

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 9/11/94 PM
Ephesians 1:13-14 "The Benefit of the Holy Spirit"

Intro: A couple of weeks ago we began a new series entitled, "The Benefits of Christianity." If you know Christ, you have access to some tremendous benefits.

Purpose: The purpose of our series is to discover the meaning and significance of these life-changing benefits which the Bible says are ours because of Jesus Christ.

Key Verse: The key verse for our series is found in Ps 103:2, "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." That's a command, isn't it? Don't forget the benefits of God!

Last week, at our outdoor service, we considered the benefit of belonging to the family of God. Tonight, we want to explore what is perhaps the key to all the other benefits. We'll be looking at Ephesians 1:13-14.

But first, turn to Luke 11:13. It's a parable of Jesus. If a son asks his father for bread, will his father give him a stone (11)? Certainly not. Here's the punch line. V 13 "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"

Compare that with Mt 7:11. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father, who is in heaven, give GOOD THINGS to them that ask Him?"

Notice that. In Matthew, it says "good things." In Luke, it says, "Holy Spirit." Is that a contradiction? No. For one reason, remember that Jesus was an itinerant preacher. He traveled around Galilee preaching for three years, often repeating the same messages to different audience. For another, if the Father gives us "good things" if we ask Him, and He does, what is the greatest "good thing"? What is the greatest benefit a Christian possesses? What benefit is the key that unlocks all other benefits? The answer is--the Holy Spirit.

Tonight, we want to explore the benefit of the Holy Spirit. Our text is a familiar one, one which we studied 3 years ago during an expositional series in Ephesians. This evening, our focus is topical. Our interest is to discover this. What's involved in the benefit of the Holy Spirit?

Proposition: In Ephesians 1:13-14, we learn that the Holy Spirit is involved in two important areas in our lives.

- I. The Holy Spirit is involved in our Salvation (13).
 - A. He stimulates.
 - B. He seals.
 - C. He sanctifies.
- II. The Holy Spirit is involved in our Security (14).

I. The Holy Spirit is involved in our Salvation (13).

Let me set the context. In the Greek text, vv 3-14 are one, long sentence. Paul packs into this statement a summary of the spiritual blessings which are ours in Christ (3). We are rich! Therefore, we must bless God.

Bless God for:

vv 3-6 The riches we enjoy from God the Father

vv 7-12 The riches we enjoy from God the Son

vv 13-14 The riches we enjoy from God the Holy Spirit

Tonight we want to learn to bless God for the Holy Spirit. What has the Holy Spirit done for us? He's involved, first of all, in our salvation. Here He engages in three activities.

A. He stimulates.

V 13 "In whom ye also trusted, after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation..." Notice the change in pronouns, from "we" (vv 3-12) to "you" (v 13)." Paul is writing, from prison in fact. He is writing to people he knew firsthand, Christians in Ephesus. For the most part, Gentiles.

How did he know them? He took the gospel to Ephesus. He preached Christ in Ephesus. To Gentiles. And guess what happened? Gentiles were saved, just like Jews had been saved! How did it happen? It happened because of the work of the Holy Spirit.

Paul says, "In whom ye trusted." Who's that? In Christ. How did they believe in Christ? For that matter, how does any person enter a relationship with Christ? It happens as the result of the stimulating work of the Holy Spirit.

Salvation would be impossible apart from Him. Yes, God the Father chose us for salvation in the past (7). And yes, God the Son provided redemption for us at the cross (7). But it's the Holy Spirit who affects and applies that salvation for us in the present.

How does the Holy Spirit bring a person to Christ? Notice the clues in v 13.

"you heard"--Ten years earlier, some pagans in Ephesus heard Paul tell them something they'd never heard. What? "The word of truth." What is that? "The gospel of your salvation." The Spirit uses the Word to save a person.

Then what happened?

"you believed"--Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. Don't miss this. What does the Holy Spirit produce in our lives? Belief. Faith. He prompts us to believe in Christ. How does He do it? By using the Word. Peter says (I Pt 1:23), "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God."

Do you see the importance of hearing the Word of God? There will be no believing apart from hearing. If you are searching in life, keep doing what you are doing now. Expose yourself to the Word of God.

Never forget. Faith does not originate with us. It is a gift from God, which is produced by the working of the Spirit (see 2:8; Tit 3:5 "he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit").

B. He seals.

V 13 "After ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." In the first century, hot wax would be placed on documents. The purpose was to signify

that the documents were sure and certain. That wax seal guaranteed that the document would be opened only by the proper person.

Notice the order: We hear the Word. We believe. We are sealed.

When does sealing occur? Is it a second work of grace after salvation? No. It occurs at the moment you believe. Lit. it reads, "Having believed, you were sealed." if you have believed in Christ, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit.

If you are in Christ, you have the Spirit. He has sealed you. And that means your salvation is secure (see 4:30).

One more activity.

C. He sanctifies.

How do we know that? Notice His title again. He is the HOLY Spirit. Holy refers to His character, but it also identifies His work. He is called holy because He makes people holy. He sets people apart from sin, unto God. He transforms sinners into saints. He sanctifies.

If you are a believer, the Spirit is (or desires to be) dynamically involved in your Christian life. As we scan Ephesians, we catch a glimpse of how. He reveals truth (3:5). He strengthens our inner man (3:16). He creates unity in the Church (4:3). He produces fruit in us (5:9). He fills us (5:18), and affects our speech (5:19), our attitudes (5:20), and our relationships (5:21ff). He equips us for spiritual battle (6:17).

Yes, the Holy Spirit is involved in our salvation, from beginning to end. He stimulates faith in us (that's how the Christian life begins). He seals us (to insure completion of the Christian life). And He sanctifies us.

Are you cooperating with Him?

There's a second area in which the Spirit is dynamically involved.

II. The Holy Spirit is involved in our Security (14).

We've seen what the Spirit does. Now Paul tells us Who He is. V 14 "Who is the earnest of our inheritance..." We talked about this word last week. It's actually a business term. In business transactions, a buyer would give a seller an "earnest." It was a downpayment, a first installment, a deposit. That pre-payment was the guarantee that the rest was yet to come.

When Jesus left 2000 years ago, He gave us an earnest, a first installment.

What is it that the Holy Spirit guarantees? V 14 He is the guarantee "of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." Redemption is a beautiful term. We have been redeemed in two senses--from the penalty of sin (1:7), but also from the presence of sin. The first has already happened. The second is yet to happen. But it will. And I can't wait!

Beloved, if you know Christ, your future is secure. You can be certain about tomorrow, because of the Holy Spirit. We need to learn to rely on Him.

Communion: