

Our Glorious Inheritance Ephesians 1:11-14

Introduction

A 67 year old homeless man living on the streets of Bolivia – named Tomas Martinez was named the heir of \$6M after the death of a relative. However – when Tomas was approached by police officers trying to locate him to give him the good news – he ran from them! He had previous run-ins with the law over drug and alcohol abuse – so he assumed they were trying to arrest him. Tomas has not been located – and so his \$6M sits unclaimed at the bank.

Eva Paole of Argentina was working as a maid when she discovered that her birth father actually was a wealthy landowner who had died in 1983. She believed she was entitled to his estate and took her claim to court. Following a legal battle and DNA testing which proved her claim - - - she inherited a \$40 million estate.

Two vast estates – one remains unclaimed – the other secured

One estate was vigorously pursued
The other – the rightful heir ran from it!

In the next section of Ephesians – we read of a vast inheritance that God has laid up for His children

It is part of this expansive list of blessings which Paul is speaking of in Ephesians 1

As Paul refers to the church – he says – ‘God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.’

We have this vast trove of spiritual blessings – going back to activities of the Father before the foundation of the world

We have been adopted into this Family [v. 5] – and have a share the family inheritance [v. 11]

Not only that – but we have a kind of first installment on our inheritance – which is indicated in vv. 13, 14 - - - the indwelling Holy Spirit who is given to believers – who seals us or marks us as belonging to God

A seal in the first century world meant several things:

- Authenticity
- Ownership
- Security

The believer in being sealed with the Holy Spirit – is marked out by God as being His property

It is God’s way of saying – this one is mine

J. C. Ryle: 'The indwelling of God the Holy Spirit is the common mark of all true believers in Christ. It is the Shepherd's mark on the flock of the Lord Jesus, distinguishing them from the rest of the world. It is the "earnest" which the Redeemer gives to His believing disciples while they are in the body, as a pledge to the full and complete "redemption" yet to come in the resurrection morning. [Eph. 1:14] / [Old Paths, p. 293]

The indwelling Holy Spirit – is referred to as a pledge of things yet to come for the believer

The Holy Spirit is God's way of saying: 'more to come' - - - you have a whole inheritance awaiting you in glory

I. The Inheritance - vv. 11, 12

We come to the close of this tremendous opening statement made by Paul to the Ephesians

Paul looks at this world and sees a plan of God being carried out

MLJ: 'The Apostle Paul is unfolding, let us remember, God's great and eternal purpose . . . The world is interested in politics and in the headlines in the newspapers; but here we are looking at something beyond all that, something that is unfolding and will continue to unfold, whatever may be happening on the worldly level. We are not saying that what happens on the lower level has no importance whatsoever, but the plan of God is altogether bigger and grander.'

He says, politics / Donald Trump / Democrats - - - this is much bigger than any of that

Ultimately – because we are dealing with matters of eternity – and which have eternal significance

Kings and kingdoms / mighty nations - - - will all pass away – not God's kingdom

We see all three members of the trinity play a role in this great program of salvation

The Father – plans it from eternity past

Son – purchased our salvation with his blood

The Holy Spirit – applies it / seals it

Paul reminds us that – it is God's purpose that lies behind salvation

If He had not devised salvation's plan / sent His Son / sent His Spirit – man would simply remain dead in His trespasses and sins – and abide under the wrath of God – be a child of wrath [Eph. 2:3]

That would be just – but it would not reflect the grace of God

Instead – something amazing has taken place - - - we have been adopted into the family of God [v. 5] – redeemed by the blood of Jesus - - - and we are now heirs of the family inheritance - - - to the praise of His glory

We see this result in vv. 12, 14 – this phrase – ‘to the praise of His glory’
‘to the praise of the glory of His grace’ – v. 6

Salvation glorifies God / magnifies His grace

It is not something we deserve

We deserve hell / wrath - - - instead we are welcomed into the arms of God’s grace

Because of that – our salvation abounds to the praise of the glory of His grace

John Piper: 'The apex of God's glory that you were made to praise, is the glory of His grace. All of His other glories - the glory of His justice and wrath and power and wisdom and truthfulness - serve to make the glory of His grace more plain, more beautiful, and more precious.' [With Calvin in the Theater of God]

Look at how Paul puts this

Rom. 9:22-24

This is a profound statement on what God is doing

God puts up with this broken planet for a time [all its sin / all its garbage] - - - He endures with patience - - - Why?

