

The Spirit and Truth

Ephesians 1:13-14

Turn with me this morning to the book of **Ephesians 1:13-14**. We are continuing on in our study of the book of Ephesians and looking at the blessings that are ours (both visible and invisible) simply because we have put our faith in Jesus Christ. We have seen that the blessings that are ours are the result of the Trinity – Father God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

God initiated a plan out of his kindness and love that would allow us to be holy and blameless and to become a part of his family. That plan involved Jesus Christ who bought our forgiveness through his shed blood, making possible for us to receive an inheritance and changing the motivation of Christianity from guilt and fear to love and acceptance. Under Jesus Christ the whole world will be brought together in unity and at the time that all things will bow down and declare him as Lord, Jesus will receive us as his inheritance.

It is amazing to think that You and I are the ones whom Jesus is looking forward to receiving into his presence. We are the apple of his eye, we are the treasure he longs to enjoy. End even now he sees us, and what we can become, and he finds joy in us. We are his proud reward and crown. So if you ever feel like you are meaningless to God, you have failed to understand that you are what he longs to be with. We have looked at the work of God the Father and Jesus Christ, but this morning we will be looking at the work of the Holy Spirit. Look with me at **verse 13-14**:

And now you also have heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us everything he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. This is just one more reason for us to praise our glorious God.

As you looked through scripture you find two words always closely linked together – Truth (the Word) and the Spirit. These two things always go hand in hand because we find that the (1) Word of God, or the Truth of God, is interpreted by the Spirit. With out the Holy Spirit the words we find in scripture make no impact.

We read in **Luke 24** when Jesus was on the road to Emmaus and he appeared to his two disciples after his resurrection, and beginning with Moses and the prophets he began to explain the scriptures written about him. We read what happened in **verses 31-32**:

Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared! They said to each other, "Didn't our hearts feel strangely warm as he talk with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?"

In fact, in other translations it reads that their “hearts burned within them.” **That burning or warmth within is the result of the Spirit taking the word of God and making it alive and real.** That is why sometimes as you are in a Bible study, or even a Sunday morning service, a truth is presented to you and something within you just seems to leap. It is the Holy Spirit at work within you. Sometimes I find another scenario to be true. I may have heard a truth for years on end, and that truth may not move me one inch for years. But then that same truth is presented again at another time in my life and it becomes the greatest revelation.

That is why many of us here, as we walk out of here this morning, may take with us a gold nugget of truth, and yet it may be a different nugget from everyone else. It is because the Holy Spirit is who is making the words of Scripture alive.

The second connection we make between the Word of God and the Holy Spirit is that **(2)the Spirit is identified by the Word.** We find that there are many spirits in the world today. Even just in our community alone it doesn’t take very long to realize that there are many spirits at work in the lives of people. How can you tell whether what you are dealing with is an evil spirit or the Holy Spirit? You simply have to look at Scripture and see the identifying traits laid out. So you see both are inseparable.

As you look at the passage you find that there are **three fundamental experiences of every Christian.** Paul tells us (a) **“You have heard the Word of truth.”** (b) **“You have believed in Christ”** and (c) **“he has identified you by giving you the Holy Spirit.”** Each of us have experienced this if we have had a conversion experience. Let’s look at these in a little bit more detail. First look at **verse 13:**

And now you also have heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you.

When Paul wrote this letter the world was filled with all kinds of twisted, distorted ideas, with attitudes and approaches and philosophies that were absolutely flawed and leading people astray. But people believed them and even if they were ridiculous fantasies that made absolutely no sense whatsoever. Have you ever heard of any of these ideas today? You don’t have to look very far, in fact, in this city it will find you.

