

INTRODUCTION

We are in this year-long journey through this wonderful letter God has given to all believers. It’s God’s Guidebook for Growth. Today, we are going to be finishing up this hymn of praise we started last week where Paul writes about the work of the Father in salvation, then he says “to the praise of his glorious grace.” He talks about the work of the Son, Jesus in salvation, then he says “to the praise of his glorious grace.” Then he is going to say something about us but, our prime focus today will be on the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation.

There are two great doctrines that rise to the surface in this passage. One of them, of course, is the Doctrine of the Trinity. That means we believe in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The Jews would tell us we are polytheists, that we believe in three gods, but that’s absolutely not true. We believe there is one God, “Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God,” but he manifests himself in three ways. I am a father, I am also a husband and I am also a pastor, but I am just one person. God expresses himself in three ways. If you have a hard time understanding that, don’t worry about it because you never will figure it out. Elsewhere, the apostle, Paul, says, “Great is the mystery of God likeness that God was manifested in the flesh.” You never will completely understand it. Just believe it. Just accept it. Just enjoy it!

The other great doctrine that is pointed out in this passage is the Doctrine of the Security of the Believer. We sometimes call it the “Perseverance of the Saints” it is also popularly called, “Once Saved, Always Saved.” None of those phrases appear like that in the Bible—but the Bible teaches that. It is one thing for you to be saved that’s a blessing. It is a double blessing for you to be saved and to *know* you are saved—but it is a triple blessing to be saved, know that you are saved and know that you can *never, ever* lose your salvation.

There are some who name the name of Christ and who are truly believers but do not believe that last point. They do not believe you are eternally secure in Jesus. Even the Baptist Christians in Russia with whom we have worked for several years don’t believe this great doctrine. It is so sad to see. I remember hearing the testimony of one of the men who at one time was a member of one of the Baptist churches in the Crimea. He said, “You know I was a Christian, but then I started smoking again, and then I lost my salvation.” I thought, “How sad for a man to be so deceived to think that simply by smoking a cigarette he could lose his salvation.” We’re going to see today that if you are truly born again—if you have ever become a child of God—you’ll never become anything other than a child of God. Sometimes people who don’t believe that point their fingers at us Baptists and they say, “I know so many folks who are Baptists and they live like the devil. They live like lost people. They never show up for church. You’re going to tell me that they are saved and they’ll always be saved?” I’m not going to tell you they are saved in the first place, because there are a lot of people who claim to be Christians who have never been born again. A lot of people who are Baptists or a lot of people who are Methodists or Presbyterians their name is not written down in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

One of my seminary professors used to say it like this: “The faith that fizzles before the finish was faulty from the first.” In other words if you see somebody and you think they have lost their salvation, it may be they never were saved in the first place.

Paul has talked about God the Father and God the Son, and in verse 13 he starts talking about us.

Ephesians 1:13-14. “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, who is a deposit [“earnest” in the King James Version] guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.”

I. A SINNER’S PATH TO SALVATION

I want to look at us and the Holy Spirit today. The first thing I want us to notice is a sinner’s path to salvation. How can a sinner like you and like me enjoy or experience true salvation? There’s not much for us to do, because God has already done it all. Before the foundation of the world, God chose you. He selected you and said, “You are going to be one of mine.” In other words, before the world was even created, you were in God’s mind and heart. We also studied last week that in the past, God the Son—the Lord Jesus Christ—died on the cross and with his blood he purchased you. He redeemed you and me. We’re going to see a bit later what the Holy Spirit is doing in us right now.

Step One: Hear the word of God

How do we respond to this? What is the thing we must do to walk down the path that receives salvation? There are three steps on this path and they are all right there in verse 13. Number one. The first step is this. You must hear the word of God. It says, “And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth.” There has never been a person who has ever become a Christian who did not first hear the word of God? You might have read it. You might have had it preached to you. You might have had it taught to you. Somebody might have witnessed to you. But, salvation comes from *hearing* the word.

