

God has given us His word and the experience of His Holy Spirit in us

Words and experiences shape us

- Words from and experiences with other people sometimes hijack the God's...
- It is hard for us not to think of ourselves in terms of what other people say to us and about us
- And what they do to us, or fail to do for us
- These words and experiences greatly influence our self-understanding—our identity
- Which shapes the way we think, feel and act—and so ultimately the way we live
- How we live and what we live for

Generally speaking we are self-absorbed

- This is Scripture confronts us and exposes our wickedness (we are not good)
- If our self absorption is not repented of (find our righteousness in Christ)—we begin to seek after and live for the praise of people
 - Their words are so powerful that when we are affirmed we feel good
 - But the opinions of people are fleeting and fully dependent upon our performance
 - And so we live in insecurity
 - And when their words and actions are those of disapproval, we live in pain
 - These words and actions (disapproval) are the strongest
 - It is hard for us not to think of ourselves in terms of what people say to us and about us in disapproval
- They are so strong that they make it **hard to believe** good words and experiences
- So again, we live in insecurity and doubt
 - **Both the praise and the disapproval of people has brought us to insecurity and doubt**
- (My experience)
 - So I find, that I can only find security and satisfaction in **what God in Christ says about me** and has done for me
 - First that I am wicked (confronting my self-absorption) and that I am loved (healing me need for approval)

What God says and does for us is always better and truer in anything people say about us and do to us

And God, in His kindness gives **us a gift** by which we can be sure of the things we just read in verses 3-11

- That we are blessed with every spiritual blessing because we are in Christ (v.3)
- That even before He made the world God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in His eyes (v. 4)
- The God predestined us for adoption and brought us to Himself through Christ (v. 5)
- That He has graced us with grace because we belong to Jesus (v. 6)
- That our sins have been forgiven and we have been purchased and set free (v. 7)
- That he has showed His kindness on us (v. 8)
- That He has given us wisdom, understanding and an inheritance because we are united with Christ (vv. 8 & 11)

All of these things we believe and receive by faith—being united to Christ by faith

- But everyday we struggle with faith
- And with the experience of these things
- As we are bombarded with all sorts of other/contrary experiences

So, God has given us **a gift** to daily help, convince and assure us of these things

Ephesians 1:13

And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, **the Good News that God saves you**. And when you believed in Christ, He identified you as His own **by giving you the Holy Spirit** whom He promised long ago

But when it comes to faith, more than just the intellect is involved

The Holy Spirit works to give us assurance at the subjective level of spiritual and emotional perception¹

- Apart from general revelation in nature (which saves no one), we can say that God reveals Himself in 3 ways:
 - 1. The revelation of God in history (centers on the work of Christ)
 - 2. The revelation of God in Scripture (centers on the person of Christ)
 - 3. The revelation of God by the Spirit (centers on the glory of Christ)
 - The Spirit **convincing and ministers** to our heart, mind and will the truth of Scripture and the work of Christ
 - That we belong to God as His beloved (identity)

He identified you as His own **by giving you the Holy Spirit** whom He promised long ago

- Cf. **you were sealed** in Him with the Holy Spirit
- This is **what** happens when we are saved
- We are given **the Holy Spirit as a seal**, and by the Spirit in us we are sealed in Christ
- What does that mean? What is the metaphor getting at?

There are 3 purposes for which **a seal** is used, and each illustrates the Spirit's work:²

- 1. To confirm an object as being true or genuine
- 2. To make something safe and secure
- 3. To mark a thing as one's property

1. A seal is used to **confirm** an object as being **true or genuine**

- As in the seal of the US on a dollar or a passport
- The Holy Spirit in us confirms that we really belong to God
- Romans 8:16
For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children.
- He not only witnesses to that fact that we are God's children, but that God is in us, and we are in Him
- That we are His and He is ours
- 1 John 3:24^b
And we know he lives in us because the Spirit he gave us lives in us.
- 1 John 4:13
And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us.
 - We are truly and genuinely His—sealed in the holy Spirit—the **Spirit** daily convincing us of that truth

2. A seal is used to make something **safe and secure**

- To seal something up (verb form)... A private letter with a seal (Cf. The tomb)
- Cf. Ephesians 1:14^a

¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 644.

² Charles Hodge as referenced in James Montgomery Boice, *Ephesians, An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Books, 1997), 32.

- The Spirit is God's **guarantee** that He will give us the inheritance He promised and that He has purchased us to be His own people
- **guarantee** (ἀρραβών)
- It is used in Modern Greek to refer to an **engagement ring** (How do you seal these vows...as often as you see these rings...)
- In ancient transactions it was used to refer to a down payment or first installment, or pledge, or **earnest money**
 - It is the payment of part of a purchase price that **secures a legal claim** to the article
 - **Earnest money** (The HS is not the full amount but the great transaction is underway and God means business. And He intends to complete His work of salvation)
 - Jude 24
Now all glory to God, **who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault.**
 - An engagement ring is a promise, but it in itself is not part of the marriage
 - A down payment though is actually part of the full package
 - The Holy Spirit is actually **a foretaste** (not just a promise) of life with God
 - He is not only the proof of our position in Christ, He is the pledge of our possessions in Christ
 - He not only guarantees our eternal security; He also guarantees our eternal satisfaction
 - By the Spirit we experience God's life and truth in us
- Since the agreement of our salvation is **sealed by God** and since **He does all the doing**, no failure on our part (all of them having been anticipated long, long ago) can invalidate what has been done! (Cf. Jude 24)
 - It is sealed by the Holy Spirit—safe and secure

3. A seal is something used to **mark** a thing as **one's property**

- A brand on a cattle or horse
- Ephesians 1:14
The Spirit is God's **guarantee** that He will give us the inheritance He promised **and that He has purchased us to be His own people**
- He is jealous for us—we are His blood bought bride!
- God marks us as His by putting His Spirit in our heart
- 2 Corinthians 1:22
...and he has **identified us as his own by placing the Holy Spirit in our hearts** as the first installment that **guarantees everything he has promised us.**

The Holy Spirit in us deals with our fears, doubts and anxiety (exacerbated by people)

- He assures of us God's acceptance of us and love for us (through Christ)
- He is evidence that our salvation and blessings are secure (in Christ)
- He is proof that we belong to God (because of Christ)

Romans 5:1-5

- 1 Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.
- 2 Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory.
- 3 We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance.
- 4 And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation.
- 5 And this hope will not lead to disappointment. **For we know** how dearly God loves us, **because** he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.

God has gone to great and kind lengths to make us secure in His love and our standing in grace

The Spirit is constantly pouring the love of the Father into our hearts and convincing our minds of the work of Christ for us—all that we might see ourselves as His and live for His glory!

And, He did this so we would praise and glorify Him (v. 14)

- This is **why** we are saved and why we have the Holy Spirit in us!
- **The sentence (vv. 3-14) begins and ends with praise to God**
 - **Everything we have in Christ comes from God by grace and returns to God in glory!**
- We do not just worship, we witness
- We do not just praise, we bring others into a place of praise
- We do not just give glory, we live for God's glory
- God chose us to be His, which includes our being His instruments to tell the world about His Good News so all the world would come together in praise to Him

The Holy Spirit was sent to bring glory to Jesus—He does this through us not independent of us

- John 16:13-14
When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth... He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me.

Nothing in our lives is without beautiful purpose

1 Corinthians 10:31

... **Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God**

This clashes with our intense man-centeredness and self-centeredness

- We are obsessed with our will and our glory
- And our self-centered pursuit of our own glory is driven by the words, actions and approval of others
- It is lesser, counterfeit, ungodly, demonic, sin

But the people of God have been turned inside out³

- We are God's possession who live by God's will and for God's glory

Life is never without purpose:

- So even when our circumstances are less than desirable (Paul in rejection and prison)
- We are able to say, "**I am going to praise God and live for His glory... right here.**" Cf. Cancer

We live for **God's praise and God's glory**—we no longer have to live for the praise of people or for our own glory

- We now know how to live in every circumstance—for God's glory
- And what to do with every instance—give God praise

Because who **we are** in Christ is better than who we **are not** in this life

- What **we have** in Christ is better than what we **don't have** in this life
- What has **been done for us** by Christ is better than what has **been done to us** by others
- The **accomplishment** of our salvation by God is bigger than all **our failures** put together

³ Stott, 50.