Why doesn't He just flood the world and get rid of all this sin?

v. 23 – that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy

So that we would be to the praise of the glory of His grace

Go to the book of Revelation – and see some of the activity of the saints in heaven – what are they doing?

Rev. 5:8-10

What does the future hold?

It will involve a people who praise God's grace – who praise the Lamb of God - - - for redemption by the blood

Rev. 5:11-14

That is the result of Calvary – in eternity

Praise to God
Praise to the Lamb slain / risen

Look at what He accomplished thru His death and resurrection

We will be to the praise of the glory of His grace throughout eternity

W.A. Criswell: 'what do you think will happen to us when we die? Do we go out like a light, like a candle? What is beyond the grave and what is beyond death? Is there existence and if there is - what kind of an existence? That we should be, that we should exist, that we should live, is the purpose of God for us beyond the gates of death . . . God reveals to us that in the eternity of the eternities and in the ages of the ages - we shall be to the praise of His glory.'

There is so much in store for us – in eternity – we only scratch the surface of it in passages like this

Jesus once told the disciples:

Luke 10:20 - 'Do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.'

A future in heaven is something to rejoice in!
Paul is going to tell us that the Holy Spirit is a first taste of these rich blessings to come

II. The Sealing of the Spirit - vv. 13, 14

Paul further spells out the order of events as they have taken place

This list of blessings runs thru the corridors of time – back to eternity past – to the present – on to the future for the Ephesian believers

Present blessings – involve hearing the word of the gospel – then believing

- 1) They heard the message of the gospel
- 2) They believed
- 3) They were sealed with the Holy Spirit

Rom. 10:17 - 'So faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ.'

We have to hear this message and respond to it with faith / belief

When the police went to track down Tomas - - - he ran away before they could tell him about his earthly inheritance! - - - so now continues to live apart from it

We say, 'what a crazy fool! - but that is what people do when they run from God and the gospel - they run away from untold riches

God brings the message to us of this heavenly inheritance

We have a decision to make

We can choose to believe in Christ

Or - we can scoff and say I don't believe that - run from the gospel

Pascal once made the famous analogy - we refer to as *Pascal's wager*

Pascal's Wager - basically stated that - 'believe in God - because if you don't and are wrong - you have a whole lot more to lose than if you do believe and are wrong.' - - - and much more to gain by believing if you are right

So - go ahead and believe

Pascal says - the better bet is to go with God

John Piper takes this whole approach to task: 'suppose you meet a man on the street whom you do not recognize, and he gives you a bag with \$50,000 in cash and he asks you to deposit it in the bank for him. He says that his account number is in the bag. You are surprised because you do not know him at all. You ask, 'Why do you trust me with this?' Suppose he says, "No reason - I'm just taking a risk." What is the effect of that faith in you? Does it honor you? No, it does not - it shows the man is a fool.'

'But suppose he said, 'I know that you don't know me, but I work in the same building you do, and I have watched you for the last year. I have seen your integrity in a dozen ways. I have spoken to people who know you. The reason I am trusting you with this money is that I have good reason to believe you are honest and reliable.' Now what is the effect of that faith? It truly honors you. Why? Because it is based on real evidence that you are honorable. The fruit of such faith is not folly.'

"If God says, 'why did you trust My word?' and we say, 'no reason - I'm just taking a risk.' - - - God is not honored and we are fools." [A Peculiar Glory, pp. 134, 5]

Piper's point is that authentic faith is not a guess - - - it is a position of trust grounded in what God has made known to us about Himself and His Word

He has spoken to our hearts thru His Word / and by the operation of the Spirit / witness of the church

The Puritans referred to something called the inward testimony of the Spirit - - - God the Spirit opens our eyes – to see that these promises are true and precious

In Acts 16 – Lydia did not take a gamble on the words of Paul – she did not flip a coin and say – I better go with God - - - but rather – the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul

She heard the message of salvation – she saw the truth – her heart responded with ‘I believe’

That’s what faith is

When God calls you to spiritual life – you know that this gospel is true and that this Bible is His Word

We come to what Paul refers to as the sealing of the Holy Spirit

This is certainly not the first activity of the Spirit upon an individual by any stretch

We know the Spirit is involved in bringing conviction of sin – opening our eyes to the truth

Jesus said that He would send the Helper [the Holy Spirit]

John 16:8 - 'And He, when He comes will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness and judgment.'

Conviction of sin is the work of the Holy Spirit - - - that will generally precede belief – or at least function simultaneously with it

The Spirit moves and begins to cause one to examine their ways / to see their sin / need of a Savior

J.C. Ryle: 'Whatever individual Christians have - they owe to the agency of God the Holy Ghost. By Him they are first called, quickened and made alive. Of Him they are born again, and made new creatures. By Him they are convinced of sin, guided into all truth, and led to Christ. By Him they are sealed unto the day of redemption. He dwells in them as His living temples. He witnesses with their spirits - gives them the spirit of adoption, makes them to cry Abba Father, and makes intercession for them. By Him they are sanctified . . . In a word, all that believers have from grace to glory - all that they are from the first moment

they believe to the day they depart to be with Christ - all may be traced to the work of God the Holy Ghost.' [Old Paths, pp. 268-9]

Paul mentions the sealing of the Spirit

The seal had various uses in the 1st century world

- Signify Ownership – we belong to God [like a brand mark]
- Authenticity
- Security – sealed – like sealing an envelope to secure the contents

The Holy Spirit seals us – making us secure – signifying that we belong to God

The Spirit is given as a pledge [ἄρραβον]

ἄρραβον – a pledge / a deposit / it is a token payment assuring the vendor that the full amount will eventually follow

Henry Alford: 'The Holy Spirit is a first installment paid as a pledge that the rest will follow.' - - - more to come!

Paul regards the Holy Spirit as the first installment on the Christian's inheritance

Every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit

In fact – the apostle Paul refers to our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit who is within us

I Cor. 6:19, 20 - 'Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? You have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.'

You have the Spirit within you – so don't drag the Holy Spirit with you into sin

We see evidence of the Spirit in our lives in various ways – changed lives – turning from sin unto righteousness

Love for God and His Word

The various fruits of the Spirit – 'love, joy, peace . . .'

J.C. Ryle: 'If you have the Spirit, labor to bring forth all the fruits of the Spirit. [Gal. 5:22] Read over the list which the Apostle has drawn out, and see that no one of these fruits is neglected.' [Old Paths, p. 321]

Let the Spirit produce His godly character in you as you walk by faith

As we see the indicators of the Spirit in our hearts and lives [the change He brings] – we are reminded of where we are headed

Conclusion

In 1992, Cara Wood was 17 and working at a Restaurant in her hometown of Chagrin Falls OH. She was a good employee – but she had no idea she was about to inherit \$500,000 from one of her customers. Bill Cruyton was 82 years old – and always sat in her section – ate daily at the restaurant. When he passed – Wood was stunned to find out she was named as an heir.

The inheritance was a complete and total surprise

It need be no surprise to us – to find out what awaits us in the afterlife

God tells us right here – ‘we have obtained an inheritance’
Peter adds that it is reserved in heaven for you

Why should God give us this amazing inheritance?

Because we are good people?
Because we deserve it?

No – we find that we are sinners / undeserving

But God – being rich in mercy has made us alive thru faith in Christ

He has called us unto Himself thru the gospel call – the message of Jesus

John 1:12 - ‘As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.’

This all will abound to the praise of the glory of His grace!