

**Preaching Christ....  
...by the power of the Holy Spirit  
...and the authority of the Word of God**

**Date:** 29 January 2023  
**Services:** *Across the diocese*  
**Series:** Every Spiritual blessing  
**Passage:** Ephesians 1:11-14  
**Title:** Sealed  
**Outline:**

**The sealed – who are they?  
The sealing – what does it mean?**

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It is hard to tell someone **bad news** that will **greatly affect them**.

**Every** word seems too **strong**.

Even with **soft** words, the reality will **hit** the **hearer** as they sense the **pain** you are trying to **minimize**. ///

I have the **opposite** problem today.

I'm here to tell you **the very best news** ... that if you are a **Christian**, you have been **blessed -- in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ**.

But every word I use will be too **weak** to convey the **enormous realities**.

But it is well **worth** the **effort**.

Over the last weeks we have considered how God graciously **achieves** all **this** for his **people** ...

the mercies we've seen in Ephesians chapter 1; - do you recall? – are that we've been

**chosen,**

**adopted,**

**redeemed,**

**informed...**

and today.... **Sealed** with God's Holy Spirit.

And I hope you've been started to grasp how amazingly blessed we are as the people of God...

...and that your response – as the passage itself anticipates and encourages – is one of praise and thanksgiving...

The other response I think the passage commends.... Is a quite humble confidence – assurance – that we are God's – not because of our great work for him – but his great work for us!! //

But as we turn now to the final sermon in the series and explore with you this reality that we've been sealed with God's Holy Spirit, I want to very simply ask:

- 1. The sealed – who are they?**
- 2. The sealing – what does it mean?**

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**1. THE SEALED – WHO ARE THEY?**

Let's read again vv11-13... *In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,<sup>12</sup> in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.<sup>13</sup> And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation.*

God in this passage... reminds us of where we started this series five weeks ago....

With this his amazing **choosing** of us – **predestining** us to be **his.... Everything in conformity** with the **purpose** of his **will... ///**

I'm not sure if that caused you any **issues** when we looked at back on 1<sup>st</sup> January...

But **again** I want to say – that it is a doctrine full of great **comfort...**

...for it reminds me that's it's not about **me!!**

And my salvation is not about my **puny efforts** to be a **nice person** – but the great work of God himself for me - in **choosing** me, **adopting** me, **redeeming** me through Jesus' **death and resurrection...**

**That's** what this Christian faith is **about**

...what a **relief...!**

And **all** this – as the passage had reminded us several times – for the **praise of God's glory!! //**

How then did we **end** up a God's **people? //**

The passage **explains** – v13 – *and you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation.*

You were **included in Christ** – when **you** heard the message of **truth** – the **gospel** – the **good news** of your **salvation....**

That's **wonderful!**

You were **included** – when you **heard** the **good news.**

That if **exactly** why we want to share **Jesus....!!**

For **that** is the means whereby those God has **chosen** to be **his**, will be **included in Christ...**

Brothers and sisters – at some **point** in **eternity** – before there was **time and space...** God **ordained** you would be **his** – his **child** – his **follower** – a member of his **body....**

He **decided** that he would **redeem** you – **rescue** you – through Jesus' **shed blood** – so that you would be **forgiven...**

And then **when** you heard the **gospel** – whether that was from when you were in your **cot** – or **16** – or **25** or **53** or **82** – when you **heard** the **gospel** and **responded...** **God's plans** came to **fruition** and you were **included in Christ...**

Isn't that the best news **ever??** – and try as I **might** – I can **never convey** how **wonderful** that is....!

**PRAISE THE LORD....!**

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And then we read - 13b - *When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,<sup>14</sup> who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.*

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So let's look secondly at

**2. THE SEALING – WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

- We use this concept of seal in everyday life without thinking about it to much....
- We might say a deal was sealed with a **handshake**
- Or some **arrangement** – sealed with a **kiss!**
- This licence for Tim Smith to serve at Grenfell which I gave Tim at his commissioning last Saturday – bears my official seal... shows it's the real deal...
- You might get something from the King – with a wax seal melted over the opening...
- It's a sign

**Three** things – (at least three!)

- **Security** – or permanence
- **Approval** – or genuineness
- **Ownership**

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**Security**

- In Babylon, when Daniel was fed to the lions, *“a stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the King sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles so that Daniel's situation might not be changed”* (Daniel 6:17). To 'seal' meant to make secure or permanent.
- God has set his Holy Spirit on us as a sign that we are permanently his... nothing will change that... we are his now and for eternity...

**Approval**

- We see this in reference to **Jesus**: *“On Him God the Father has placed his seal of approval”* (John 6:27).
- That 'seal of approval' on Jesus – Matthew 3 – *As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. <sup>17</sup> And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”*
- God setting his Holy Spirit on us as his children, is his approval – that we are his now and forever... he has approved us to be his... his adopted children...

**Ownership**

- Many large companies have an asset register – everything in the office is labelled with a number related back to the register... it demonstrates **ownership** and that whatever the item is, belongs where it does....
- governments on official **documents**... set their **seal** on them to show they are **official** and are for **real**.. they have a mark of **authenticity**...
- God has set his seal of **ownership** on **you**... you are his - by his Spirit... - it's kind of like a **branding** if you like – **YOU ARE MINE**...
- Our passage here in Ephesians 1 is not the only place God tell us about this.... He puts it this way in 2 Corinthians 1

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- “Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, **set his seal of ownership** on us, and **put his Spirit in our hearts** as a deposit guaranteeing what is to come” (2 Cor 1:21-22).
- The Holy Spirit is God’s mark upon us, God’s signature, saying we are his property!
- ...so we can say that **everyone** here this morning - who loves **Jesus** – who is a **Christian** – everyone who has said ‘**yes**’ to Jesus... has that **seal** and are indwelt by **God’s Holy Spirit...!**
- There is no such thing as a Christian who does NOT have the Holy Spirit!!
- And the Holy Spirit - helps us to understand who Jesus **is**,
  - inclines our heart to **surrender** to him;
  - helps us **recognise our sin** and **repent** of our sin;
  - **give us gifts** us for ministry so we can serve one another as the body of Christ...
  - and **transforms** our very **character** so that we demonstrate all the **fruit** of the **Spirit** of joy, love, gentleness, peace, self-control etc...
- AND that Holy Spirit’s **work** in us...
  - the **closeness** we **feel** to Jesus..
  - the **shaping** and **transforming** of our **character** –
  - the **pruning... the training... the equipping...**
- is a **guarantee** that **God is at work... and** is a **deposit** of what is to **come... //**
- Of **WHAT** to come?
- Our **being remade – restored** - in the **image** of the **Lord Jesus...**
- AND our **inheritance** in the new **creation!** /
- God says the same thing in **2 Cor 5:5** – *God, [who] has given us the **Spirit** as a deposit, **guaranteeing** what is to come.*
- The Spirit’s work in our lives... is the **deposit – a forestate** - of all our inheritance in the **new heavens** and new **earth will bring upon us...**
- All the good things we spent last week exploring – when we considered his plan to bring everything into unity under **Christ**
- All the good things we spent last **Advent exploring** and **revelling** in... about the new heavens and the new earth will look like when Jesus finally returns.....
- **everything** he **promised** which has been made **possible** through the **redeeming** work of the **Lord Jesus.** /// - the Spirit is a deposit of all the glorious things we have to look forward to...

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Well – what does all this mean for us?

- **Assurance...** we don’t only have assurance from being told we’ve been **chosen, adopted and redeemed...**
- we have **assurance** because of the Holy Spirit’s work in our **hearts** – our **lives.**
- We know the Spirit’s work in our lives – strengthening our resolve to say ‘no’ to sin – prompting us to love and serve others in humility and generosity – that’s the work of the **Spirit....**

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- And we ought not to **resist** the Holy Spirit's transforming work in our lives.... *Do not quench the Spirit* we are exhorted elsewhere...
- Assurance - yes – we are **sure** of our eternal life – our passport has already been stamped with God's seal.... Our **inheritance** is **guaranteed**...
- And the **second** thing it should mean for us...?
- We should be **wonderfully grateful**...
- "O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise, the glories of my God and King, the triumphs of his grace".
- **Ten** tongues cannot sufficiently praise God for his **blessings** ... nor **100** ... give me **1000!**
- I think I hear you singing with **David** ... *The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want* (for anything).
- I lack nothing, I have **every spiritual blessing** in the **heavenly places!**
- We should sing it even more **meaningfully** than David since we know far more than he could about being **chosen, adopted, redeemed, informed, and sealed!**
- We now know all God's plans in and through Jesus.
- We should be calling out like David is... "my cup overflows!"
- Christian friends ... whatever griefs we must face in this life, surely our constant assurance is ... *Goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me; and in God's house forevermore my dwelling-place shall be. ///*

Let's bring then this summer series to a close

God had a **plan**

the plan started by him showering **blessing** on **people** – that he may draw to himself, a **people** unified under **Christ**.

- In accord with that plan...
  - He **CHOSE** us to be **holy** – even before we **existed**
  - He **ADOPTED** us to be **his** – so we are his **precious children**
  - He **REDEEMED** us by his **grace** – even at the cost of **Jesus' blood**
  - He has **INFORMED** us of his **plans** – made **known** the **mystery** – **to bring everything under the unifying leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ**
  - And he has **SEALED** us with His **Spirit** as a guarantee we are authentically HIS, and a **deposit** of all that is yet to come.
- As **someone** said – it's an **embarrassment** of riches!
- Surely I can only finish as the passage begin right back at v3...
- ***Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ!***