This summer I spent a few days on vacation with my family in Santa Fe, New Mexico. I was blown away by the influence of the New Age Religion there. The New Age Religion basically says there are many pathways to God. If you want to take the Islam path, that’s fine. If you want to take the Buddhist path, that’s fine. They all end up in the same place, but the New Age Religion says, “If you want to make your own trail to God, you can build your own path to God. You just sit down and close your eyes and meditate a bit and if what you think God is okay with you and if you think that makes you right with God that’s okay too.” There’s only one thing wrong with that philosophy. It is wrong! It’s a lie. It is absolutely not true. No one can ever be saved by thinking up their own way to be saved. The pathway to salvation begins when you hear the word of God, and this word tells you how to be saved.

The way I became a Christian was when I heard the Word, and if you are a believer, somewhere you heard the word. I would not trust the most brilliant five seconds of insight I ever had in my own intelligence to get me to Heaven. I’m not smart enough to figure out who God is, but the Word tells me who God is. I’m not smart enough to figure out how I can know God, but the Word tells me how I can know God and so it always starts when you hear the Word of God.

Step Two: Believe the gospel of Christ

The second step on the path to salvation is found in verse 13. It’s the gospel of salvation. “Having believed.” Here’s the second step: You believe the gospel of Christ. In other words, somebody shares with you the word of God, and then you believe it. You accept the gospel of Jesus Christ. What does the word “gospel” mean? It means “good news.” Good news is not good unless you have some bad news to put it up against. The bad news is you and I were born sinners. You and I deserve death and Hell, eternal separation from God for all of eternity, because of our sin. Romans 6:33 says, “The wages of sin is death.” That’s the bad news. But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord. That’s the good news and you have to believe that before you can be saved.

Step Three: Receive the Spirit of God

The third step is simple: You must receive the Spirit of God, because it says in verse 13, “Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.” There are a lot of people who think, “All I have to do is believe in God and I will go to Heaven when I die.” That’s not true. The Bible says in James 2:19, “You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.” You must believe and you must receive. The Bible says in John 1:12, “to all who received him [Jesus] to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”

Let me show you my little pitcher of water that I use to illustrate this to kids. Forget for a moment this is muddy, dirty water. Our English words “believe” and “drink” have absolutely no similarities. They are two totally different things. To *believe* something and to *drink* something are different. But in the Bible, the word believe, *pisteuo*, and the word to drink, *pino*, come from the same root word. When the Bible says you believe something, it does not mean simply giving mental assent to it. It means to believe it, trust it, and accept it as part of your life. When I say for you to believe something, you say, “Okay. That fact is true. I believe it.” When the Bible says to believe something, it means you believe it and you are willing to receive it. The Bible word for “believe” is like the word to drink. In John 7:37, Jesus said, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever BELIEVES [there’s that word drink] in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” If this was clean, clear water instead of dirty water, and I told you to drink it, first of all, you’d have to believe it was water; you’d have to believe it was good for you—but that’s not enough. All day long you could look at it and say, “Yes, I think that’s water, and yes, I think it is good for me, and yes I think I can drink it,” but you haven’t believed on it yet. It is not until you drink it and it becomes a part of you that you have truly believed according to the New Testament word.

Have you truly believed in Jesus Christ? That means not only do you believe he was the Son of God, but you believe he died for your sins; you believe he was resurrected; you believe he went back to Heaven You can even believe he is coming back—but have you *received* him? You thought the point of my outline was about receiving the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God? That’s what actually happens, but the Holy Spirit possesses such a sense of divine modesty he never draws attention to himself. The Bible says he always bears witness to Jesus. The Holy Spirit never calls attention to himself. He always points you to Jesus.

When I was a child, I said, “Lord Jesus. I am a sinner. Come into my life.” I believed and I received, but it was actually the Holy Spirit of God, the Spirit of Jesus, who came to dwell in me and that’s who dwells in you. Let’s get technically correct: Where is Jesus right now? He was buried; he was resurrected; he ascended back into Heaven and right now as I am speaking to you he is in Heaven seated at the right hand of God the Father. One day he will come back, but right now he is in Heaven. But he says, “I’m going to send my Holy Spirit. I have been with you, but he will dwell in you forever.” So, when you become a Christian you hear the word, you believe the gospel and you receive the Spirit of God. That’s what salvation is. It’s so simple, but it is so glorious.

