**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

**Sermon Series**

**Paul’s Letter to The Saints in Ephesus**

**Sealed Forever in God’s Love**

*Chapter 1:11-14*

*Pastor ~ Matthew Diehl*

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(Unless otherwise noted, NAS is quoted – New American Standard Bible)

 As we read the text of Ephesians 1:11 and following, it is clear that an understanding of the Triune God (Trinity) is needed.

We are in a scientific, materialistic environment, in that, many participants basically reject any spiritual ideas. However, it is this same “scientism” that failed to produce an alternative explanation for the origins of life and our universe. One of their latest attempts in gasping for air to keep their “Darwinian boat” afloat is to say that life was seeded on earth or that “nothing created nothing”. They have a serious problem addressing the laws of physics concerning the origins of energy and matter and a “Cause-Agent” that kicked it all off from the beginning.

 Therefore, we have the God of Creation who is not limited in the presentation of Himself in person, speech, form or time. The creation itself is a miracle (unexplainable materialistically) and we have a miraculous God. The God of creation created life and can resurrect life and can incarnate His Spirit into humanity. One of the achievements of the Incarnation was the Water-Baptism of Jesus. This act fulfilled Old Testament prophecy and gave us a visual that God intended for His Spirit to descend upon us and dwell in us. If you have not read Ezekiel 36 by this time, you need to go home and read the Old Testament passage. God, speaking through his servant Ezekiel, doesn’t leave any doubt concerning His intent for His Spirit to indwell us.

 So, the understanding of the Trinity is important in receiving the truth of this biblical text in Ephesians. Notably, that God is not limited in a fixed person, speech, form or time. Again, this is seen in the use of the proper name Elohim (Genesis 1:1) in the plural form. This points to God’s Spirit (Genesis 1:2) and a direct connection to John 1:1-4 (all things created by Christ - who is God). Thus, highlighting the three presentations of God, Messiah, and Spirit.

**Ephesians 1:11** In Him (Christ)

also, we have obtained an inheritance,

having been predestined

according to His purpose (God)

who works all things

after the counsel of His will, (God)

 What is the purpose of God’s will?

 That all people receive an inheritance of eternal life.

 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

Who receives this inheritance? Those who are **in God.**

Who are those in God? Those whose **God’s Spirit indwells**.

However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit,

 if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.

But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ,

he does not belong to Him.

(Romans 8:9; See Ezekiel 36; John 3, 15:4,5)

Make no mistake, the purpose of God’s will - is for all people to receive the eternal life inheritance to be with God in His heaven. But that inheritance is only applied to those who chose to surrender to the conviction of the Holy Spirit - then receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (indwelling). A person then is predestined to glory.

This is God’s plan and intent for all humanity. This is why we were created in God’s image. So, we can contain God’s Spirit and have a relationship with Him for an eternity. Once again, God’s foreknowledge, not ours, from before the foundation of the world knows who will surrender to Him (Ephesians 1:4).

**God’s Universal Call**

God has made sure that everyone who has ever lived has had an opportunity to know Him (Romans 1:18ff). Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. But I say, surely, they have never heard, have they? Indeed, they have, "THEIR VOICE HAS GONE OUT INTO ALL THE EARTH, AND THEIR WORDS TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD." (Rom. 10:17-18)

**Believer’s Sealed (Ephesians 1)**

 **12 to the end**

 that we who were the **first to hope** in Christ

 **would be to the praise of His glory.**

 **13** **In Him,** (Christ)

you also, after listening to the message of truth,

 the gospel of your salvation—

having also believed,

you were sealed in Him

with the Holy Spirit of promise,

**Sealed -** ἐσφραγίσθητε

 verb indicative aorist passive 2nd person plural from σφραγίζω

**Friberg, Analytical Greek Lexicon**

Literally seal up, secure by putting a seal on (MT 27.66); metaphorically, of endowment with the Spirit (EP 1.13);

**Gingrich, Greek NT Lexicon (GIN)**

Mark (with a seal) to identify Eph 1:13; 4:30; Rev 7:3, 4f, 8. In John 6:27; 2 Cor 1:22 connotation ‘endue with power from heaven.

**Danker, Greek NT Lexicon (DAN)**

 In imagery 2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13; 4:30. – c. to guarantee

 Of all the verses proclaiming the certainty of the Believers eternal relationship with God, verse 13 is emphatic. I know some will point to certain passages of Scripture and take them ‘out of context’. I refer everyone to Luke’s Gospel (Luke 8:13). The bottom line is that there will always be people who are not “rooted” in Biblical Christianity. Remember those followers of Jesus in John 6 who walked away when they heard a deeper spiritual message from Jesus regarding His body and blood. They walked away. Jesus said that He knew them from the beginning. So, many people through history fall into the category of the *seed that fell on the rock*. They were following Jesus, until Jesus’ teaching refuted their culture or local traditions. They failed to receive the universal Word from God. They then walked away.

CSB **Luke 8:13** And the seed on the rock are those who, when they hear, welcome the word with joy. Having no root, these believe for a while and depart in a time of testing.

ESV **Luke 8:13** And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away.

KJV **Luke 8:13** They on the rock *are they*, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

NAS **Luke 8:13** "And those on the rocky *soil are* those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no *firm* root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away.

NAU **Luke 8:13** "Those on the rocky *soil are* those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no *firm* root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away.

