

Sermon Notes: *Our Glorious Inheritance in Christ (Ephesians 1:11-14)*.

Intro: Through the payment of Christ's blood for our sins, "we have obtained an inheritance." We have this inheritance not only as a present right but also, through the indwelling Spirit, as a present reality. Because we have the Spirit as a seal and guarantee, we already enjoy a down payment of our eternal, glorious, fellowship with God. Three truths about our inheritance give us reasons for hope.

#1: Our inheritance is enjoyed as God's gift. After saying we have obtained our inheritance in vs. 11, Paul goes on to say how we have it—as a sovereign, undeserved, gracious gift. One of the comforting truths of Scripture is that because of God's sovereign power plan, no trial or experience we encounter is outside of his control and further that he is using all of our experiences to equip us to enjoy our eternal inheritance. Before we consider that more, we must understand Paul's words "obtained an inheritance." The words translate a Greek verb literally meaning "to choose by lot" in order to gain an inheritance. Some believe it should be translated simply as "to choose" thus echoing the truth of vs. 4 which is that believers know that God chose them for salvation in Christ in eternity past. Their present faith in Christ is the proof of God's prior election (NIV). Most scholars however believe Paul means either that we have been given an inheritance by God (ESV, NKJ, NAS) or that God has claimed us as his inheritance (NET). Both views are represented in the OT (Deut. 4:20-21). Further both work within the argument of verses 11-14. Vs. 14 which says the H.S. has been given as the "guarantee of our inheritance" speaks in favor of our obtaining an inheritance whereas our being sealed or marked by the H.S. in vs. 13 speaks in favor of God claiming us for his inheritance. I believe that Paul is saying we have obtained an inheritance in vs. 11 but we must remember that this only because God first claimed us as his inheritance in Christ (how breathtaking!). Paul's basic point however is obvious, according to God's sovereign plan, we are heirs of God. As God said, "I will be their God and they will be my people" (Heb, 8:10). We possess God by trusting him, loving him, and worshiping him and God in return reveals more and more of himself to us through these means. And wonder of wonders, we have God as our inheritance because of his sovereign predestination. Vs. 11 may be the strongest most comprehensive statement about God's sovereignty in the Bible (Ferguson). God has foreordained every event that happens. Is he the author of sin? No! Does he force the wills of his free moral agents? No! Does God then fulfill his sovereign plan sometimes directly and other times indirectly through real secondary causes such as the free choices of his moral creatures? Absolutely (cf. Acts 4:26-28). How? We don't know! But let us humbly acknowledge that all the events of history and our individual lives are not outside God's will and predestination. Implications: Unconditional grace. We who have Jesus by simple trust may be assured that we have him only because of God's prior undeserved and unconditional grace (Rom 9:15-16). Invincible grace. God's wise and gracious plan for us in Christ is invincible. How bitter the medicine of God's sovereignty is for some ("I am master of my fate"/W. E. Henley). But how therapeutic for God's saints! God is God. Nothing is outside of his plan for us. Nothing will separate us from his love for us. All things, both the seemingly bad and good, must work together for our joy.

#2: Our inheritance is "sealed" by God's Spirit. Having spoken of the Father's election and the Son's redemption, Paul turns to the Spirit's sealing. The Spirit seals us as God's precious possession. The timing of the Spirit's seal. Having heard and believed we were sealed. Hearing, believing, and sealing belong to one saving reality. The meaning of the Spirit's seal. Three

purposes for a seal: (1) to confirm something as genuine (Jn 6:27); (2) to mark something as one's property (2 Tim. 2:19); (3) to make something secure (Mt. 27:66). Each describes how the Spirit seals and confirms that we are God's cherished possession (Rom. 8:16). However, heed this caution! The Spirit's sealing testimony is known not by seeking special experiences but by clinging to Christ! The Spirit promotes not himself but Christ (Jn. 16:14). Christ is the treasure chest of God's spiritual blessings which the Spirit points us to and leads us to so that we may draw upon Christ's riches by faith.

#3: Our inheritance is "guaranteed" by God's Spirit. The indwelling Spirit is a down payment of greater spiritual life to come. The life of the Spirit is a foretaste of the life we will enjoy in heaven. A guarantee of present power. Christ's blood has purchased every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places for us. Let us meet every challenge in the confidence that Christ's blood has purchased present needed spiritual power (Phil 2:12-13). A guarantee of future glory. "Here on earth we have experienced only the first dollar of a million celestial dollars" (Hughes). 2 Cor. 4:16ff. Through faith in Jesus, we have forgiveness by his blood and new life by his Spirit. This life within us is already resulting in new life out of death. We are clay in God's hands. According to the Father's election, Son's redemption, and Spirit's renewal God is using all things, good and bad, to make us like Jesus!