The great thing about the Good News of Jesus Christ is that it is true, it makes sense, and you find that his Word completely describes in detail the plan of God. The Gospel is a return to reality. It isn’t an illusion. It lays out the cold hard facts about who we are. It tells us our true condition. Yet in our world today, we minimize our situation because we find that our society buys into the idea that we aren’t that bad. Get rid of a couple of bad habits, add a little bit of morality and we can take care of ourselves. We are not that bad and yet reality says we are. In a speech from Winston Churchill about the history of humanity he said the following words:

“Certain it is that, while men are gathering knowledge and power with ever increasing speeds, their virtues and their wisdom have not shown any notable improvement as the centuries have rolled by. Under sufficient stress – starvation,

terror and war – like passion or cold intellectual frenzy – the modern man we know so well will do the most terrible of deeds and his modern woman will back him up!”

We are a people who deserve the wrath of God – the removal of God’s restraint. Paul even tells us that no matter how hard we try we can’t even do the right thing. We are a fallen mankind. And yet **the return to reality not only declares our guilt but God’s love and forgiveness.** That is salvation. **(b) Ephesians 1:13** also tells us that the Christian also” believes in Jesus Christ”. **You believe in Jesus.**

And when you believed in Christ.

We not only hear the word of God (Truth) but we have also believed it. Belief is not mere human acknowledgment but true action. If one says that they believe something to be true and yet live contrary then it truly shows that they don’t believe. **Belief results in change, in adjustment to the facts, and in conformity to reality.** Notice that the belief is in Jesus. It is in a person and therefore **the faith of a Christian is always related to a person, and it involves a personal commitment or personal relationship.** We don’t just buy into an impersonal idea but a person.

You see many people understand the idea of salvation, in fact many non-Christians can probably explain to you how it works. But it is about the love of Jesus Christ. The third things that Paul tells us about the Christian is that **(c) you have been given the Holy Spirit. Verse 13:**

He identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit.

In the Revised Standard Version it reads that “You have been sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.” This idea of a seal is a reference to the ancient practice of sealing letters or other objects with sealing wax and impressing the wax with a seal worn on a ring bearing an identifying image. The use of the seal was used in two different ways.

- The first was ownership. The seal marked to whom the letter belonged. It was possessed by the individual who owned the seal. Paul is saying here that **when God sent the Holy Spirit into your life it was a mark that you belong to him.** That’s why Paul tells us in **1 Corinthians 6:19-20:**

Or don’t you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with you body.

*For his Holy Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts and tells us that we are God’s children. **Romans 8:16***

Even as the Holy Spirit is working in us, the result of joy and peace and love shows others that we belong to God as well. That there is something different about you because you have the mark of ownership upon you.

- The second idea in the use of the seal is that of preservation. Remember that at the tomb of Jesus there was the seal of the Roman Emperor on the stone. If that seal was broken it was punishable by death. Its purpose was to insure that the tomb remain intact and that no intrusion or destruction be made. When speaking of the Holy Spirit it means that **God has promised to keep us together without destruction.** It is God's guarantee,

In fact, that word guarantee is defined in the Greek as "a down payment." In other words, presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives – the joy, the peace, the working within – it is the guarantee that there is more to come, much more, much better, more in quantity and greater in quality. More than I am currently experiencing right now.

It is also interesting that the modern Greek this same term of the word of guarantee is used for an engagement ring. When a man gives a woman an engagement ring, he is giving here a guarantee that one day she is going to be his bride. **The Holy Spirit tells us that we don't have to worry because he will never leave.** Like the words in **Hebrews 13:5**:

"I will never leave you, I will never forsake you."

When a person becomes a Christian they accept the truth, the Holy Spirit became alive them. In fact, in **John 16:13** Jesus told us:

When the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.

The Holy Spirit will not only point to truth but he will also point to Jesus Christ. In **John 16:15** we read Jesus words again:

"All that the father has is mine; this is what I mean when I say that the Spirit will reveal to you whatever he receives from me."

The Holy Spirit is God's seal of ownership and preservation. We not only belong to him but we are also promised to be saved and preserved by the work of Jesus Christ. The great blessing for us that is in the heavenly unseen realm is the source of power and leading that lies within us. The inhabitation of deity, the presence of God, alive and well letting me know each day that I have found truth, I have faith in Jesus Christ, and that all that is promised will take place. How miserable life would be if we never knew how our existence would end. But we know that heaven awaits us because we have his seal of approval. Let's pray