**Holy Spirit Down Payment**

 14 The Holy Spirit

 is the down payment of our inheritance,

 until the redemption of the possession,

 to the praise of his glory. (CSB17)

Ephesians 1:14 Greek Text

ὅ ἐστιν ἀρραβὼν τῆς κληρονομίας ἡμῶν,

 εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως,

εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ.

**Friberg, Analytical Greek Lexicon**

ἀπολύτρωσιν noun accusative feminine singular common from ἀπολύτρωσις, εως, ἡ (1) literally, as an action a buying back of a slave or captive through payment of a ransom; hence setting free, release (HE 11.35); (2) figuratively; (a) of rescue from sin redemption, deliverance (RO 3.24); (b) of the release of the body from earthly limitations and mortality liberation, deliverance (RO 8.23); (c) of Christ as the one who sets free from sin redeemer, deliverer (1C 1.30)

We can see from the word study on “redemption” – Greek: ἀπολύτρωσιν (apolutrosin) - that Paul conveys the action of the Cross directed at payment for sin. We have previously looked at the word *propitiation* in Romans 3:25 (Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2, 4:10) to see the clarity of God’s intent for the Cross, giving us a visual that cannot be forgotten. In verse 14, Paul uses this *redemptive* Cross-imagery to paint a spiritual picture of God’s actions tying it to the down payment of God’s Spirit into the hearts of Believers sealing them for an eternity of His own possession.

Paul paints the eternal spiritual reality for Believers in verse 14. Through God’s Word and our own life experience of maturing in our transformation to be closer to God, we know spiritual transformation has taken place - something has happened to us.

This is my experience – I surrendered to God and allowed **His** plan for me to work through my life. There were struggles along the way. There were successful days and days of failure. But, like all the examples in the Bible, Believers were able to rise from seemingly failure and defeat (through prayerful confession) and face the next day, restored by God.

**This is because** **God’s Spirit** resides in us.

(Ezekiel 36, Romans 8:9).

**This is why** **God** gave us His Spirit to indwell our hearts. This takes place at our re-birth of Spirit (John 3). The same as circumcision of the heart (Deut. 30:6, Acts 2:37).

**This is why** **King David** responded with confession when Nathan confronted him about Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12).

**This is why** **Peter** could be restored to the mission to which he was called by Jesus (John 2:21).

**This is why Paul** could be restored, after breathing murderous threats upon Believers, to be used by God (Acts 9).

All of them were guided by the Lord’s Holy Spirit.

King David is one of the greatest examples we have in all of Scripture. In David’s confession, he called to God not to take His Holy Spirit from him in Psalm 51:11. God had made a Holy Spirit down payment in David, because David had previously surrendered to God. Thus, David was able to be restored. It is not that Believers live perfect lives, but we confess our sins, bring our lives to the light to be examined by God (John 3:19-22). The Believer’s participation in the Lord’s Supper is a declaration of this spiritual reality. Believers take Jesus’ words to heart when He restored the woman caught in adultery – “go and sin no more”. We are restored with the intent to practice life allowing God’s Spirit to guide us.

**Spiritual Summation**

God deposited His Spirit in us, as a down payment, enabling us to live in this fallen world and have a partial victorious life now. We will be “fully” redeemed from the law of sin and death when we physically die or when this age comes to an end.

 It is my opinion that these verses are some of the most detailed-salvation and comforting verses in the Bible. This is due to the fact that Paul points directly to the *certainty (sealed)* of the Believer’s salvation. These verses from the Lord, through Paul, are a continuation of God’s overall outreach plan of salvation that is proclaimed throughout His Word.

Scripture citations detailing the certainty of the Believer’s salvation.

 **1 John 5:13** These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, **so that you may know that you have eternal life.**

**Romans 10:11** For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

**Romans 10:13** Anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be save

**Romans 8:16-17** 16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

**Romans 8:38-39** 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**John 3:36** "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

**John 3:14-16** 14 "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; 15 so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

**John 3:18** "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

**John 5:24** "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

**John 6:40** "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

**John 6:47** "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.

**John 10:27-30** 27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. 29 "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 "I and the Father are one."

**John 11:25** Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies,

**Ephesians. 4:30** Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

**Jude 1:24** Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy,

**Hebrews 7:23-25** 23 The former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing, 24 but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. 25 Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

**How Simple is a Right Relationship with God?**

What we have just read and witnessed from Ephesians 1 is God’s plan for salvation. Notice there is not one position for man to be involved. God seeks for the individual to surrender directly to Him, and not through the agency of man. There is only one Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5) between God and man and that is Jesus the Christ/Messiah. In actuality, Jesus is the human face of the Triune God. Therefore, there is not any mediator between God and people. Scripture makes this mediating point to demonstrate that God fulfilled His mediating covenant through the Cross of the Messiah. This is God’s direct “in-the-flesh” witness to us.

What happens when people get in the way of God’s salvation plan? My observation is that many historical religious groups who hold themselves as teachers administrating God’s Word tend to make themselves a high fence around God’s salvation and they are the gatekeepers. They also set-up internal religious institutional edicts, that if you break them, then your state of salvation is in question.

 Today, there is much confusion about “how to get saved and stay saved”. Fallen religious orders are like governments. They will most assuredly *bureaucrat* God’s simple offer of salvation away from most people. But rest assuredly, God has not changed His plan or His mind. Irrespective of any other plan for salvation, God’s plan is free and open for anyone. Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved. And . . .

 I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. And God will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ; For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and toward for His good pleasure. So that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

Philippians 1:6; 1 Corinthians 1:8; Philippians 2:13;

Philippians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:24

**AMEN**