

**A Series on Ephesians: Spiritual Blessings**  
**He Sealed Me with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14)**  
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**I. Spiritual Blessings**

We are in the middle of a series on Ephesians, and series within a series called Spiritual Blessings.

When things are difficult, and we are struggling with finding a job, finances, housing, relational issues, we wonder if God is blessing us at all. Paul wrote this letter from prison. He had nothing materially. He was in chains. He was poor. He didn't eat well. He was in rags. Yet, when he wrote this letter, in Ephesians 1:3, Paul starts out the letter by saying: **"Praise be to God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ."** Then, he breaks out into all of the spiritual blessings that God has blessed us with, all the way until the end of verse 14. Verses 3-14 is grammatically one sentence.

We've looking at these true blessings we have in Christ so that our lives can be like Paul—praising God even in midst of suffering.

We looked at the blessings of being chosen by God.

We looked at the blessings of being adopted by God.

We looked at the blessings of redemption.

Today, we want to look at the blessings of the Holy Spirit.

Let's read Ephesians 1:13-14.

**<sup>13</sup> And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having 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.**

**We will look at three things in the passage about the blessings of the Holy Spirit: (1) the promise; (2) the seal; and (3) the deposit.**

**II. First, the Promise.**

Verse 14 describes the Holy Spirit as “promised Holy Spirit.” It was promise by God through the prophets of the Old Testament. Generally, in the OT, the Holy Spirit came and went. It came for a particular purpose, to a particular person, in a particular time. The Spirit of God came upon Gideon and he was able to lead Israelites. The Spirit of God came upon Samson, and he had supernatural strengths. The Spirit of God came upon Isaiah and he prophesied. But, there were multiple prophesies that God was going to do something new.

Ezekiel 36:26-27:

26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

The nation of Israel had become either a people who did not obey the laws of God because it was such a burden, or people who were trying hard to obey the laws and became moralistic and legalistic. There was no heart in it. They wanted to do what was right externally, but their heart was not in it.

So, God said that I am going to give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you soft heart. Your life will not be a drive to do what is right, you will want to do what is right because your heart has been softened. I am going to send you a new spirit that’s going to transform you from the inside!

Then, Prophet Joel prophesied TO WHOM this promise is for.

In Joel 2:28-29, the Lord said:

28 ‘And afterward,  
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.  
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,  
your old men will dream dreams,  
your young men will see visions.  
29 Even on my servants, both men and women,  
I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

**The Prophet Joel prophesied to us that the Holy Spirit would no longer be reserved for particular people at particular times for particular tasks, but it would be for ALL.**

God would pour out His Spirit on all people

- regardless of sex—sons and daughters,
- regardless of age—old men and young men, and
- regardless of background, race, color, or rank—even on my servants.

It will be awesome—they would dream dreams and see visions and they would prophesy. There is a sense that God would pour out something awesome into all of us.

- Yet, this prophecy remained unfilled for at least three hundred years. The people waited and waited.

**With the birth of Jesus, it's almost like a trumpet sound; there was a bursting in the activities of the Holy Spirit. Almost everyone connected with the birth of Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit.**

- John the Baptist, who was to prepare the way for Jesus, he was filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth
- Mary, the mother of Jesus, the Holy Spirit came upon her
- Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist, was filled with the Holy Spirit when Mary came to visit her
- Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied

In each case, something happens; but it is still for particular people, for particular time for particular tasks.

**John the Baptist is the first one to connect Jesus with the Holy Spirit.**

- Later, when someone asked John the Baptist whether he was the Christ—the Messiah, he replied: Let's read Luke 3:16.

<sup>16</sup> John answered them all, "I baptize you with<sup>c</sup> water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

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<sup>c</sup> Or *in*

- Baptism in Greek literally means to immerse or to plunge or to overwhelm. It what happens to a ship when it sinks. Holy Spirit is going to come and overwhelm you.

**And Jesus also predicted the Spirit's presence.**

John 7:37-39.

This is a fascinating passage for me.

At one time, Jesus went to a feast called the Feast of Tabernacles.

- This was a huge feast. Thousands of Jewish people would go to Jerusalem for this feast.
- This feast celebrated the time when God gave people of Israel water from a rock while they were thirsting for water in the desert. They thanked God for providing water and prayed that God would continue to provide water.
- This was not just about water in the physical sense. The Prophet Ezekiel prophesied in Ezekiel 47 that a time would come when the river of God would pour out of the temple and bring life, fruitfulness, and healing wherever it went.
- Ezekiel 47 was read at the Feast of Tabernacle and enacted visually. The high priest would take water and pour it into a funnel on the west side of the alter and the water would go from the center of the temple and end up on the ground.
- The Jewish rabbis believed that Jerusalem was at the navel of the earth and the temple was the center of the navel, *koilis*, or put literally “belly” or “innermost being.”
- On the last day of the Feast, the greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood up at the temple and proclaimed this: Let's read John 7:37-38 (NASB):
  - “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart (or in the original word—“belly” or “innermost being”) shall flow rivers of living water.’”
- **Jesus was saying that the promise of Ezekiel would not be fulfilled in a place but in a person—from Jesus. Out of the innermost being of Jesus,**

**the river of life would flow. Also, he said that this river of life would flow from every Christian—that’s in verse 38—“whoever believes in me). From within us, Jesus says, this river of life would flow, bringing life, fruitfulness, and healing to others as promised by God.**

- John went on to explain in Verse 39:

**But this He spoke <sup>a</sup>of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for <sup>b</sup>the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet <sup>c</sup>glorified.**

- The promise of the Father had not yet been fulfilled.

Even after Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection, the promise had not been fulfilled. The Holy Spirit still had not come.

- But there is a rising sense of anticipation. It is almost like a shaking a champagne bottle.

- **Before Jesus ascended into heaven, Jesus again promised the Holy Spirit, the Promise of the Father: Acts 1:4-5:**

**“Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. <sup>5</sup>For John baptized with<sup>a</sup> water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”**

Skipping down to Verse 8:

**<sup>8</sup>But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

- **And here this group of 120 people started to pray, “Lord, send us the Promise of the Father” and they prayed and prayed.**

**Then, at last, the Spirit came. The Champagne cork flew open.**

- Let’s read Acts 2:1-4.

**When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup>Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole**

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<sup>a</sup> Joel 2:28; John 1:33

<sup>b</sup> John 20:22; Acts 1:4f; 2:4, 33; 19:2

<sup>c</sup> John 12:16, 23; 13:31f; 16:14; 17:1

<sup>a</sup> Or *in*

house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. <sup>4</sup> All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues<sup>a</sup> as the Spirit enabled them.

- This caused several different reactions: You see in verse 7, some people were “utterly amazed” and said, “This is amazing!” Other people were “amazed and perplexed” (verse 12). Other people made fun: verse 13: “Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They had too much wine.””
- Peter stood up and explained what is going on.
- See said, first of all, what you are seeing is biblical.
- Let’s catch it at verse 14:16-17.

<sup>16</sup> No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

<sup>17</sup> “In the last days, God says,

I will pour out my Spirit on all people.  
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,  
your young men will see visions,  
your old men will dream dreams.

<sup>18</sup> Even on my servants, both men and women,  
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,  
and they will prophesy.

- He says, “This is Jesus” verse 22: “Men of Israel, listen to this: This is Jesus of Nazareth, and he goes through the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus and then verse 33, he says this: “Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the Promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.”
- And then he says, “This is for you”
- Verses 37-39

<sup>37</sup> When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

<sup>38</sup> Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup> The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

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<sup>a</sup> Or *languages*; also in verse 11

- He says this promise is no longer for particular people, for particular time for particular task.
  - It's not just for the apostle;
  - it's not just for the 120 who were praying;
  - it's not just for the 3,000 who were converted on this Day;
  - it's not just for the 3,000 and their children.
  - It's for all whom the Lord our God will call.
  - For all Christians, all the way down through history.
  - The Promise of the Father has been fulfilled.

And that is why Paul refers to the Holy Spirit as the “promised Holy Spirit.”

### **III. Second, Ephesians 1:13 says: “Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.**

#### **What does he mean by seal?**

2 Corinthians 1:22 says: “**God set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.**” Very similar idea.

A seal is something that signifies ownership. God by placing his Holy Spirit within us is saying: you're mine as a lover says to his love: you're mine.

A seal also means security. Something is seal to secure it, to protect it. This means he will protect us through trials and difficulties of this life. He will not let us go, no matter what! “I love you and I am not going to let you go. I am not going to lose you. No matter what hardship you are going through, I got you back.”

When do you receive this seal, the Promised Holy Spirit? “Having believed...” It is when you believe, you receive this seal from God. It is not when you are good enough. It is not when you get yourself all fixed up and life turned around. It is when you believe that God has chosen you, that God has adopted you, and that God has redeemed you through the blood of Jesus on the cross. **That** is when you are sealed!

And when the Spirit of God comes upon you, “Out of your heart, streams of living water will flow!”

- There will be a new spirit in you.
- Your heart will change. There will be transformation at your heart level.

- You will begin to see the beauty of God's love for you.
- You will begin to receive power to live out your life naturally.
- You will begin to receive power to overcome your addictions.
- You will be able to praise God even in midst of the toughest time of your life, just like Paul here is able to praise God from a prison.
- You will become his witnesses in Los Angeles, in California, and to the ends of the earth!

Do you want to receive this power? Do you want to be sealed with the Holy Spirit? Put your faith in him! Believe in the good news!

#### **IV. Lastly, he says the Holy Spirit is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance.**

When we think of the word for deposit, we think of it as something we get back, like security deposit. But, this is not the case here. The word for deposit was a common commercial term meaning a down-payment or a first installment in the purchase of something. So, God is not just promising us an inheritance, the Kingdom of God, the beauty of heaven, the fullness of the Kingdom of God. He is not just saying I am going to bless you when you die or when I come back with glory and honor and joy and love and bliss! He is saying, I am going to give you a foretaste of what is to come! In theological term, this is saying, I am going to give you an eschatological experience now. I am going to give you an experience, a taste of your future inheritance now. And that is the Holy Spirit!

The Holy Spirit is the foretaste of the glory of the Kingdom of God.

You see, Christianity is not about getting fire insurance so that we don't end up in hell. It's not about doing the right thing to cover up our guilt. It's not about trying really hard to live a moral life. It's not about moral reformation. It's about living in the Spirit! It's about our hearts becoming soft! Warm! It's about streams of living water flowing from within. It's about finding a new life with vibrancy, life, new purpose, new mission, and a new heart!

Do you want this in your life?

Sometimes, even after we believe, we live our lives as if God did not deposit the Holy Spirit in us. We continue to live by own moral striving. That's like trying to heat the house with a pilot light only. When we become a Christian, I think the pilot light of the Holy Spirit is lid. It will never go off. But, there is more than that. Later, Paul tells us to be filled with the Holy Spirit. He wants us to experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Picture a father and a son walking hand and hand through a park. They are happy and completely secure as they walk along. But, once in a while, the father picks up his son, twirls him around and gives him a big hug and says: I love you son. That's being filled with the Holy Spirit. But, even when we don't experience the fullness of his love (and we often don't experience it everyday), we still know that we are sealed. We are his. He is our father and he has my hand and he walks with me everyday.