**Sealed with the Helper**

**Ephesians 1:3-14 (ESV)**

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Isn’t it a powerful name, a wonderful name to come and celebrate Jesus, come and celebrate our triune God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit? Amen? (Amen!) Thank God for the opportunity we have to be together. We’re going to stay standing as we read Scripture together. We’re going to be in Ephesians 1. There is a Bible near you, either under your seat or a seat next to you, and it’s going to be on page 917 in that Bible. If you don’t have one of those Bibles, you’re on your own. (Laughter!) There is a Table of Contents at the beginning of the Bible that helps us.

We are in a series on the Holy Spirit. Just coming to church and being part of the first service and now this one, I just am so thankful to be a member of Jesus’ church. I didn’t place myself here. The Holy Spirit places us in membership of His church, and what a blessing! Isn’t it fantastic to come together with brothers and sisters, with opportunities to encourage one another, opportunities to pray for one another, opportunities to instruct and help one another in so many different ways. All of that can take place together as we gather for the worship of God, to bring glory to Him. Are you thankful to be part of Jesus’ church? (Yes!) It’s a special, special opportunity every Sunday. Well, let’s read. I’m going to be reading Ephesians 1:11-14 as we think about the Helper, the Holy Spirit, and how He helps us by sealing us. That’s the work of the Holy Spirit, the work of sealing. We’re sealed with the Helper.

***11*** *In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,* ***12*** *so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.* ***13*** *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,* ***14*** *who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*

Amen! What amazing work!

A few years ago, a pastor friend was invited to Texas to perform a wedding. The weekend of the big day arrived. My friend and his wife had traveled to Texas and they had this great evening at the rehearsal and the rehearsal dinner. There was a whole bunch of celebration. The next day, it was just about a half hour before the wedding was to begin and he was talking with the groom for a few minutes. Then he realized something. He said, “Normally at a wedding, I usually ask the couple for the wedding license on the rehearsal night, but I forgot to do that last night. It might be good for me to get it so that right after the wedding, we’ll be able to sign it and get the witnesses signatures.” As he’s talking about this, he looks at the groom and this groom has this blank, faraway stare in his eyes. Then there was a look of fear. The groom says, “Oh no! We have been so busy with all the details of our wedding. This was on our list and I just now realized that we have forgotten to go to the courthouse to get a wedding license.”

Now my friend, at this time, he was a young pastor and he had never performed a wedding in Texas. He really wants to do things legally. He doesn’t want to get arrested for doing a wedding. So he says, “I don’t know what I can do.” He looks out the window and all the wedding guests are coming. They’re streaming in. The groomsmen are all ready. The bridesmaids are ready. The bride is in her dress. So he gets on the phone and he starts making some phone calls. He says, “I can’t do this wedding until I find out some information.” He finally gets a hold of a friend who is a lawyer, but this wasn’t his particular subject of law. So he said, “Let me do some research.” It takes about an hour. So now the wedding is delayed by about a half hour. Finally he gets word back that in Texas at least, you can perform a wedding and then afterwards go to the courthouse and then they’ll postdate it. They’ll put the date of the wedding on the legal certificate. So now it is legal, and they had a great time at that wedding. It was official.

Here in our area, the courthouse provides newly married couples with both a decorative wedding license and a legal wedding license. You can easily tell the two apart because the legal wedding license has a raised embossed seal and the decorative copy does not. That official raised embossed seal makes all the difference.Without this seal the document is nothing more than a nice, kind of sweet, commemorative piece of paper. With the seal, the document communicates that these two legally belong to each other. It communicates that their union is authentic and that they have legal security in this relationship that has been established.

This morning we open up our Bibles to Ephesians 1. Here we learn about an important, yet seldom understood ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We have been discovering that God the Father gives the Holy Spirit to us to be our Helper. He helps us in so many ways! So far in our series, we learned that the Holy Spirit helps us by indwelling us, having a permanent presence in our lives. We’ve learned that the Holy Spirit helps us by convicting us of sin and righteousness and judgment. We would think nothing of our sin if the Holy Spirit didn’t work to convict us of our sin and of righteousness and judgment. Then we learned that the Holy Spirit helps us by taking our dead souls and imparting the life of God into our souls so that we’re transformed, we’re new people. All of these amazing helps are necessary helps.

