



“Truly Blessed in Christ—Part 4”

Sermon Date: October 10th, 2021

Reflections on Sunday’s Sermon

Below is a reference to the section of the Heidelberg Catechism that we went over on Sunday:

The Heidelberg Catechism—Lord’s Day 41

Q&A 108

Q. What does the seventh commandment teach us?

A. That God condemns all unchastity,¹ and that therefore we should thoroughly detest it² and live decent and chaste lives,³ within or outside of the holy state of marriage.

¹ Lev. 18:30; Eph. 5:3-5, ² Jude 22-23, ³ 1 Cor. 7:1-9; 1 Thess. 4:3-8; Heb. 13:4

Q&A 109

Q. Does God, in this commandment, forbid only such scandalous sins as adultery?

A. We are temples of the Holy Spirit, body and soul, and God wants both to be kept clean and holy. That is why God forbids all unchaste actions, looks, talk, thoughts, or desires,¹ and whatever may incite someone to them.²

¹ Matt. 5:27-29; 1 Cor. 6:18-20; Eph. 5:3-4, ² 1 Cor. 15:33; Eph. 5:18

Prayer

As you begin your study this week, spend some time praising God for all that He has accomplished for His people, as revealed in His Word. Thank the Holy Spirit for enabling you to hear the gospel of your salvation and believe. Also, thank the Holy Spirit for taking residence in you and continually reminding you of your adoption and inheritance. As you pray, consider the following words of this prayer taken from Piercing Heaven—Prayers of the Puritans and make them your own before the Lord.

Holy Spirit, finish the healing, saving work of Jesus my Lord, and do not let the flesh or the world prevail.

Be in me the resident witness of my Lord, the author of my prayers, the Spirit of adoption, the seal of God, and the deposit of my inheritance.

Transcribe those sacred words on my heart that by your inspiration are recorded in your holy word. Bring that love upon my heart that may keep it in a continual life of love.

Teach me the work which I must do in heaven, refresh my soul with the delights of holiness, and show me the joys which arise from the believing hopes of the everlasting joys.

Exercise my heart and tongue in the holy praises of my Lord. Strengthen me in sufferings, and conquer the terrors of death and hell.

Scripture

Ephesians 1:13-14 (ESV)

¹³*In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*

Handling the Word

1. Verse 3 alludes to the fact that redemption was wrought by a Triune God. **God the Father** has blessed us **in Christ (the Lord)** with every **spiritual blessing**. Referring to the word ‘spiritual,’ John MacArthur states that “*spiritual is always used in relation to the work of the Holy Spirit.*” We could say it this way, the Father planned redemption (vv. 3-6), the Son accomplished redemption (vv. 7-10), and the Spirit applied redemption (vv. 11-14). Finally, we will focus on how the Holy Spirit applies redemption. Take your time to reflect on verses 13-14 and fill out the questions below.

Verses 13-14

What did the Holy Spirit do?

Why did the Holy Spirit do this?

2. At first glance, it may not be crystal clear as to why Ephesians 1:11-14 is often coined “the application of redemption by the Holy Spirit.” Read the provided article that sheds light on this idea (<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/redemption-applied>). What are some reasons that the Holy Spirit is considered the Applier of redemption?

Understanding and Applying

1. Paul doesn't present the gospel as an exclusive message, reserved only for the Jews. Rather, he declares 'in Him *you also*,' thus including Gentiles into the Father's plan of redemption. Salvation through Christ has been accomplished for a variety of peoples (Revelation 5:9-10). Have you ever been tempted to assume that God wouldn't save certain people? Why is this incorporation of the Gentiles a motivator for sharing the gospel and a reminder that salvation is according to grace, and not dependent upon man (Ephesians 2:1-5)?
2. The Gentile believers had received the same benefits as the Jewish Christians—they heard, believed, and 'were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance' (vv. 13-14). Have you heard of people in the church who elevate themselves above other Christians, and what was their reasoning for doing so? In your own words, how should this text impact the way we view believers of different backgrounds or gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-14; Ephesians 4:1-6)?
3. In verse 13, we are given the Father's methodology, in time, for bringing about our salvation, 'in him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed.' Those chosen before the world began will, in time, hear the truth and believe. Given this, what might we say are the means through which the Holy Spirit applies redemption to people (Romans 10:17)? How do these means shape evangelism for the church and individual believers?
4. **Gospel Refresher.** Paul states that the gospel is 'the word of truth' (verse 13). What are some truths that the gospel reveals regarding God, man, sin, and Christ (Romans 3:21-26; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Galatians 1:6-10)? Though the gospel is absolute truth, I assume we all know people who reject, or do not believe the gospel. What aspects of the word of truth do they tend to reject and why?

5. From a human perspective, we would rightly say that “I believed the gospel and therefore I was saved,” so it is right for us to *offer* the gospel (Romans 10:9,13). However, as Paul is unfolding the Father’s eternal plan of redemption (God’s perspective), he alludes to the fact that our hearing and believing are on account of being found ‘in him’ (verse 13). Based on these passages, why is our ‘hearing’ and ‘believing’ attributed to the work of the Spirit, and not simply the will of man?
- John 3:1-8
 - John 6:63-65
 - 1 Corinthians 2:6-12
6. There is an unresolved tension being presented in verse 13. There is the human responsibility of believing and yet, it is the Spirit who enables us to believe, which is why faith is considered a gift (Ephesians 2:8-9). What happens when we take either of these realities to their extreme? Based on what you have been learning in Ephesians thus far, why does our belief ultimately stem from the Triune God and why is this good news?
7. Verses 13-14 reveals that believers are ‘sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it.’ Upon belief, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us, assuring us that we are God’s children—that life with God has begun and will one day be fully consummated (Romans 8:15-17; Revelation 21:3). Why do these truths—promised, sealed, and a guarantee—offer us endless reason for comfort and confidence in our walk with God?
8. So typical of Paul, what should our response be to the Spirit’s work in making us God’s own possession, ‘the praise of His glory’ (verse 14). As you consider the goal of our redemption—praise, what truths from these passages move you to bless the Triune God?

“Salvation in all its parts is founded in and flows from the three persons of the Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father has chosen us, blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing, adopted us as His sons, and predestined us according to His own eternal purpose. The Son has redeemed us by His own blood, and in union with Him we come to possess and experience the riches of God’s grace. The Holy Spirit has sealed us and is the guarantee of our inheritance. In all of this the Trinity has worked as one.”

-Ian Hamilton