

"The Earnest of the Inheritance"

Ephesians 1:13-14 II

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Ephesians 1:13-14

"13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." (Eph 1:13-14)

"1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. 3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. (John 3:1-7)

That which is born of the flesh cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The words of the Lord Jesus are very plain: that which is born of Adam is under the curse of sin and death and cannot see and cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of God, for the word are interchangeable.

Last week I spoke on the two pairs of things that Paul mentions in verse 13,14. These pairs are part of the very rich list of blessings that God has given to the church through the Lord Jesus Christ. These are spiritual blessings in heavenly places—they are not treasures that you find on this earth. They come to you from heaven from the Lord Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

The first pair are: hearing and believing. Something outside yourself—for you heard the Gospel. You were not saved because of some treasure that you found within yourself, but you were saved because you heard a message that came from the preaching of the Gospel: you heard a wonderful promise: for faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of God. But when you heard this external message—this promise from outside yourself, something happened within yourself: you believed. The Holy Spirit awakened you from your slumber of unbelief and you received the message, and were convinced that it is the word of God.

The second pair of things are: the seal and the earnest. The Holy Spirit seals the covenant, for a seal is a sign of authenticity. Only the Holy Spirit can authenticate the Gospel to you. the seal and the earnest. Paul said in Romans 8:15,16: "or ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:" It is the work of the Spirit to reveal Christ to the elect and hide Him from the reprobate, so that seeing, they see not, and hearing they hear not. It is the Holy Spirit that opens the eyes and ears of the elect, and blinds the minds and stops the ear of the reprobate, for both of these are said to be the work of God in the Bible, as can be clearly demonstrated: The Holy Spirit not only seals the people of God as the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry "Abba, Father," but He also reprobated the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Because of this, sin against the Holy Spirit is a very frightful sin, the only one that Christ said could not be forgiven, either in this world, or in the world to come.

This brings us to the second thing of this second pair: The Holy Spirit is the "earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." The earnest is a different figure from seal, but is closely related. An earnest is a guarantee of performance. You pay earnest money to guarantee that you will perform the contract to which the earnest is attached.

I want to examine the words themselves, and then make applications to you and to me.

I. The words: the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

A. The earnest.

1. We find this word also in I Cor 1:21,22 and 1Cor. 5:5 "21 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; 22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." (2Co 1:21-22) "Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." (2Co 5:5 av)

2. This word means a pledge or money or valuable that is given as a guarantee for the fulfillment of an agreement. The Holy Spirit Himself is the pledge or earnest of the covenant, that God will fulfill the promise that He has made to His people.

3. The work of the Holy Spirit in working faith is the seal of the covenant and the guarantee that God will bring us all to glory. We are kept by the power of God, and that power begins in the working of faith. This is the seal of the Holy Spirit, and this seal is the earnest of the inheritance.

4. John would write:

a) “22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. 23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. 24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us. 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. 2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.” (1Jo 3:22-4:3 av)

b) “4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. 5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. 6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. 7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. 12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. 13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. 15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. 16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” (1Jo 4:4-16 av)

c) “And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.” (1Jo 5:8) Spirit in our hearts; baptism; peace with God. B. Inheritance: This means the fulfillment of the Gospel in the resurrection of the body and eternal life.. Note the following: “3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant

mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1Pe 1:3-5 av)

B. Redemption of the promised possession: This refers to the second coming and the church. Christ will return to save His church. This includes the resurrection, glorification of the body, possession of the new heavens and the new earth according to the promise of God. The Spirit is given to us as an earnest of this promise.

1. “21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” (Ro 8:21-23 av)

2. We need to be redeemed from this body of corruption.

a) The body is the instrument of sin. By a figure the word “flesh” in Paul’s writings does not have the Greek sense of the physical body, but that which controls the body in the lost: the sinful nature of Adam. This sinful nature is not eradicated when you are born again, but a new nature after the image of Christ is implanted in you. The sinful nature still uses the body as an instrument of sin if we permit sin to reign in our bodies.

b) Until the resurrection of the dead, we carry this sinful flesh, that is the instrument of our old man, and leads us into sin and wickedness.

II. What is the application: this is found in the following passages:

A. “And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. 24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?” (Ro 8:23-24 av) We understand our situation: we have hope within a body of death.

B. “12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” (Ro 8:12-13 av) Our life is in the deeds of the Spirit; not the deeds of the flesh. We are put off [mortify—put to death] the deeds of the flesh, and what are these?

18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

C. Finally: We are to live by the mind, and not by the body.

1. It is your mind that is renewed now: the body will be renewed and redeemed later.
2. Our bodies are to be presented as living sacrifices; we are to be renewed in the spirit of our minds. The Holy Spirit works through the mind—the inner man—not the body, yet.
3. Paul said, “I keep under my body, lest when I have preached to others, I myself become castaway”
4. Do not allow yourself to be ruled by the body: by hunger, thirst, sexual desire, weariness, or other feelings that arise from the flesh.
5. This means that you must not speak, and you must not act except under the control of thought and training. The great athlete learns to act without thought; the thought, however, is in the training to act instinctively; it does not come by yielding to the force. Hebrews says that we must have our senses exercised [exercise vigorously—not half-heartedly or lazily—stir up yourself] to discern both good and evil. Good action can only arise from training and the discipline of Christ. Our children must not grow up wild and untrained.
6. Teach your children to control their bodies—to be under the subjection of their minds. This is a long process and will not be achieved in a moment, so have mercy on them—we are not talking about cruelty and asceticism, but bringing the body in subjection to the mind and spirit. 1 The body’s propensity toward evil will not be cured except by death and the resurrection of the body; but it can be restrained now, not indulged or pampered, but brought under control that God be praised in our lives. This does not mean that material things are evil; only that the natural tendency of the body is to be an instrument of sin; it must be trained in righteousness and life.

7. You cannot be pleasing to Christ if you do not understand this about yourself and put off the old and put on the new. It will not happen automatically, but must be done consciously day after day.

8. This is to the praise of His glory.

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” (Ga 2:20 av)

Amen and Amen.