In Ephesians 1, we learn this morning that the Holy Spirit helps us by being a seal from God that verifies and secures our eternal salvation. The main idea we’re going to trace through Ephesians 1 is that God assures His elect children of His enduring love for them by sealing us with the Holy Spirit. It is official! Because of the Holy Spirit, a child of God never has to wonder if God will stick with us. We are flawed and we fail, but because of the sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit, a child of God never has to wonder, “I wonder if God is finally through with me. I wonder if I have failed for the last time and He says, ‘That’s it.’” Friend, do you ever wonder whether or not God truly loves you? Do you wonder if you have lost the salvation that you know at least at one time, God had given you?We open up our Bibles to Ephesians 1, where God teaches us about His amazing salvation.

This passage that is really a paragraph from verses 3 to verse 14 is a single, unbroken sentence. If you put your Greek glasses on for a moment and would just take a brief look at what Paul writes, he writes one single, unbroken sentence. That sentence flows from the beginning of verse 3, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” and it flows in an unbroken, continuous fashion all the way to the end of verse 14, “to the praise of his glory.”

This sentence is a summary of all the spiritual blessings that every believer is given by God’s grace in Jesus. So our salvation is described here as a work of God and solely of God, apart from man, without any help from us. The triune God grants unsaved, unredeemed, unregenerate people, salvation. Each person of the divine Godhead is working in our salvation. In our salvation, God the Father chooses us and adopts us and accepts us. In our salvation, God the Son redeems us and forgives us and reveals God’s mysterious will to us. In our salvation, God the Holy Spirit applies the Father’s election, He authors God’s word, He seals God’s people, and He guarantees our future inheritance. All of this is described in this one single passage. This passage teaches us that the grand purpose of God’s action in our salvation is that we would be to the praise of His glory. So this morning, our focus is upon the Holy Spirit’s part in God’s rich, gracious salvation. If you’re taking notes, the first truth we’re going to learn about our Helper in regard to salvation is that

**The Helper applies God’s election.**

God chooses us, but how do we receive the benefit of that election?

***13*** *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,*

We ask the question: why do believers believe the Gospel when they hear it and unbelievers do not believe the Gospel when they hear it? The answer to that question will never be found in us. We as believers do not believe because we are more spiritual than those who do not. We do not believe because we are less willful, less forceful in our rebellion than those who do not. We do not believe because we’re wiser, more perceptive spiritually, than those who do not believe. So why then do we believe when we hear the Gospel and others, in fact, the majority of mankind, does not? The answer is embedded in the prayer that Paul prays in the following section.

**Ephesians 1:15-16** For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,

Notice that as he talks about their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and their love for other brothers and sisters, he doesn’t give thanks to them. He doesn’t say, “I want to thank you for having faith. I want to thank you for your love.” He gives thanks *for* them. Who is he giving thanks to? He is giving thanks to God. Paul recognizes, and he has just written in these first fourteen verses, that God alone grants them faith. God alone then through the new life that they have in Christ, have love for the brothers. The cause of their faith, the cause of their love for their brothers and sisters is God. He continues now.

**Ephesians 1:17** that the 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,

It’s the same Spirit, but he is describing the Spirit first as the Spirit of wisdom and the Spirit of revelation in the knowledge of Him.

**Ephesians 1:18** having the eyes of your hearts enlightened,

Here Paul is praying that the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of wisdom, will produce in them an increasing wisdom. He recognized the Spirit of wisdom’s work already because they have become wise unto salvation. They have become wise unto seeing the truth. I am desperately in need of a Savior, and the wisdom of seeing that Jesus is absolutely sufficient, altogether complete as a Savior. The Spirit of wisdom has already worked and he is praying that that Spirit of wisdom would continue to work in them in their ongoing progress of knowing God.

He also calls the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the revelation in the knowledge of Him. He credits the Holy Spirit in enlightening the “eyes of their hearts.” He recognizes without the Spirit’s work, the Spirit of revelation that reveals a true, personal knowledge of God, then no one would come to the revelation that God is God, that God is worth following, that Jesus Christ is Savior. No one would know God apart from the Spirit of revelation of the knowledge of God working sovereignly, effectively.