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT’S PART IN SALVATION

I want us to move on to the second thing in this passage of scripture. This is where I want you to pay close attention, number two the Spirit’s part in salvation. Last week we looked at the Father’s part and the part of the Lord Jesus, but what about the Holy Spirit? What does he do in salvation? What I am going to say to you this morning is certainly not exhaustive of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. There is so much more that he does. He convicts of sin. He empowers Christians. He gives gifts to the saints. All I’m talking about this morning is what the Holy Spirit does in relation to salvation. There are two words in our text, the word “seal” and the word “guarantee.”

1. The Holy Spirit is a seal

Number one, the Holy Spirit dwells in a Christian as a seal. When I use the word “seal” a lot of you are saying, “I don’t really understand this idea of the Holy Spirit being a seal.” Seal means different things to different people. Some of you may think about the animal down that bounces a ball on its nose. But it’s not this kind of seal. Some of you may be thinking about the rubber ring on top of a Mason jar of preserves. And, ladies, if you are right with God, you’ll bring a jar of that over to your preacher’s house Right? That’s a seal, but it’s not this kind of seal. Some of you who are mechanically minded may be thinking of a gasket on an oil rig, or in a transmission of a car that keeps the fluid from leaking out. All of those are seals but that’s not what the Bible is talking about.

This word “seal” here is a very special word. Have you ever written a letter, put it in the envelope, licked the back of the envelope and closed it, then you took candle wax and you let the candle wax drip on the back of that envelope and then you took some kind of a stamp some kind of an emblem, and you stamped it you sealed it that way? That’s the seal the Bible is using. When you became a Christian, that’s what the Holy Spirit of God did to you. The Holy Spirit sealed you in Christ. That word seal has many meanings in the Bible and all of them are a blessing to you.

a. A mark of authenticity

Let’s look at three meanings and three uses of a seal. Number one, it is a mark of authenticity. If you can’t spell authenticity, just put “real thing,” because that’s what it is. It is a mark of the real

thing. “This is genuine!” We do that today. When you go to the produce section, you may look for Sunkist oranges; you want that seal on there. You want to buy Chiquita bananas so you look for that seal. I didn’t know it until I found out this week, but for almost a hundred years the Good Housekeeping organization has put their seal of approval on certain products, meaning “these are real,” “these are authentic,” “you can trust them.” Any kind of official document you take down to the Courthouse has to have the right kind of seal on it. “This is genuine.”

What does that mean to you and me? It means you can always tell a real Christian from a counterfeit Christian, because a real Christian is sealed by the Holy Spirit. “This is the authentic, real thing.” So how can you tell? I can’t look at you and see some stamp in the middle of your forehead that says “genuine Christian,” how can you tell?” Just watch what squeezes out when you get pressed, when you are under pressure and you get squeezed a little bit whatever comes out that’s what you are made of. That’s how you can tell many times whether a person is truly a Christian.

If I handed you a tube of something with a top and I said, “Here, brush your teeth with this,” but it had no product label on it no markings on the front, you probably would not brush your teeth with it, would you? Because it might be shampoo it might be Brylcreem, it might be hydraulic grease. You would want to know what’s in the tube. How would you find out what is in it? You would squeeze it, and whatever comes out when it is squeezed that’s what is in it. When you are under pressure, whatever gets squeezed out of you is a sign of how authentic you are.

I’m not talking about how you act when you come and sit down in church with an open Bible and praise God. I’m talking about how do you act when you get cut off on a Monday morning on the loop on the way to work? I’m talking about how do you act when somebody comes in and gets face to face with you and criticizes you and fusses at you? How do you react whenever you are squeezed? Whatever comes out that’s the sign of how real you are.

b. A mark of ownership

There’s a second thing the seal indicates; it is also a mark of ownership. In Bible times, seals were used more than signatures. In Jeremiah 32, Jeremiah goes out and buys a field. The Bible says very plainly Jeremiah puts his seal on a title deed, which is like his signature saying “I own this property.” It was a sign of ownership. The Bible says as a child of God, the Holy Spirit has marked “Owned by God” on your life?

