

# The Glory of His Gracious Bequest

Ephesians 1:11-14

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## **Introduction:**

For several weeks now,

- we have been exploring some of the rich treasures of our salvation as they are presented to us in Ephesians 1:3-14...
  - Treasures that God has deliberately designed in such a way that in lavishing them upon us,
    - the glory of His grace and kindness might become as conspicuous as possible.
    - He has, in fact, made His church to be theatre upon which He displays the glory of His grace for all eternity...
      - The whole world and all its history is designed for this great purpose—everything from the fall to the cross of Christ is subservient to this purpose.
      - God wants all of His intelligent creatures in heaven and earth to be able to see just how gracious He is by observing the way He deals with His elect people, chosen out of this fallen world.
  - Paul sets forth this grace in this one great sentence that runs from Ephesians 1:3-14...
    - Have I mentioned to you that it is all one sentence in the original?
    - It is as if Paul was so excited to declare to us how profusely God has lavished us with the riches of His grace that he didn't want to stop!

Do you remember how he described our treasure from the beginning—in verse 3?

- He said that God has “blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.”
  - I have explained to you what “every spiritual blessing in heavenly places” refers to...
    - It speaks of blessings that have been around as long as God has...
      - They are the blessings that God Himself has enjoyed within Himself for all eternity in what we call the heavenly places...
      - They are the blessings that make His household glorious as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit live together in perfect harmony...
    - For all eternity, they have been living together in glory,
      - delighting in each other,
      - doing good to one each other,

- loving each other with perfect love,
  - the Father giving all things to the Son,
    - and the Son always always doing what pleases the Father...
    - And the Holy Spirit proceeding forth to the delight of the Father and the Son.
  
- Paul is telling us in this great sentence that God has graciously chosen us in Jesus Christ that we might enter into the joy of these heavenly blessings!
  - That we—mere creatures of God—and miserably fallen creatures at that—
    - might enter the circle of loving communion that has made heaven such a blessed place for all eternity.
      - It is just what Jesus prayed for in John 17—
        - that we would be given eternal life to know the Father and to know the Son...
        - that we might be one even as He and the Father are one...
        - that the love with which the Father has loved the Son may be in us...
        - that we would be brought to see the glory that of the Father which Jesus has seen and shared in for all eternity.
  
- Paul explains to us that God has predestined us in Christ to the very adoption of sons...
  - that we might be brought into the household of Jesus to live, not as servants, but as His very own brothers—as God’s own sons!
  - and that He has chosen us in Christ that we should be holy and without blame...
    - that we who are now so full of sin should become sons who are just like God’s Son—holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sin!
      - It is an absolutely amazing promise!

And last week we saw that in verses 7-10,

- Paul zeros in on what we have already received...
  - In verse 7, he says,
    - “We *have* redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”
    - The Ephesians who believed already had this redemption and so do all of you who savingly believe in Jesus Christ.

- This is talking about the redemption that Jesus fully accomplished for us when He died on the cross!
  - The cross is the focal point of God's revelation to us for all eternity!
  - This whole world is arranged in such a way that every thing comes together in Christ crucified!
    - It is here that the supreme revelation of God's love and justice and mercy and wrath and wisdom all come together!
      - God will have nothing greater to reveal in heaven about Himself than this!
        - Where else can love be so expressed for ruined sinners as that God would send His Son to die in the place of those sinners?
      - The revelation of His grace has already reached its highest pitch,
        - and it will be to the Lamb that was crucified that we constantly look to see the purity of God that required the blood of His Son to satisfy for our sins,
          - It will be to the Lamb crucified that we will look for all eternity to behold the love of God as nowhere else.
          - God has nothing greater to display than what has already been displayed!

TRANS> But now there may arise from you a concern about this...

- You may look at this and say:
  - "But if Christ-crucified is the great focal point of revelation that is supposed to animate us to praise God for all eternity,
    - and if this revelation has already been fully given...
      - How is it that we are not yet filled with the praises of heaven?
      - If the glory of His grace in Christ has been fully revealed,
        - and if we have received this redemption and the full forgiveness of sin...
          - what can be done about the dullness that remains in us?
      - We have a problem because ...
        - The revelation of His glory has been fully given,
          - but our praises are not yet full—
            - They are yet weak and inadequate!
      - If the redemption is complete, and Paul says it is,

- why do I still find it difficult to love God with all my heart?
- why do I find that I still do not love my neighbour as I ought?
- Where is the heavenly life that Jesus spoke about?
  
- My brothers and sisters,
  - do not fret about that!
  - Paul, having told us that
    - we have redemption through His blood and the forgiveness of sins...
    - goes on to tell us in verse 11 that:
      - “In Him **also** we have obtained an inheritance”
        - There are two things that you have...
          - Redemption in Christ’s blood and the forgiveness of sin—that you have in completeness...
          - And an inheritance in Christ—
            - that inheritance is the new life that you have only just begun to receive in this world,
              - but that you will surely receive in all its fullness on the day of Christ’s return.

**I. Let me show you what Paul says about this inheritance in Eph 1:11-14.**

A. First, I want you to see that it is an inheritance that has to do with God’s work to make His elect people glorious...

1. Please look in your Bibles at Ephesians 1:11—

a. Paul begins with the words,

- “In Him also we have obtained an inheritance...”
- and then He inserts a big old participle that continues all the way to the end of the verse...
- The translators could have put it in parentheses.

b. To see how the beginning of verse 11 connects with verse 12,

- I am going to read it with out the participle...
- (don’t worry, we will come back to it—I just want to be sure you understand what the inheritance is that Paul is talking about)...
- So if we begin in verse 11, it says...
- “In Him also we have obtained an inheritance...

- then skip to verse 12...
- “that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.”

TRANS> The inheritance is that “we should be to the praise of His glory!”

2. But what does that mean?

a. Well I want you to notice the *we*...

- “that *we* should be to the praise of His glory!”

1) When we looked at redemption before,

- it was Christ and His work for us that brought glory to God...
  - but here in v. 12, it is not the redeemer here, but the redeemed,
    - “we who first trusted in Christ”
      - who are said to be to praise of His glory!

2) Before it was what He did for us that was said to bring Him glory...

- Here it is *we* who bring Him glory.

3) Before it was said that what He would bring praise to the glory of His grace...

- but now it shows that we ourselves will bring glory to Him.

b. My friends, the Bible shows us here that we are going to become God-glorifiers!

- We are going to attain what our Catechism tells us is our chief end...
  - “to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever!”
  - This is our promised inheritance in Christ!
- We are going to become like our elder brother Jesus Christ who has always glorified the Father!
  - We are going to become those whose very life is a shining and true expression of all that God us...
    - It will be an expression on a creaturely level because we are creatures,
      - but it will be a true representation of Him.
      - just as Jesus, when He came in the human flesh, was a true and perfect representation the Father in human flesh.
  - As Dr. Ross put it at the MRI yesterday,

- What Jesus said of Himself in John 14 to his disciples...
  - “If you have seen me, you have seen the Father,”
  - will be possible to say of the redeemed church:
    - “If you have seen us, you have seen the Father!”
- That is what the Lord has purposed for us for all eternity!
  - We will shine forth in glory as His perfect images,
    - not in isolation,
    - but in the communion of the heavenly city!
      - It is not just that God will show forth His glory by loving us and doing all things for us...
      - But He will also make us into those who show forth His glory in the way that we love one another—
        - even as Jesus loved us when He came in our flesh.

TRANS> So you see first of all that this inheritance has to do with God’s work in us by which He will make us into a people who bring glory to God.

B. Secondly, I want you to see that this inheritance something we only have in part now...but will be given in fullness later.

1. Verse 11 says plainly that

- “You have obtained an inheritance!”
- a. It is something you have, in a certain sense, already been given if you are believer...
  - But it is one thing to obtain an inheritance,
    - quite another to take full possession of the inheritance.
  - To obtain it is to receive the title to it...
    - the official promise of it...
    - but it is not necessarily to receive it in full.
- b. A son with an inheritance may have that inheritance in a trust...
  - It has been fully signed over to him,
    - but it is going to be doled out according the father’s pleasure.
  - I had a friend in High School named Carlton who was an orphan...
    - He was an only child and his parents left all that they had to him...

- but they wisely put it in a trust so that only a portion would be handed over to him until he had finished university...
- They gave him just enough to live as a university student...
- then at the appointed time, he would be given everything.

TRANS> Paul makes it clear in verse 13-14 that like my friend Carlton,

2. You have only been given a small portion of your inheritance now.
  - He speaks of the Holy Spirit as “a guarantee of our inheritance.”
- a. The word translated “guarantee” refers to something that is given as a promise of future payment...
  - 1) Perhaps you remember in the Old Testament when Judah gave Tamar his signet and cord and staff in promise of his payment for her services when he thought she was a prostitute....
    - It was a pledge of his promise to pay her...
    - It was his way of assuring her that the rest would come...
      - that’s why the translators of the NKJV call it a guarantee...
  - 2) This verse shows you that the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to us now, is only the down-payment....
    - Our promised inheritance is much greater than the deposit.
    - Even though our redemption in Christ’s blood is wholly accomplished,
      - we have not yet received the fullness of our inheritance of every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.
      - God has only given us a deposit now!
- b. The bestowal of the complete inheritance is spoken of here in verse 14 as “the redemption of the purchased possession.”
  - 1) What is this talking about?
    - Did I not show you last week that our redemption in the blood of Christ is complete?
      - That everything that can possibly be done to redeem us from the guilt of our sin has been done?
      - I did and it has...
        - That is why we are called “the purchased possession!”
        - The LORD has already purchased us with the precious blood of His Son and we are His possession!

- 2) So the yet future redemption in verse 14 is a different redemption.
- a) It is about the LORD **taking** complete possession of us!
- Right now, we are not wholly devoted to Him—
    - we are divided—
    - there is still sin and corruption in us...
  - We are not yet like the burnt offering of the OT that was fully consumed on the altar...
    - nor are we like our Lord Jesus who was represented by all those offerings...
      - and whose dedication to the Father was such that He even went to the cross in obedience to Him.
- b) The redemption spoken of in verse 14 is not redemption as payment by ransom, but redemption as deliverance by power.
- It is like the redemption of Israel out of Egypt...
    - God came by His mighty power and rescued them from bondage to Pharaoh in order that they might serve Him...
    - This redemption will completely free us from sin so that we can be the LORD's forever and ever!

TRANS> This is the glorious inheritance that God has promised you!

- He promises this redemption all through His Word to you who believe...
  - How many times does He say to us things like:
    - “You will be my people!”
    - “You will be conformed to the image of my son.”
- Think of it, you will be like Jesus Christ!
  - You won't have all that stinkin' sin and selfishness all through you!
  - You will be a true lover of God!
  - You will have a heart of gold and will actually love your neighbour as yourself!
    - Isn't it a glorious hope?
- But please, don't look at this as a hope the way the world looks at hope...
  - A “hope so hope...”
  - I hope everything will turn out okay...

## II. The LORD has made the hope that all who believe in Christ will be like Christ certain...

### - Let's look at two ways that are spoken of in this passage...

#### A. First, our inheritance is certain because God makes it certain.

- Verse 11 says that He has purposed to do it!
  - v. 11: In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,
- 1. This verse spells out in the plainest language that God works all things according to the counsel of His will...
  - a. Notice it says that He works *all things* according to the counsel of His will...
    - Not **some** things, but **all** things.
      - He is in control of the gyrations of every atom in the universe...
      - and at the same time, He is the one who determines the orbits of the galaxies!
        - There is nothing outside the purview of His decree...
  - b. God always does exactly what He wants.
    - His desire and His decree are never at variance.
    - We are told that when Judas and the Chief priests and Pilate gathered together to crucify our Lord,
      - they did exactly what God has purposed should be done!
      - What was done, right down to the smallest detail, was not one bit different than what God had determined should be done...
        - This verse teaches us that this is *always* the case in everything that happens.
  - c. Sometimes Calvinists and Arminians get into philosophical debates about this,
    - but it is really not a matter of philosophy...
      - We are told plainly that God's decree includes all things...
      - There is nothing left to happen on its own...
        - And the Bible is consistent with this all the way through...
        - If there is a calamity in the city, the LORD has done it!

TRANS> Now as sinners, it makes us very uneasy for God to have *that* much control!

- Because deep down we know that we have rebelled against Him, and that He has no pleasure in our sin...
    - we recoil from the idea that He is in control of everything.
    - We would rather think of Him in a different way...
      - and I suppose you think of Him in whatever way you want...
        - The only problem is, thinking of Him will not change Him, and one day you will have to face Him.
  - But if you are a believer... one who has trusted in Christ...
    - You have every reason in the world to love the fact that He works all things according to the counsel of His will!
2. Here you are told that it is His will to give you the inheritance that He promises to His people!
- a. In verse 12, Paul says,
    - v. 12: that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.
    - Paul is talking about himself and his people, the Jews, to whom the gospel was first preached...
      - Why was it that the Jews trusted in Christ before the other nations?
      - Why was it persons from among this one little nation that first trusted in Christ?
        - Because God purposed that they should be heirs of His salvation and that from them, the other nations would come.
        - He predestined them to obtain the inheritance first...
          - and they did...
    - And I want you to understand that when God came to them in the ancient time—when He came to Abraham and promised to bless Him and said,
      - “I will be your God and you and your descendants will be my people,”
        - it meant a whole lot!
        - To be their God it meant that He would forgive their sins and that He bring them into conformity to His ways!
          - To put it in the NT language that we have already used today,
            - He purposed to make them like nothing less than Jesus Christ!

- God would be ashamed to call them His people if He were going to bring them to anything less than perfection!
- He has predestined that those who first trusted in Christ would be to the praise of His glory!

b. But it does not stop with the Jews!

1) They were not the only ones that God had chosen to trust in Christ and to be conformed to His image—to receive the inheritance!

- What Paul says to these Ephesians Gentiles who trusted in Christ after they heard the Word of truth, the gospel of your salvation...
  - pertains to all of you Gentiles who have trusted in Christ today.

2) Look at verse 13:

a) He says,

- v. 13: “In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,”

b) Do you remember when Paul first went to minister to the Ephesians?

- They had been baptised with the baptism of John, but they did not know if the Holy Spirit had been given yet...
  - John had promised those he baptised that the Messiah was coming...
    - and he had said,
      - “I baptise you with water, but He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.”
- These disciples knew that the Spirit was supposed to come, but they had not heard that He had come...
  - Paul preached Jesus to them and baptised them in His name and they immediately received the Spirit.
  - Signs were even given to confirm that they had received the promise as they often were when a group of persons received the gospel.

c) Paul seems to be reminding them of this...

- That as soon as you heard the gospel and believed, you were sealed with Holy Spirit!
- This was a confirmation to them that all those wonderful promises about the Spirit to the Jews in the Old Testament also belonged to them...

- They were on the same footing with the believing Jews who “first trusted in Christ.”
- This is the argument that Peter uses in Acts 15:6-9 to prove that the Gentiles are sharers in the inheritance of God’s people.
  - Acts 15:6-9: “Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter. And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up *and* said to them: “Men *and* brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. “So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as *He did* to us, “and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.”

B. Now this seal of the Spirit is the second assurance we have that we will receive the inheritance...

1. As we have already seen the seal of the Spirit is a guarantee of the promised inheritance...

- As soon as you believe,
  - you receive the Holy Spirit, and that is God’s down-payment of the inheritance that is now yours and that will be fully given to you when our Lord returns...
- But I want you to understand after it was fully established that the Spirit was given to both Jews and Gentiles in the New Testament,
  - God did not continue with the special signs...
    - They were never for the purpose of showing which individuals had received the Spirit,
      - but for confirming that groups had received Him...

TRANS> The central primary work of the Spirit is the sealing of us with the life of heaven that God has promised.

2. The idea is that the Spirit begins the new life in us that God has promised to perfect in heaven...

- a. As we have seen, what we have now is only a deposit of what we will have in heaven...
  - but blessed be our Lord!
    - It is the beginning of the life of heaven in every believer!
    - The Spirit comes and works that new life in us!

- b. When the Spirit comes to you, everything changes!
- Ezekiel 36:26-27: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*."
- 1) You were avoiding God or denying God, but after the Spirit came, you began to seek and follow the LORD.
    - You see Him in an entirely different way because you see Him reconciled in Jesus Christ...
      - You yearn for Him and desire to be with Him—
      - You want to be near to Him, to serve Him, to live in His house.
  - 2) Before He came, you denied your sin; after He comes, you cannot deny it...
  - 3) Before He came, you did not want to obey God's commandments; now you yearn to become like Jesus, to be full of love for God your neighbour!
    - You find His commandments and good and lovely...
      - wholesome and wise—you delight in them from the heart.
- c. When you have the Spirit (and the new life that goes with Him),
- you have the seal of the Spirit—
    - It is the mark of God's ownership—that you are His purchased possession...
      - and that just as surely as He has begun that new life in you, He will bring it to perfection at last!
      - He who began a good work in you will complete it in the day of Christ's return.
        - Then you will be like Him because you will see Him as He is!

**Conclusion:**

Now I must ask each of you today...

- Do you have this inheritance?
  - Has God planted the new life in you?
    - Or are you still in your sins, going along without God in the world?

What can you do if you do not have this mark?

- You must do what Paul says the Jews did and the Gentiles also did—
  - You must trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

- the word of truth—the gospel of your salvation...
- The gospel or good news of salvation is that anyone who believes in Jesus Christ can have the new life that God promises!
  - Christ is the One who has paid for our sins on the cross...
  - It is in Him that you have eternal life.