

] Ye Have Heard the Word of Truth [

Ephesians 1:12 – 17

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~ In this Spiritual Safari, you have heard the Word of Truth, my beloved readers. The Gospel of our salvation has been taught properly, correctly and completely since day one of this expedition through the entire Word of God; which we began twenty years ago. Unfortunately, some people cannot move past the cross. Others are still waiting at the tomb. Quickened and raised with Christ; yet lingering still in the gloom. Some people abide in the Passover feast; but Pentecost is still unknown – not knowing the triumphs of grace, or the Heavenly place, that the Lord has made our own. If Christ Who died for us had stopped at the cross, His work would have been incomplete; and if the Christ Who was buried had remained in the grave — that would have revealed defeat. See, the way of the cross doesn't stop at the cross; and the tomb leads through to victorious grace – in the Heavenly place – where our risen Lord has gone to prepare a place for us. That's what Ephesians is all about, friends; all spiritual blessings in the Heavens....

12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

~ In our last several reports from Ephesians, we have considered how the Father planned the church; and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, built the church, according to our election and predestination — and how Christ then paid for the church with His Blood. We also saw how we have been rewarded with an inheritance which we will realize at the coming of Christ. So, that brings verse twelve as a sort of doxology to all of those mind-boggling topics. See, the believer is for the praise of His glory, my friends. Period. Full stop. God does not exist to satisfy the whims and wishes mortal man desires on this earth. The believer exists for His glory and for His glory *O-N-L-Y*! No other reason.

When we can position ourself in the direct will of God, in the center of His direct will, we will begin to experience a life of fulness, satisfaction, and deep joy. Only when we are brought to that high plane of living in the spirit

will we discover a purpose, a sense of worth, standing, dignity — or any type of meaning whatsoever in our life. When we constantly struggle in the permissive will of God — also known as the *providence* of God — we will never — *NEVER* — reach a place of true happiness in Christ; because that would be impossible. The direct will of God and the unequivocal center of glorifying His existence is the only way we will be delivered from the troublesome rut of the psychologist, the interminable treatment of the medical doctor, and the constant counseling of our consciousness, where most Christians are literally stuck. That's what's real....

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,

~ This report brings us to the way in which the Holy Spirit protects the church. That is His primary work and ministry in the world today. The Holy Spirit regenerates us as believers, He is our Comforter and our Refuge, and it is the Holy Spirit Who seals us unto the day of redemption. Further, the Spirit of God living in and through us is what gives reality to our lives. That is in Whom we have also trusted; and we only trusted God after we heard the Word of Truth. I understand that “*regeneration*” is not mentioned specifically by name in this passage — but it is referred to in a very wonderful way. See, now we are passing from God's work *FOR* us in planning, predestination, redemption, and the price paid for the church — which is all objective — to the work of the Holy Spirit *WITHIN* us, which is altogether different. The work of the Holy Spirit is *IN* us — and that is *entirely* subjective. In the work of regeneration and renewing, the Spirit of God causes a sinner to hear and believe in his heart. That's what makes and completes a child of God. Jesus said that in order for us to become a child of God, we must be born again. That only happens to as many as receive Him. Those are they to whom He gave the right to be called sons of God; even unto those who do nothing except believe on, and call upon, His Name!

“*Hearing*” means more than a cognizant realization of the sounding of audible words. It means to hear and comprehend. Paul said, “.... *the Jews required a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ*

crucified; which is unto the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks it is foolishness; but unto them which are called – both Jews and Greeks – Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.” So, those who are called refers to a group other than those who have simply heard the words that form the sentences that comprise the Gospel, friends. It refers to those who have heard with understanding and wisdom. Only the Holy Spirit can take those sounds and make them living and true to the mind and hearts of believers.

Many people hear the Gospel, and they just don't get it. They might as well be first graders hearing the theory of the Higgs Boson – there is simply no understanding in their minds. Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Those who hear with understanding will respond in kind. Peter said, “.... *being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, of the Word of God that liveth and abideth forever.*” The Word of God goes out in the teaching of sound doctrine as it is going out right now in this Spiritual Safari.

Further, just to be clear, when I tell you that the Son of God — the Lord Jesus Christ — died for your sins and was raised for your justification, that's where my responsibility ends — and yours begins. My message to believers is that if you trust Christ, you will be saved. Well, many read these writings, but it means absolutely nothing to them. Then, there are others who do understand and to whom the Spirit of God makes application to their heart and life – and those, my friends, are the elect – because they believed. That's when regeneration happens. Believing is the logical step to follow the hearing; although it is not necessarily the chronological order — it is the *logical* step.

Moreover, most people understand this passage to contain time phrases with words such as “*dispensation*” in verse ten and “*after that*” in verse thirteen. Well, those are *NOT* time phrases; but are what is known in the Greek as a *genitive absolute*; meaning they are in the same tense as the main verb. It's not really all that complicated, though, let's try it like this: when you heard and believed, you were also sealed at that very moment. That's also the moment baptism by the Holy Spirit occurred, too, by the

way – all of that takes place the moment we trust Christ. So, the Holy Spirit first opens the ear to hear, and then He seals us with an implanted faith.

Now, I understand that many theologians argue whether the Holy Spirit — or God the Father — or Christ Himself — does the sealing. Well, that type of bickering wearies my tiredness, friends. It's utterly useless to split hairs that way. In the middle ages, they argued about how many angels could dance on the pointed-tip of a needle. Well, if that's what you are interested in, then you're not interested in the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. See, we're told that God the Father gave His Son to die on the cross; but we're also told that Jesus offered Himself up willingly – so – *BOTH* are true. God the Father and God the Son both sent the Holy Spirit to perform a very definite work; but it is the Holy Spirit that performs the work. Personally, I believe the Holy Spirit Himself *IS* the seal.

The sealing work is, actually, two fold: **(1)** He implants the image of God upon the heart to give a tangible reality to all of this. Naturally, a seal on a document always contains an image; and that's exactly what the Holy Spirit does for the believer today. That is certainly the thought in John chapter three verse thirty-three when John says, *".... he that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true; for he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him."* That imprint is branded upon the heart, friends. **(2)** The second aspect of the sealing is to denote and distinguish rightful ownership. Paul said to Timothy, *".... nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal; the Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity"* — second Timothy chapter two verse nineteen.

Of course, these securities do not mean we have license to live in sin. No, if we so much as name the Name of Christ, we're going to depart from iniquity. If we don't, then apparently, we were never sealed. If we were never sealed, we were never elected or predestinated, either. See how that works? All of that is wrapped up in this sealing by the Spirit of God; and Paul will say a little later that, *".... we're sealed unto the day of redemption by the Holy Spirit."* One day He is going to deliver us to Christ. When we think of all of that in connection with the Lamb opening the seals in

Revelation it is all at once intensely interesting, mesmerizing, and terrifying! Let's not get too far ahead of ourselves; but, there are many things we just don't know, friends....

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

~ "Earnest" in verse fourteen means "down payment" — as in a real property transaction. If we want a seller to hold a property while we finalize the deal, we put down earnest money; and it always means there is more money to follow at a later time. So, we're sealed in the Holy Spirit, Who regenerates us, and gives us a refuge and a reality in this present evil world. We have an inheritance; and we have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the Heavenlies — and all of that has been arranged for the praise of His glory. That understanding leads Paul to prayer for and on behalf of the Ephesians! It is important that you and I remember what Paul is praying for here, too....

15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

~ The early church at Ephesus was noted for its faith and love, friends! They had a *real* love one for another. Love wasn't a philosophical bumper sticker or slogan on a T-shirt; it was real. That's a picture of the church at its very highest level. When we get to Revelation, we see the church at Ephesus mentioned first; because it is the church at its best possible level of functioning. They are commended for their faith in Christ, and for their love of all the saints. We can give thanks that there are still a few churches left in this world today that are honestly like this church. The prayer of Paul here is one of thanksgiving for true love.

Our main motivation today in prayer for others is generally trouble, sickness, distress and crises. Those are good things to pray about, but how often do you pray for the love of the brethren towards each other? Some churches have degenerated into nothing but gossip dens. Bible study is not a top priority; if it is even part of the program. That will distress and, ultimately, kill a church. When you hear about how God is blessing the preacher, or some servant of God, we need to get down on our knees and thank Him for doing that. If you have a good Bible believing church, you should, likewise, thank God continually for that privilege. I think we turn in too many grocery lists and errand demands to the Lord, quite frankly. Imagine advising God who He should heal. Preposterous.

We all want this, that, and the other thing, but we don't seem to understand God isn't our gopher. Maybe we should all just have a thanksgiving service sometime. It would sure do us well to just stop and praise God, worship Him, and thank Him for all He has done for us. It would do us all a world of good to pray for wisdom, judgment and spiritual discernment in the Word of God, too! I wish some would pray that prayer for me; seeing how most think I am truly ignorant of the Bible. Well, Paul was only asking for those things — and remember, Paul is writing this from a dank, dark, damp, depressing, and dire situation in a dungeon in an ancient Roman Mamertine prison. The condition Paul was in at this time in which we are studying is something *NONE* of us know *anything* about. Think about that; examine yourself while you're at it ~

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