It’s like how they brand cattle in West Texas or in other places. I heard about a West Texas ranch where five boys inherited from their father. They wanted to rename the ranch, but couldn’t figure out a name for it. So, they just used a combination of each one’s brand. The ranch ended up being a combination of all the brands and they called it the “Cripple W, Double A, Lazy Q, Flying Z, Double Barreled T.” Somebody asked one of the guys, “How many cattle do you have?” He said, “We used to have some but none of them survived the branding.” That’s exactly what the Bible says has happened to us. We have been branded, sealed by God. In Galatians 6:17, Paul says that very statement. “I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.”

In Old Testament times whenever a person became a slave, they were often marked on their

bodies, either by cutting an ear, or piercing their ear—and yes, history books tell us sometimes by some kind of a tattoo that was a sign they were owned by someone else. You say, “I don’t like the idea of being a slave.” It all depends on who your master is. Right? The only image of slavery we have is “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” but if you had a benevolent master who had unlimited resources and was only concerned about your goodwill, safety and blessing, you wouldn’t mind a master like that. Paul says, “Many times I am a *doulos* a slave of the Lord Jesus Christ.” This is what the Holy Spirit is doing in you right now. He is saying, “If you are a born again Christian, “real thing authentic.” If you are a born again Christian, you are owned by God.”

c. A mark of security

But there is another meaning of it and this is the one I really like the most. It is also a “mark of security,” because in Bible times they would use a seal for protection. Basically, they were saying, “When you see this seal, it is not to be broken.” In Esther 8:8. Esther talks about the time when King Xerxes made a decree, and the Bible says when King Xerxes made this decree he stamped it and put a seal on it. That seal was not to be broken. “Now write another decree in the king’s name in behalf of the Jews as seems best to you, and seal it with the king’s signet ring.” I want you to listen to this next sentence it applies to the heavenly king and your salvation. “For no document written in the king’s name and sealed with his ring can be revoked.” What the Holy Spirit has sealed, the Bible says cannot be revoked. This is talking about King Xerxes. That seal, which was not to be broken under the authority of King Xerxes, was actually broken. That decree was to kill all the Jews, but it got broken, because Xerxes was only an earthly king. There was a limit to his power.

Where else do you think of a seal that was used for protection? In the New Testament when Jesus was buried, the Bible says the Romans rolled a stone across the opening of the tomb and sealed it. That doesn’t mean they took putty and sealed around the rock. It means they took twine or a cord and wrapped it across the front of that big stone and put that seal there which indicated, “Do not open!” “If you open this seal, you shall experience the wrath of the Roman Empire” Huh!! That seal didn’t last either, did it? That first Easter morning, that angel came there and broke that seal like it was toilet tissue, and picked up the stone like a Frisbee and tossed it across the clearing. Xerxes’ seal says it can’t be broken, but it was. The Romans said “this seal can’t be broken,” but it was, because those are earthly kings. When God stamps on you, “This seal is not to be broken,” there is nothing in heaven and there is nothing on earth that can ever break that seal. That’s why I want to say to you once you truly have been born again, you’ll never ever lose your salvation!

Jesus said in John 10:14-16, “My sheep listen to my voice. I know them. They follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish. No one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father who has given them to me is greater than all. No man can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.” So, Jesus said, “Once you are in the hand of the Father, nothing in Heaven, nothing on earth, no person can snatch you out of my Father’s hand.”