You see no one believes apart from the Holy Spirit working to open our eyes to enlighten us to this truth. The Holy Spirit reveals to our blind hearts the treasure of the glory of God so that when we hear the Gospel, we’re drawn to Christ because we see His loveliness. When we hear the Gospel, we’re drawn to fall on our faces before this holy, glorious God because we see the amazing magnificence of His nature in the face of Jesus. You see, we do not believe and then we see. What Paul is saying is we see and then we believe. It is the seeing that produces faith.

Look at what Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4. I love this text!

**2 Corinthians 4:3** And even if our gospel is veiled,

He recognizes that it’s veiled. Many hear this amazing Gospel that He has given His life for and would gladly lay down His life for. Many who hear it, hear nothing. It’s like, “Okay. Move on.” So he is describing then what is happening in their soul. How come they don’t respond to this amazing offer of knowing God through Jesus Christ? He describes why. He says

**2 Corinthians 4:3** …it is veiled to those who are perishing.

In other words, the only people who don’t hear the Gospel and see the glory of God in it, are those who are perishing. They’re perishing now and if they die in their sins, they will perish forever. Then he says this. In the perishing’s case, the unbeliever’s case,

**2 Corinthians 4:4** In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers,

He says there are strong, spiritual powers in play, more powerful than any people. They are underneath the spell, willfully so. But they have placed themselves underneath such a strong delusion. The god of this world has blinded the minds. So the minds aren’t even interested in God. He says the god of this world keeps

**2 Corinthians 4:4** …to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

You see, if anyone would see Him, they would be drawn to Him and they would believe. But they don’t even see anything in it that is worth committing to, that is worth pursuing. Then he goes on to say

**2 Corinthians 4:5** For what we proclaim is not ourselves,

No one will ever be empowered to see the glory of God by preaching ourselves, by preaching just about practical helps of this world of how to have a better life now. No one is going to be transformed by that kind of message. So that’s not what we’re preaching here. What do we preach? We preach

**2 Corinthians 4:5** …Jesus Christ as Lord,

Isn’t that fantastic?! That is the message of the church. That is our hope. That is the message God uses to impart life in the soul of man. Here is the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. We proclaim Jesus Christ as our Lord. As for ourselves,

**2 Corinthians 4:5** …with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake.

Then he says this. Now he is describing this process of what happens when a believer hears the Gospel. He says

**2 Corinthians 4:6** For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

He takes us back to Genesis 1, to Day 1. He says, “Remember when the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the earth and then God declared ‘Let there be light’? What happened? By the supernatural power of God’s very Word, that which is dark turned on with light. It was effective.” He says, “That which God did physically, that’s what He does spiritually. Of every person who believes, He says, ‘Let there be light.’” This dark soul that was closed off from seeing the glory of God, suddenly we hear the Gospel and Boom! There is light! It’s all a work of God. Once we see, we are drawn. Once we see, we move toward Christ. We cannot help it because anyone who is in the presence of seeing His glory recognizes that His glory is a thing of infinite and eternal worth. So in Ephesians 1, we learn that God the Father elects us, that God the Son dies upon a cross to redeem us, and that God the Spirit opens our eyes to apply the salvation that we are predestined to receive.

Here’s the application. Give thanks to the Holy Spirit for your faith. Give thanks every day. Your faith is the instrument that you possess not because you manufactured it because you’re a good person or a spiritual person. Your faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit. None of us would have faith. Not one of us would have faith in Christ apart from a gift of the Holy Spirit. Let us give thanks every day because it is the one gift that connects us to every other gift. Without faith, we have no other blessing from God. It is the one thing that connects us to God truly through His Son Jesus Christ. It opens the door to everything else that we could talk about related to the preciousness of being a child of God. So let’s give thanks to the Holy Spirit for our faith and pray that you will honor the Giver by using this gift every day throughout all of your life.

You see, it’s a special stewardship. To be granted faith is a gift. The god of this world seeks to attack that faith to bring blindness where there used to be clarity, to attack that faith, to diminish it, to weaken it. That is a spiritual battle. So let’s give thanks, first. This is a gift. Let’s nurture this faith by the grace that God has granted us through His Word and by His Spirit and His church and all these graces that God grants to strengthen faith. Here’s the message that Paul gives to us. I think he quotes it three times throughout the New Testament. For the righteous will live by faith! Isn’t that great?

**The Helper authors the Word of truth.**

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

How did we have the word of truth, this Gospel of salvation? Well, the Holy Spirit, who opens the eyes of blind hearts does so through the instrumentation of this Word of truth, the Gospel. Paul is referencing this Book. Every part of this Book is the word of truth. It’s the Gospel, the good news of our salvation. The Holy Spirit takes a book that He wrote and applies it and uses it to bring about spiritual life. But he is the author. He’s the origin of this. In 1 Peter, Peter is going to say

**1 Peter 1:23** since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;

The Holy Spirit uses the Word to bring about life. So someone asks, “So you’re saying that the Holy Spirit uses a book written by a bunch of flawed men in order to produce a miracle of spiritual life?” I would say, no. That’s not true. This Book is not written by men, but by the Holy Spirit. Yes, the Holy Spirit uses the instruments of flawed, human men, holy men of old. But He moves in these authors in such a way so that what they write is not their words, but is the very Word of the Holy Spirit.

In Ephesians 6:17, as Paul is explaining this armor that we have to protect our faith and contend for the faith, he says

**Ephesians 6:17** and take…the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,

It’s the sword of the Spirit, produced by the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Peter is going to explain this even more clearly in 2 Peter 1. He says

**2 Peter 1:21** For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man,

When we think of this Book, we must not think of any of the human authors sitting down and saying, “You know what? I have some good ideas rolling through my head. I think I’ll write them down and they’ll become Scripture.” That never happened. Not once! No line, no word, no phrase of anything found in holy Scripture was produced by the will of man, a person saying, “I think I want to write something really good,” from God. Peter says here’s what happened.

**2 Peter 1:21** …but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

We’re discovering that this Holy Spirit is so vital to possess as our own, as a gift from God. How do we possess the gift of the Holy Spirit? Look at verse 13 again.

***13*** *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,*

A person receives the Holy Spirit simply by hearing the Word that the Spirit reveals about Jesus and then receiving the Spirit’s Word by faith. That’s it! You heard the Word. You heard the Gospel and you believed. At that moment, God did a work of sealing you with the Holy Spirit. Every person who genuinely believes in Jesus is given the gift of the Holy Spirit, freely.

Someone asks, “Does the Holy Spirit really care though, that we root ourselves in doctrine, in all the teachings that are found in the Bible?” The answer is Yes! Yes, He cares. The Holy Spirit wrote a Book, and it’s a big Book. It’s not the biggest book, but it’s a pretty large book. Not one word that the Holy Spirit writes is empty, is superfluous, is extra credit. No part of the Holy Spirit’s Book is to be considered sort of like as footnotes at the end of an important section in a text.

Sometimes we tend to treat the Bible this way. We tend to think, “Here’s a Bible and I’m a believer. I have the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit wrote a Book. He wrote a Book so that I would learn how to walk by the Spirit and so that I might live to the glory of God. But I think the core curriculum is just a few chapters. In order to pass the class, here’s just a few things I need to pass the class, and I just want to pass the class. So the Holy Spirit wrote a whole bunch of things for some people who are kind of weird and academic. For those folks, I understand they get interested in a whole bunch of doctrines that just seem like they’re not relevant to life. So that’s good for them. That’s their extra credit. Some people like reading the footnotes and the addendums in a textbook. That’s not me.”

I want you to know that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of wisdom. He wisely wrote a book for which each part is absolutely necessary for us to strengthen our soul, for us to protect our soul, for us to do the work of the ministry that God has given us. Every part of it is vital. It’s vital that we then see this is a gift of the Holy Spirit to teach us so that we might know God. It’s not so that we can have a bunch of religious information, but so that we can know God and grow in God and worship God and that our lives might be lived for the glory of God.

I understand the danger of studying the Bible in order to learn cold knowledge. I’ve had friends that have done that and they have had terrible spiritual effects from that kind of approach. But the Holy Spirit wrote this book to be our daily bread, to nourish our soul so that we would be strengthened and stabilized in a world that is filled with doctrines of demons and filled with temptations and trials. The whole of the Bible and everything in it is our vaccination against the virus of demonic oppression, demonic delusion. To listen to the Holy Spirit means that we open the Holy Spirit’s book and listen to the Holy Spirit speak.

I’m excited about this series for a number of reasons, but one of the reasons is I believe that so many of God’s people have been wrongly taught about the ministry of the Holy Spirit. They think that somehow, listening to the Holy Spirit is some extrabiblical process and that if you get to these people who are super-spiritual and you hear them tell you exactly how you can get in the certain kind of trance state and maybe say these specific words, that maybe you might be one of the special people who hear the Holy Spirit. I’m saying, no. The Holy Spirit seals every person and dwells in every person who hears the Gospel and believes. Every one of us in the same way! The Holy Spirit is not holding back His communication from us. He said, “I’m going to make it so clear so that everybody has access to it. I’m going to put it in a book.” It’s not going to be sort of a subjective kind of feeling about whether or not this is what the Spirit says or not. It’s right here in black and white, where we together can study what the Holy Spirit says so that we would benefit one another’s souls, so that we would have guidance together as we gather around the Word by faith, listening to the Holy Spirit speak to us. He says, “I will speak to you in a very real way, in a relational way, in a dynamic way, in a powerful way if you listen to my voice, listen to the voice of the Father, the voice of the Son, my voice speak through the Book that I wrote.” To be led by the Spirit means we open the Holy Spirit’s book and follow the Holy Spirit’s lead. To be filled with the Holy Spirit means we open the Holy Spirit’s book and we fill ourselves to the brim of everything that the Holy Spirit gives us through it.

Here’s the application. Let us give thanks to the Holy Spirit for the Bible, God’s Word. We have the Word of truth because the Spirit of truth gave it to us. Pray that we will honor the Giver by using this precious gift every day to nourish our soul, to strengthen our faith, because here’s what Jesus says. Man will not live by bread alone, but by what? Not by mystical experiences. Man will live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Make this central to our daily life.

**The Helper seals** **God’s elect.**

***13*** *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,*

This idea of sealing occurs a couple other times in the New Testament. In Ephesians, Paul writes

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

In 2 Corinthians,

**2 Corinthians 1:21-22** And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

When we hear the Word of truth and believe in Him, we’re sealed. Now, in New Testament times, a seal was usually made by a government official having a signet ring. They pour some hot wax on a document or on some object, and then before that hardens they press their signet ring in it. As they pull up, there is an impression. That impression is official authentication by the government, of the status of this document or object. That’s what it means to seal.

Sealing a document represents three ideas. It represents ownership. It represents authenticity. And it represents security. When the Father seals us with the Holy Spirit, that sealing indicates these blessings of ownership, of authenticity and of security. Let’s think about ownership for a moment.

**A. Ownership**

Even in modern times, a title deed of a property most often has an official seal pressed into it and that’s how you know it’s real. You own the property because of the seal placed on it. The Spirit’s sealing of believers indicates the ownership of God over the whole of our lives. In Romans, Paul says

**Romans 8:9** …Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

The inverse idea is that anyone who does have the Spirit of Christ does belong to Him. Are you glad that now you are in Christ, God owns your whole life? Are you glad for that? I am. I make a mess of this property when I own it. God is this ultimate owner, a God of wisdom, a God of wealth and riches, a God of power. So when He takes ownership over the property of a soul, He does something that no other owner can do. He makes it into something marvelous, something majestic, something eternal, something really, really great. How glad I am that my life is no longer my own, but it’s now owned by God. We are His possession. As such, He takes responsibility for our development, for our future. In Titus, Paul thinks about this. He says

**Titus 2:13** waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

He’s going to come again. This Jesus Christ, the Messiah

**Titus 2:14** who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

When God takes ownership over us, He does so to now have the authority to purify us. If you’re walking through your neighborhood and you see a piece of property that is overgrown, the house needs painted, the roof obviously leaks. There are bushes that need trimmed. What do you do? You walk on by. You say, “I wish they’d do something. It’s kind of an eyesore.” You walk on by. It’s not your property. If you purchased that property, what would you do? All of a sudden, you get to work to purify it.

So now that we are God’s own possession through Jesus Christ, by the sealing of the Holy Spirit, He begins to work. He takes responsibility for our soul. He has authority now to direct our lives and to do whatever He wants. So here’s the application. Because God has authority through His ownership over our lives, let’s submit to Him. He is such a good Father. We don’t have to fear Him messing up our lives. We have to fear the opposite, that we somehow will struggle with Him to try and take back that ownership. But the Father will always do what is good and wise and right.

Here’s what Paul says about this idea in 1 Corinthians. This is a people who are giving themselves over to sexual immorality. Here’s how he makes the application of God’s ownership.

**1 Corinthians 6:19** Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit

It’s a temple now. It’s not a warehouse. It’s a temple of the Holy Spirit

**1 Corinthians 6:19-20** …within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Another major application of God’s ownership over us is that God takes joy in us and He delights in us. He knows us and He treasures us as His people. So let’s worship Him, because He treasures us. In 1 Peter 2, God says

**1 Peter 2:9** But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood.

All this is because of God’s ownership.

**1 Peter 2:9** …a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Isn’t it amazing that the majestic, holy, eternal, infinitely great God of the universe takes delight in us? We know He does because He has taken ownership over us. We are His own possession, His precious possession. That’s remarkable!

I know I talk about my grandchildren a lot. I hope you don’t mind because I’m going to keep doing it. (Laughter!) This week, I got a text from my daughter, Keira. She’s my daughter who married my son. She said, “Hey, Malakai,” my three-year old grandson, “Malakai first wants to send you these emojis.” There were about 40. There were smiley faces and all kinds of things. He just thought it was going to be great to send me all these. I got 40 emojis on my phone. This is great, right? He’s thinking of me! “Also, Malakai wants to know when you’re going to come over to mow.” (Laughter!) Isn’t that great?

We live in a condo, so I don’t have to mow anything. But my son bought a house and I told him, “Alexander, if you buy a riding lawn mower, I’ll mow your lawn.” The idea is, I remember when he was little, I’d put him on my lap and I had visions of doing that with Malakai. So lo and behold, he took me up on the deal. He bought a riding lawn mower, so I’ve been mowing his lawn. Malakai wanted me to come over and sit on my lap as we just kind of rode around the lawn, mowing it. That’s pretty cool, isn’t it? Somebody was thinking of me. It’s hard to measure or express how much that kind of made my day.

So then I went over there. I thought, “Okay, it’s time to mow the lawn.” I think it was the next day, I went over to mow the lawn. I go in the door and I hear the pitter patter of these little feet. He’s just running now, because I’m here. He’s running down saying, “Grandpa!” and he literally just flies into my arms and I catch him. Then we have this great celebration. I think to myself, who else in my life do I have that does that? I talked to Kimberly earlier and said, “Maybe this afternoon, Kimberly.” (Laughter!) But he’s so expressive! Just to see me, I’m treasured. I’m important. Why?

Many of you are about my age, and if you came into Malakai’s house, what would happen? He’d kind of hide. You’re just an old guy. (Laughter!) What’s the difference? I’m his grandpa. There’s an ownership, a relationship. I’m his grandpa and that makes all the difference. Think about this. You are His son, His daughter. When He communicates, it says He sings over us with delight and joy. Isn’t that amazing? Is that amazing to think that God would have that kind of relationship with us? That’s what the sealing of the Holy Spirit does. It makes us His and it makes Him ours. We are His possession and He is our Father. He is our God and that makes all the difference in the dynamic of this amazing relationship. Ownership. The seal also indicates

**B. Verification of authenticity.**

A seal makes something official. Government officials look for a seal on a passport to determine whether it’s real or whether it’s fake. The Holy Spirit seals us to assure us that our adoption in God’s family is authentic. In Romans 8, it says

**Romans 8:15** For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”

Notice this! He says

**Romans 8:16-17** The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—

I think that this ministry of being sealed with the Holy Spirit and the ministry of the Spirit testifying that we indeed are children of God, is one and the same. There is a verification that our souls need because our souls are filled with doubts and fears. “Do you love me? Do you love me not? I have failed you. Are you still my Father? Do you still embrace me as your son? Do you still delight in me? Am I still yours?” The Holy Spirit takes up residence in us to verify, to say, “Yes, you are His and He is yours.” One of the most precious testimonies fueling our assurance of salvation is this inner witness of the Holy Spirit, the sealing of the Spirit.

Let me ask you, have you ever been reading the Holy Spirit’s book and you read a promise from God and it’s like it just jumps off of these physical pages. It jumps and takes on a life, and it jumps right into your heart and ignites you? You’re overwhelmed that this promise is for me. “This promise is exactly what I need to carry me through this temptation. This promise is mine.” Have you ever experienced that? I think if you’re a believer, you all have at some point. What is that? It is the sealing work of the Holy Spirit. It is the witnessing work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit loves to take His Word and bring verification to our souls that we are His children. He does that by having a promise jump off the page and we say, “Yes, I know this is for me.” How do you know? I just know. It’s the same way I know that Malakai loves me. I just know. I don’t have to prove it. I’ve experienced it. This sealing work of the Holy Spirit is the most important matter of the verification that we truly are God’s children.

**C. Security**

A seal expresses ownership. It expresses verification. It also provides security. At the tomb of Jesus, Pontius Pilate placed a Roman seal so that no one would steal the body of Jesus. What he didn’t know is that he had more concern for the power inside the grave than the powers outside the grave, because the grave couldn’t hold Him. The seal was broken. Human seals fail. Ownership seals fail. Verification seals are counterfeited. Securing seals fail. God’s seal is absolute. When the Holy Spirit seals us, God is saying to sin and to Satan, “Hands off! Hands off now! Hands off forever! You will not destroy what is mine.”

The presence of the Holy Spirit seals us. It seals us even when our own wills feel like we’re wavering. Even when our own wills cave in to those temptations and we fail, the Holy Spirit brings us back to repentance. He brings us back to humility. He brings us back. That’s not us! That’s not because we’re so great. “I just have a soft heart. That’s why I confessed.” No, it’s the Holy Spirit’s sealing work that drives us back, securing us, lashing us to the mast of Jesus Christ in the midst of the storm, in the midst of the wind, so that we are safe.

Because of the Holy Spirit, we are permanently and irrevocably God’s precious possession. We are not loved for a short time and then discarded. We are not God’s shiny new penny that He says, “Oh, this is new. This is fun.” Then when it begins to tarnish, He puts it aside. That is not who we are. God wants to communicate in the clearest of language that’s not who we are. He says, “I’m guaranteeing that you’re not my shiny new penny. You are not my next thing. I’m going to guarantee that by placing my Spirit, sealing you with the Spirit, securing you once and for all so that you will know that my love for you is unrelenting. It is unchanging.

The application is let us draw near to God and pray. Let us pray. Let us draw near to God in prayer. Assurance of God’s love is a key to a praying life. I believe one of the reasons why we don’t pray more is because we’re not truly convinced that God loves us and that He’s good. The more we understand and receive of the sealing ministry, the more we understand that God loves me and He’s good. That fuel is not sort of an ought to. “I ought to pray because it’s a command.” No, this is such a good, good Father that I want to bring everything to Him because He really, really cares for me.

**The Helper guarantees our future inheritance.**

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

Right now we have salvation, but not its fullness. Right now we still suffer through temptations. We still sin. We still need to confess our sin. That’s going to happen all the way to this future day when redemption is fully realized. On that day, there is going to be no more temptation. There is going to be no more failings. Right now, we are secure in this salvation even as our sanctification is in this process. How do we know we’re secure? Because the Holy Spirit is our guarantee. The word “guarantee” simply means “down payment.” God makes a down payment on us when He seals us with the Holy Spirit. He guarantees that our Savior Jesus will complete the work that He started.

Why would someone put a large down payment on a property and then lose that down payment by not continuing with the purchase? Well, in human terms, there are a lot of reasons. I can think of a few. First of all, the person may have found out something negative about the property that they didn’t know and they couldn’t get out of it legally, so they’re just saying, “I’m willing to lose the down payment rather than go further into this deal, because I found out something that I didn’t know, that was negative. It’s a bad deal, so I’m stepping out now. I’m cutting my losses.” A person may lose their down payment because they realize, “I don’t have enough money to complete this transaction. I already made a guarantee, but I don’t have the resources, so I have to back out and I know I’m going to lose that.” A person may lose their down payment because they change their mind. They’re kind of fickle and they say, “I don’t want it. It’s just worth it to get out of it because I really don’t want it.”

Beloved, here’s the deal. God makes a down payment. The down payment is the Holy Spirit. He’s the guarantee of the future full payment price when we stand before Him, to bring completion and glory. God never finds out something about us that He doesn’t already know. God never runs low on funds. God never changes His mind. The Holy Spirit, as God’s down payment, is an absolute guarantee of our future full redemption. The application is let us rejoice in the Holy Spirit’s confirming work. The Holy Spirit is our assuring Spirit. He comforts us in our doubts.

**The Helper glorifies Jesus.**

Twice here in verses 11-14 we read this little phrase, “to the praise of his glory.”

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

***14*** *who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*

The driving goal of all the Holy Spirit’s work is the glory of the Son. He does so by transforming us from being creatures of sin into being creatures of sonship. In this, we become people who are able to glorify the Son. So the Holy Spirit has an interest in our lives not just for us, although He loves us, but also for the sake of the Son, the sake of the glory of God. The Holy Spirit’s purpose for sealing us and for being our down payment is that we would live to the glory of God.

Let’s ask these questions. Is Jesus the center of my life? Does everything in my life revolve around Jesus? Can I say that my whole life gives praise to Jesus? If the answer is, “I’m not sure if He’s the center of my life. I’m not sure if all of my life gives praise to Jesus,” we come back to God’s grace and God’s answer. The answer to those problems is not, “You just need to try harder. You have to try to be a better Christian.” The answer is you need to receive more of the Holy Spirit’s ministry. There is something that is robbing you of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, this Helper, of His sealing work in your life.

The thing that keeps us from living a life that brings glory to God is our sin. So let’s think about the Holy Spirit and our sin for a moment. If the sin of lust is consuming you, it’s because we have lost view of the gift of knowing Jesus. How precious it is. We’re trading sin for a relationship with Christ. If the sin of anxiety consumes us, it’s because we have lost view of the gift of our sonship, that we are safe, that we are His and provided for. If the sin of anger consumes us, it’s because we have lost sight of our future inheritance. We’re frustrated with things now, without a view of the joy that is to come. If the sin of materialism consumes us, it’s because we have lost sight of the greater reality of heaven. Who cares about this world? It’s all going to burn up. We have something sure and eternal. If the sin of bitterness consumes us, it’s because we have lost sight of the great forgiveness that God has granted us. If the sin of despair overcomes us, it’s because we have lost sight of the Holy Spirit Himself, and He’s willing to help us through everything so that we can overcome. Friends, let us pray that God would help us and let us trust in Him and learn to walk by the Spirit. Let us pray, “Helper, help me to keep every spiritual blessing in view so that I am an overcomer and not one who is overcome.”The answer to those sin problems is first and foremost, get in view the salvation of God and His grace. That’s the first step.

I want to ask you before we close, do you have the Spirit of God indwelling you? Is He your down payment, your guarantee? Has He sealed you? Another way of asking that is have you heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of salvation? Have you believed in Christ? If you have never believed in Christ, you do not have the Spirit of God and you do not have any of His helping ministry. But He offers this to you. He offers this freely. Let us call to God and call upon the name of Jesus Christ, who is our Savior, and He will hear you. “Father, rescue me from my sin through your Son, Jesus. I need your Spirit indwelling me. I need your life through Jesus. I need to be forgiven. I know all of those blessings and more are found in Christ. I trust in Him.”