit. It means that we will grow. In knowledge. And in wisdom. So that we will be able. To understand. That which is of God. And that which is not.

[19:05] Of God. Well. How then. Did you receive the spirit. Now that you have become. A Christian. Well. Look back. At verse 13. Now that we understand.

That the spirit of God. Is to lead us to Christ. In light of what Christ. Has actually said. In his word. You will see. That when you heard. Verse 13.

The word of truth. The gospel of your salvation. And when you believed in him. That is in Jesus. When you believed in him. You were then sealed. With the promised.

Holy spirit. Notice the order. In him. You also. When you heard. Hearing the word of God. The word of truth. Hearing what? The gospel of your salvation.

And believed. So hearing. Believing. Is then followed. By sealing. You hear the word. You believe the word.

[19:59] And then. God seals you. With his promised. Holy spirit. That's the order. Of salvation. In that sense. That faith comes by hearing.

And hearing. By the word of truth. You hear the word of truth. You believe the word of truth. You come to faith. And then God confirms. That word of truth. By giving you the promised. Holy spirit. That is how you were sealed. That is how it happened. Whatever experience. That you may have. Other than what I've just said. This is how God explains.

To us. How we have received. His holy spirit. We heard the word. We believe the word. And we are then sealed. With a promised.

Holy Spirit. That's the order. That God has laid down. For us. Of how and why. We have received. God's blessing.

[20 : 56] In being sealed. Now what does it mean to be. Sealed. With the holy spirit. Now this. May not sound. As though it's all that tricky. But when you actually start.

Thinking about what it means. We have to ask. At least a couple of questions. Are we sealed. With the holy spirit. In the same way. You have. Two letters.

Sealed in one envelope. Right. So you take letter A. Take letter B. You place them. Both inside one envelope. And then you're sealed. With the holy spirit. Inside the envelope.

And we're then sealed. By something else. Is that what God. Is saying here. Or is it the case. That we are sealed. With the holy spirit.

In the sense. That the holy spirit. Is himself. The seal. That which keeps us safe. And secure. Until. We enter into our inheritance.

[21 : 51] And this is what God. Is actually saying here. That when we are sealed. With the holy spirit. We have the shared life. We now have this shared life. With God. But we are also sealed.

With the holy spirit. In the sense. That we are kept safe. Until God himself. And we enter. Into the inheritance. That God has provided.

For us. And this is confirmed. In both old. And new testament passages. That we can be. Both sealed with. And share with God. In one sense. And in another sense.

Be kept safe. By the person. That we are sealed with. So God is both. God the holy spirit. That is. Is both. The one who.

We are sealed with. There's our shared life. And we are sealed by. In the sense. That we are kept safe. Forever. In fact.

[22 : 46] The promise here. Is that the holy spirit. Is the guarantee. Of our. Inheritance. That God has placed. A guarantee. Upon your life.

That everything. That he has promised. To you. You will receive. Do you understand. How important that is. That every promise. That God has made.

To you. You have received. Now I mentioned this. Only briefly. Last Sunday evening. And it is the direction. That we need to be going in. That. As an illustration.

That when. Parents are told. In 1 Corinthians 7. That your children. Are holy. That children. Of believing parents. Are considered holy. Unto the Lord. When God.

Made that statement. Through the apostle Paul. And makes that promise. In how you are then. To bring up your children. In light of the promise. Do you think God.

[23 : 43] Understood the nature. Of your child. Do you think God. Still understood. That your child. Would sin. That at a young age. He would throw his toys. At the pram. That at an older age.

He would steal his brothers. Or sisters drink. At the fridge. Whatever it may be. Pull his sister's hair. Do you think God. Would understand. All of the sinful actions.

This child. Growing up. In believing parents. Could do. And I would say. Well yeah. God knows all things. And yet God. Still makes the promise. That children. Of believing parents.

Are considered holy. Why is that important. For parents. It's important. Because parents. Are to raise their children. According to the promise. Not according to their nature. That's how important it is.

That's the same thing. Which should happen. In the church. As well. More needs to be said. On this. Than it will be. Starting this evening. In fact. So what does it mean here.

[24 : 40] When we hear about guarantee. Well it means. That we're to live. In light of the promise. Not in light of what we experience. Because the various trials.

That we go through. May convince us. That I'm insecure. Or that my life. Won't get. Through. Or I won't make it.

But God. Is telling us here. That we ought to live. In light of his promise. Not in light of what we experience. And the Holy Spirit. Is the promise guarantee.

Of our inheritance. Until. We acquire. Possession. Of the inheritance. That we have already. Obtained. In Christ. Jesus.

So what does it mean. To have this guarantee. Well I have a brother. I think I've told you. This story before. Who is just. Famous. For saying. When he's gone out.

[25 : 38] And bought something. Normally. Something quite expensive. The way he justifies. His purchase. Is that he will say to us. But it has a lifetime guarantee. And I always want to point out to

him.

Whose lifetime. Your lifetime. Or the lifetime of the thing. That you've bought. Because I don't know about you. But I've had a few things.