I love the story of the little boy who had not been saved very long, but he knew that once he was saved he could never lose his salvation, and he was sharing that with a group of people. One of them was an older man who was a Christian, but didn’t believe that. So, he wanted to repudiate

the boy’s testimony. The little boy had said, “I am in God’s hand and I know that I’ll always stay in God’s hand and God will never let go of me.” He was so happy about it! The man said to him, “Son, that’s well and good, but what would happen if you slipped out of God’s hand?” The little boy thought for a moment, he didn’t really know the Bible answer, but he gave an answer which I think is very profound. He said, “Mister, that can never happen. I can’t slip out of God’s hand because I am one of his fingers.” When you become a Christian, the Bible says you are part of the body of Christ.

The security of your salvation is not based upon your power, your strength or your goodness. It is based upon God’s character, and his authority. Sometimes people say, “I don’t feel very saved.” whether you feel saved or not, God says you are saved. If your salvation was based on your feelings, most of us wouldn’t be saved until about 10:00 every morning. But, your salvation is based on God. He’s the one that’s keeping you. You are not keeping the salvation, he is keeping you. That word “seal” means the Holy Spirit has said, “You are the real thing. You belong to God and you are eternally secure.”

2. The Holy Spirit is a guarantee

There is that other word in verse 14 I want us to look at. Not only has the Holy Spirit been a seal to us, but he is a guarantee. Ephesians 1:14 says, “The Holy Spirit is a deposit guaranteeing.” That word “deposit guaranteeing” is one word in the Greek language. It is the word *arabon* that’s an interesting word in that it was a Bible Greek word, but it is also a current word in Greece today the word *arabon* is used today. Today, as it was back then, it basically means two things and I’m going to relate those to you and explain how it blesses us in salvation. First of all, it means it is a down payment. Anybody who has ever bought any property understands the idea of earnest money. It’s like a down payment.

When we moved to Tyler and found a house we were going to negotiate to buy, we paid a thousand dollars earnest money with which we were saying this, “We are interested in this property. We haven’t signed the deed and we haven’t obtained a mortgage, but we are so interested in it, we are willing to put down some money so it will all work out.” You and I know that sometimes when you put down a down payment or you put down earnest money, it doesn’t work out and the deal falls through; you back out, they back out, or you can’t decide. That’s where this analogy breaks down, because God the Holy Spirit has been the down payment to you. It’s not *you* making a down payment to God; it is God making a down payment to you in the person of the Holy Spirit. You and I may make some mistakes in real estate deals, but God never makes a mistake. He never needs to back out of a down payment.

What does that mean? It means the Holy Spirit is like a down payment of what life is going to be for all of eternity. It’s sort of a deposit. The Bible says in Philippians 1:6, “I am confident that he who has begun a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ.” The Holy Spirit lives in us today to let us know what it’s going to be like for all of eternity. It’s a down payment. Some of you are saying, “That’s nice, but that is so impersonal, it’s so commercial, a ‘down payment.’ I really want something that can assure me of God’s love for me.”

That’s the second meaning of that word *arabon*. Not only is it a down payment, it is also a word used today as it was in Bible times for an engagement ring. That’s really what it is. Today in Greece, if a young man asks a girl to marry him, he’s going to give her an *arabon*, an engagement ring. It means, “I want to marry you. I want to have a relationship with you and as a sign that I want to marry you and spend the rest of my life with you, I’m giving you this engagement ring.” That’s what salvation is. The Bible says right now we are espoused to the Lord Jesus Christ. That means we are engaged to him. One day when Jesus comes back and we go to Heaven, the book of Revelation talks about the marriage feast of the Lamb one day, the church, the bride of Christ, is going to be united with Christ in that mystical, heavenly marriage. Right now, the Holy Spirit is the engagement ring. You may be saying, “I thought you were talking about the security of the believer, and I know some engagements that have broken off.”

