

**Valley Bible Church**  
**Sermon Notes for June 17, 2018**

**The Inheritance of Salvation**  
**Ephesians 1:11-14**

I. God's inheritance of the saints (1:11-12)

- First, Paul shows us the result of salvation from God's vantage point
  - A. The people of God's inheritance  
*11 In him we have obtained an inheritance,*
- Verse 11 begins and identifies that God, Himself, has an inheritance in the plan of salvation
- God's inheritance is the people redeemed by Christ's blood
- However, different English Bible translations confuse this very first and essential point for us
  - ESV - "In him we have obtained an inheritance"
  - NASB - "also we have obtained an inheritance"
  - NKJV - "In Him also we have obtained an inheritance"
- These major translations give the appearance that Paul is speaking about our inheritance that we receive as believers
- While that is a true statement from Scripture (as we will even see later in our text), this is not what Paul stated at this point
- Instead, the beginning of verse 11 is better understood as God's inheritance, not the inheritance of believers
  - NIV - "In him we were also chosen"
  - Restate ESV - "In him we have *been* obtained *as* an inheritance"
  - NET - "In Christ we too have been claimed as God's own possession"
- Much like God describes Israel as His portion and inheritance; so too, the church is the inheritance that God receives for accomplishing salvation
- Furthermore, consider the context of our passage in verses 3-14
  - God planned salvation before the foundation of the world in verse 4
  - God predestined us for adoption into His family in verse 5
    - Notably, Paul stated that we were adopted *for himself*
  - Christ accomplished salvation in His death upon the cross
  - Christ awaits the final fulfillment of all things brought into subjection to Him
  - It only makes sense that God receives what is rightfully His after the unfolding of such a glorious plan of salvation

- 1 Peter 2:9 “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession...”
    - Revelation 5:9 “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,”
- Of course, the only way that we are deemed worthy to be God’s inheritance is because of Christ
  - Our text reminds us with that familiar phrase “In Him” that is, in Christ
  - Christ provides the grounds by which we can be in relationship with God
  - While we were sinners, we were destined for God’s righteous wrath to be unleashed upon us
  - However, this verse reveals the astonishing truths concerning the Person and work of Jesus Christ
    - Jesus does not simply get God to stop hating us - Propitiation
    - Jesus does not merely make us friends with God - Reconciliation
    - Jesus does not just allow us into God’s family - Adoption
    - Jesus brings us before God in such a way that God receives us with joyful delight as His inheritance
    - How can we go from once being God’s enemies to now being God’s delightful inheritance is only explained in the Person and work of Jesus Christ
- We will revisit this stunning concept in verse 18 of Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians in chapter 1

B. The plan of God’s inheritance

*having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,*

- We are here reminded of the sovereign purpose and planning of God in the salvation story
- It was God’s plan all along that we would be redeemed from slavery to our sin in order to serve Him with our lives
- Paul says that we have “been predestined” to be God’s inheritance
- This reminds us of Paul’s earlier mention of God predestining us to be adopted into His family in verse 5
- From this we realize the majesty of God’s plan in salvation
  - All of salvation from the plans of eternity past to the future glories of God’s inheritance have been perfectly planned and purposed by God
  - More specifically, we could say that God had His beautiful work of salvation planned out from beginning to end

- Furthermore, Paul reminds us the basis upon which this salvation plan was crafted and formulated
- He says, “having been predestined according to the purpose of him”
  - Again, this plan of salvation, leading up to the final moment when God receives us as His inheritance, was all based upon God’s purposes and pleasure
  - It was not God’s foreknowledge that saw in advance what kind of people we would be
  - God did not choose to inherit us reacting to our character or personality
  - His planning was in conjunction with His purposes and desires
- In fact, this is the case with all things that unfold in human history
- Paul further describes God in our verse as “him who works all things according to the counsel of his will”
  - It is not just salvation that God has planned and worked according to His will
  - Our text says that He “works all things” according to the counsel of His will
  - We don’t know the reason for which God has planned and allowed all things that happen on earth, good or evil
  - But we do know that God’s sovereign hand is upon all events that do occur
  - At this point, we are either uncomfortable with God’s control over all or we are comforted by His control over all of His creation
  - People that are uncomfortable would like to say they could do a thing or two better if they were God
    - Often these people point to the existence of evil and claim that they would get rid of it, if they were God
    - But to this thought, we must raise the objection, how do you know where to begin and where to end when it comes to removing evil?
      - Evil actions? Evil words? Evil motives?
    - Clearly it is not so black and white when it comes to playing God
  - People that are comforted by His control find rest and peace knowing that God is intimately acquainted and involved with every detail that comes to pass in life
    - The reality of an infinitely wise God brings comfort in knowing that all events are purposeful and meaningful according to God’s will
    - God does not tell us His purpose behind every event as if He needs to explain Himself
    - Instead, God has shown Himself to be faithful to His character and those who trust in Him will not be disappointed by the exercise of His sovereignty over all things

### C. The purpose of God’s inheritance

*12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.*

Valley Bible Church  
 3347 West Avenue J  
 Lancaster, California 93536  
[www.valleybible.net](http://www.valleybible.net)

- The purpose of God’s plan to secure us as His inheritance in Christ is introduced in the words, “so that”
- Why did God plan to inherit believers as His own?
- So that we believers “might be to the praise of his glory”
- Those believers who, along with Paul and the early church, had already put their hope in Christ were to represent God’s purpose as His inheritance
- They were to bring praise and glory unto God
- God has selected His inheritance for the purpose of His glory being made known
- This is what it means to be a believer—we exist to bring glory to God
- In salvation alone, God plans to inherit us in eternity past, which Christ allows for through His death on the cross, and God secures at the final day when He will receive us unto Himself
- This plan of salvation has very little to do with us, why?
- Because God must receive the glory and praise!
- It’s not about us!
- Our contribution was rebellion that God overcame through the power of Christ’s work on the cross
- This is salvation through God’s perspective

## II. The Spirit’s indwelling of the saints (1:13-14)

- Paul’s shift to address believers and their experience in salvation is evident in the beginning of verse 13, “In him you also, when you heard the word of truth...”
- Paul also states this final spiritual blessing for believers in verses 13-14, namely that we have been sealed with the Holy Spirit or indwelt by the Holy Spirit

### A. The prerequisites for indwelling

*13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him,*

- Paul does not simply state, “In him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,”
- Paul describes the necessary steps that led to this moment of indwelling
- This is where Paul addresses salvation from the perspective of believers like us
- It is hard to pinpoint a moment where you think you might have been sealed and indwelt by the Holy Spirit
- However, our experience in receiving salvation should be able to mirror how Paul describes it in verse 13
- He describes it in two steps—hearing and believing
- First, he states, “when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation”
  - This is where it begins for all who would live a new life in Christ
  - You must hear the good news

- You need the gospel proclaimed to your ears
- You need truth and you need to hear about salvation that God has offered
- Why do you need good news?
- Because without Christ, all you have is bad news!
- On our own we cannot be good enough to meet God's perfect standard
- Our pursuit to be good falls short like my toddler son trying to shoot a free throw in basketball on a regulation height 10 foot basketball hoop
- It's not happening!
- Because Jesus said we need to be perfect as His heavenly Father is perfect, we have no way of being "good enough" for God or heaven
- Thus, we are left with bad news
- Without Christ there is only bad news, but with Christ, there is good news!
- The good news is that Jesus has already been good enough for us
- It was Jesus who became a man and lived up to God's perfect standard
- It was Jesus who willingly and sacrificially died upon the cross
- It was Jesus who exchanged His sinless life for your sinful life
- It was Jesus who took the punishment for your sins
- It was Jesus who died and was buried to experience the punishment of sin and death
- It's not over though, it's not simply good news because Jesus took a bullet for us
- It's not good news because He remains buried as our fallen hero
- No!
- It's good news because He rose again and defeated sin's power over mankind
- It's good news because He ascended into heaven with His Father
- It's good news because He will return to reward those who have believed in Him with the gift of eternal life
- Without Christ, all we have is bad news but with Christ, we have the greatest news for mankind
- This is the word of truth and this is the gospel of our salvation
- At some point, you heard this good news and you responded in faith
- You stopped trusting in yourself and you entrusted your life to Jesus who makes us righteous before God
- There is no other reasonable response to such wonderful news
- In Christ we heard this gospel and in Christ we believed this gospel message

B. The person of indwelling

*were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,*

- Paul states our spiritual blessing as being "sealed with the promised Holy Spirit"

- When we hear and believe the good news about Jesus, we are sealed with God’s own presence, the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit
- To be sealed with the Holy Spirit is God’s own statement and definitive mark of ownership on us
  - “A seal (σφραγίς) was indeed a mark of ownership in the ancient world. Seals were often made of hard stones or precious metals and had a distinctive image engraved on them, such as the figure of a deity, a hero, or a portrait. All of a person’s significant possessions were marked with the impression of the seal. Even slaves and livestock were marked by the owner.”<sup>1</sup>
- Paul states that our hearing and believing in the good news of Jesus brought about the certainty of God’s ownership over our lives
- The richness of this blessing extends back into the past since the Holy Spirit is described as “the promised Holy Spirit”
  - The New Covenant prophecies of the Old Testament promised a time when God would pour out His Spirit upon His people
    - Ezekiel 36:26-27 “And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”
  - We now experience the joyful blessings of such promises from the Old Testament since Christ inaugurated the New Covenant in His blood

### C. The promise of indwelling

*14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it,*

- Paul states that the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance
- Here we see the other side of the coin in the plan of salvation
  - God inherits believers as verse 11 stated
  - Believers have an inheritance as well
  - 1 Peter 1:3-4 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,”
- Furthermore, Paul states that the Holy Spirit is the very guarantee of our inheritance that we will receive as believers

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<sup>1</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, Ephesians, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 92.

- Our inheritance as believers is so certain that God has guaranteed it by His own Spirit
- Our text says that the Spirit is the “guarantee” or you could also say “down payment” or “deposit”
- 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 “And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, 22 and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.”
- 2 Corinthians 5:5 “He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.”
- God has given us His Spirit as a down payment guaranteeing our future inheritance
- The future time will come when God redeems us on the last day as His own possession and inheritance
  - NET - “until the redemption of God’s own possession”
  - NIV - “until the redemption of those who are God’s possession”
  - NKJV - “until the redemption of the purchased possession”
  - When God redeems us to Himself as His inheritance, then we also will acquire possession of our inheritance as the ESV states

D. The praise of indwelling  
*to the praise of his glory.*

- The indwelling of God’s Spirit sealing and securing believers is also meant to bring attention, praise and glory to God just like every other spiritual blessing and good gift from above
- This has been the fitting refrain for this entire doxology
- It prompts us to consider our own lives and worship