That have broken. And I've had to take it back. And I says. Look. It says on the box here. Lifetime guarantee. And the lady on the other side. Of the counter says. It doesn't mean your lifetime. The lifetime of that product.

Was only two years. So what it says here. Guarantee. Whose lifetime. If it is a lifetime guarantee. Whose lifetime. Yours or God's. This is a good question. And the question is. The answer is both. Death. Because in Christ. You have received what?

[26 : 39] Eternal life. And what that means is. Is that though you die. And you will die. You are sealed with the Holy Spirit.

And have been guaranteed. That death itself. Means that you cannot be abandoned by God. That you cannot be separated from God.

Because the guarantee. Of the seal. Is that you will make it through. Anything that you go through. Because you have been sealed.

Until the day you acquire possession. Of what God has promised you. So the guarantee. Is God's lifetime guarantee.

The eternal life. That you have. Means that you can never. Ever. Be abandoned. By God. Ever. So it doesn't matter.

[27 : 40] What you go through in life. You are still sealed. With the Holy Spirit. In such a way. That he is a guarantee. Of the inheritance. That you will one day acquire. And when you die.

That lifetime guarantee. Doesn't end with your life. Because you have received. New life in Christ. Which is called. Eternal. Life. And because of that life.

Death. Cannot cause you. To be separated from God. And therefore. God cannot abandon.

Anything. That has been sealed. To him.

With the promised. Holy. Spirit. Spirit. So when we talk about. Being saved forever. This is what it means. When we talk about.

Being. Once saved. And therefore. Always saved. This is why. That is. Possible. We are safe. We are secure. We are redeemed.

[28 : 37] We are restored. We will be sanctified. Are being sanctified. We will live in the presence. Of God now. And we will live in the presence. Of God forevermore. And when death comes. And it will.

Frightening. But it ought not to be. Because what death does. Is it separates you from this world. It doesn't separate you from the God.

Who made you. So you will experience. A separation. But it will not be from God. It will be from the people.

That you sit next to. And then. By God's grace. The very people. That you sit next to. Will join you. When they are separated.

From the people. That sit next to them. Until that day. We all meet around. God's throne. Together. You need to really appreciate.

[29 : 42] What God has done. For you. I do. As well. We do. And the only way. To truly appreciate. What God has done. Is to truly learn. The order.

And understand. And appreciate. What God has actually given to us. In Christ Jesus. The God who sent his son. The son.

Went. So that we would receive. The spirit. So that we could be sealed. So that we could have a guarantee. That whatever we go through. We will go with him.

And what that means is this. If I can put it in a slightly. Different way. If you can't grasp. What I am saying. Let's understand it in the negative. If you are sealed.

With the Holy Spirit. Never to be separated again. Is it possible for you. To be abandoned by God. Is it possible for you. To go to hell.

[30 : 39] Is it more plausible. To think that the spirit. Could go where you go. Rather than you go. Where he goes. Not even for a moment. Your life.

Your life. Is then directed. By the one that you are sealed with. The promised. Holy Spirit.

Wherever. He goes. You will go.

Both in this life. And in the life to come. Here's the exhortation. As we close. Friends. Your life with God.

Is shared. Your life. Is a shared. Life with God. You have come. To share in him. And all of his. Benefits. And not only.

Are you sealed. But with that sealing. You are. Have a guarantee. You are secure. And I finish. With one question. Why do we need. This security.

[31 : 34] Why do we need. The security. The Holy Spirit. The security. That comes with the sealing. With the Holy Spirit. Well it is.

Because when you read. The end of your Bible. And even if you. Began in the Gospels. Like Matthew 13. And elsewhere. Where Jesus is speaking.

About the end times. There's one thing. That he says. Over and over. And over again. That in that final day. There will be a great. Separation.

The wheat. Will be separated. From the tares. The good fish. Will be separated. From the bad fish. In the two parables. That Jesus told. Just there. There is coming.

A great separation. And so. The one thing. That the Christian. Needs to be convinced. Of. Which God knows. That we need. To be convinced. About. Is when that great.

[32 : 29] Day of separation. Comes. Which one will I be? Where will I go? How will God deal with me?

And so. What God gives to me. And has given to you. Who are in Christ Jesus. Is the promised Holy Spirit. With whom you are sealed with. Until that day.

You acquire. Everything that God. Has promised. To you. What this means. Is that you can never. Ever. Be abandoned.

By. God. Because the life. That you have. Is shared. It's not only yours. It's God's.

Your life. Is God's life. You share it with him. And therefore. When that day comes. You are.

[33 : 26] You have. Your guarantee. Ahead of time. You know. Where you're going. Because it has already. Been promised to you. And it has been. Guaranteed. To you. And therefore.

I'll finish with this. You ought now. To live. Not in light. Of your experiences. But in light. Of the promise. That God has made. To you. Live.

In light. Of the promises. That God has made. To you. Amen. And may the grace. Of God. Be with all those.

Who love. The Lord. Jesus Christ. With love. That is incorruptible. May the blessing. Of God. Be upon you. All this morning. In Jesus name. Amen.