One time I went to perform a wedding ceremony. But the groom didn’t show up. He had called the thing off. Nobody was very happy that night, I want you to know. A lot of engagements have been broken off. Cindy doesn’t know I’m going to tell this, and if she knew, she probably wouldn’t let me tell it, but I’m going to tell it anyway. Twenty-two years ago when we got engaged, I gave her a ring. We were to be married in June. I want to confess to you, about three months before the wedding, I got cold feet! It’s not that I didn’t love her; it’s not that I didn’t want to get married—frankly, I just was scared of marriage itself. I had been single for a while and independent. My parents lived out of the country. I just wasn’t real sure I wanted to get married so I tried to back out of it. I tried to break off the engagement. I’ll never forget the night I went over to her house and broke the news to her. I don’t know how I was expecting her to respond; I think I was expecting her to tear up and maybe get on her knees in front of me and say, “Oh, please! Please marry me.” She didn’t do that. In fact she pulled off that engagement ring and threw it at me saying, “Get out of here right now!” I got out of there. I turned and walked out the door and walked halfway up the sidewalk took about three steps and then I said, “Wait, you’re about to make the biggest mistake you’ve ever made.” I turned around and went back in there just as humble as I knew how to do; eating all the crow I could eat saying, “I am so sorry.” I tried to explain to her, “I wanted to marry you, I was just a little bit afraid of marriage itself.” That’s the greatest decision I ever made except accepting Jesus as my Lord and Savior.

There have been some engagements that have been broken off, but that’s because of the frailty of the human personality. It’s God who has given us this engagement ring. Do you know why he did that? He says, “I love you so intimately, that I have given you this engagement ring and it is the Holy Spirit within you and that is the promise I have given to you and I will never break it. One day we will be absolutely and completely united in Heaven.” So do I really believe a Christian will never lose his salvation? Yes, I really believe it. What about when a Christian sins? What sin could you commit that would cause you to lose your salvation? God has already forgiven every sin you have ever committed, every sin you will ever commit, and he does not distinguish between sins. The Catholic Church says there are “mortal sins” and there are “venial sins,” but the Bible never uses those words. Sin is sin against God. The Bible says if you keep the whole law yet offend it in one point, you are guilty of it all.

What happens to a Christian when we sin? Turn to Ephesians 4:30. I’ll show you what happens to a Christian when they sin—we do not lose our salvation. “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” If you could lose your salvation

this is what would happen: You would sin and the Holy Spirit would leave, but the Bible does not say that happens. The Bible says when you sin as a Christian, you “grieve the Holy Spirit.” He is still there; he indwells you and because there is sin and disobedience in your life, it grieves the Holy Spirit. The Bible says it is possible to quench the Spirit elsewhere. That’s when the Holy Spirit tells you to do something good and you say, “No!” That’s quenching the Spirit, but he doesn’t leave. And, the Bible says here it is possible to grieve the Holy Spirit; that’s when the Holy Spirit tells you not to do something wrong and you say, “Yes,” and you do it. That grieves the Holy Spirit. It breaks his heart. But he does not leave you. Why? Because he has sealed you until the day of salvation.

I want you to know you can be saved and you can know it and you can be saved and you can know you can never lose it! Do you have that assurance? If you do, walk out of here and start acting like it!

OUTLINE

I. A SINNER’S PATH TO SALVATION

1. Hear the word of God
2. Believe the gospel of Christ
3. Receive the Spirit of God

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT’S PART IN SALVATION

1. The Holy Spirit is a seal

A mark of

- a. Authenticity
- b. Ownership
- c. Security

2. The Holy Spirit is a guarantee



DISCLAIMER: These messages are offered for your personal edification and enrichment. There is no legal copyright on this material. I have used many sources, and I have always attempted to cite any exact quotations. Any failure to cite a quote is simply an oversight on my part.

If you are a preacher or teacher, I encourage you to use this material to stimulate your own Spirit-driven imagination. Additional study beyond this material will benefit both you and your listeners. You have my full permission to use any of this material as long as you cite the source for any substantial amount used in your message.

If you borrow the majority of a message or outline, I encourage you to simply preface your remarks by saying something like: ***“Some (or “much” as the case may be) of the ideas I’m sharing in this message came from a message by Pastor David Dykes in Texas.”*** This simple citation may prevent any criticism that may be directed toward you.

To put it in Texas terms, “You’re mighty welcome to use any and all of my ingredients; just make your own chili!”

For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes