

## 2. Learning What Is Meant by the Sealing of the Spirit

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand when God chose us to be His children. We saw that in addition to choosing us to be His children before He even created the world that the Father also blessed us with all spiritual blessings. As we help our children grow in the understanding of those blessings, it helps both we and our children to come to a greater understanding of the greatness of the grace and love of Christ. Today, we want to see how to help our children learn to understand what it means for us to be sealed by the Holy Spirit.

We concluded our last topic by seeing that we have received the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace. As we start this topic, in Ephesians 1:8-10, we read, “Which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth--in Him.” Here, we see that God made the riches of His grace to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence. The word that is translated “wisdom” in this verse speaks of the perfect knowledge and wisdom that belongs to God. In Colossians 1:9, Paul prayed, “For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” In this verse in Colossians, Paul prayed that Christians would come to knowledge of the will of God through the wisdom of God. Here, we see that God wants us to understand the wisdom that made it possible for us to receive forgiveness of sins.

The word that is translated “prudence” is used only one other time in the New Testament. In Luke 1:17, while talking to Zacharias about the ministry that John the Baptist would have, the angel told Zacharias, ““He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, “to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,” and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”” In this verse in Luke, the word is translated “wisdom”. This word means *God given spiritual understanding of the will of God*. As a result, we see that God has designed us as Christians to fully understand the will of God that makes forgiveness a reality in our lives. This is very important in the daily lives of our children because only as they and we know that we are forgiven can we experience real inner peace moment by moment.

God has made known to us the mystery of his will in His Word. However, Christians can only understand that will as they get to know the Word of God. Paul used this same word when he said in Ephesians 3:3-4, “How that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ).” We are reminded that the Lord used Paul and the other New Testament writers to give us the wisdom that we need about the things of the Lord. The Lord did this according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself.

We also see that God is going to complete His plan for all believers. The word that is translated “dispensation” means *management or stewardship*. Here, we see that God is so managing the

affairs of the world that He has set the time when history will be complete and He will gather together in one all things in Christ. This will happen both in heaven and on the earth. In Revelation 20:1-6, we see that Christ will bind Satan and rule all believers on the earth for a thousand years. Then, in Revelation 20:11-21:1, we see that God will create a new heavens and a new earth and as believers we will live with Christ for all eternity.

Ephesians 1:11-12 says, “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, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.” It is in Christ that we as Christians have received eternal life. In Romans 8:16-17, we read, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.” Here, we see that our eternal inheritance makes us heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. We will share all of the riches of glory forever.

The word that is translated “predestinated” means to *determine in advance*. Ephesians 1:5 says, “Having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.” We see that God determined before the creation of the world to adopt us as His children and make our salvation certain before He created the world. The word that is translated “works” means *energy* and speaks of the fact that God has the energy to complete what He plans. Philippians 2:13 says, “For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure.” Here, we see God also determined that He would carry out His purpose to bring His plan to completion.

We see that the reason God determined these things before the creation of the world was to carry out the purpose He had planned for the life of each person who places their faith in Christ. It is the will or purpose of God that we would become conformed to the image of Christ. Romans 8:28-29 says, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” To carry out that purpose, God adopted us as His children through Christ.

In verse 12, we see that God did this so that we could be to the praise of His glory. Here, we see that it brings glory to God to change and transform us so that we are in the image of Christ. That is why Romans 8:30 goes on to say, “Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.” Here, we are reminded that when God predestinated us, He determined not only to save us but also to glorify us. The fact that God completes this whole process in our lives also brings glory to God because of the fact that He is the One who is over all things.

Ephesians 1:13-14 goes on to say, “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, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” In order to make it possible for us to trust in Christ, God made certain

that two things happened in our lives. First, God made certain that we heard the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation. Romans 10:17 says, “So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” True faith comes in response to hearing the Word of God. That is why it is so important that we share the Word of God with others and not just our own words.

Second, God made certain that we would hear the Word of God which makes it possible for us to believe. Acts 16:31 says, “So they said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.’” The word “believe” means *to be convinced that something is true* with the result that we place our trust in the thing that we believe. Here, we see that we place our trust in our Lord Jesus Christ and receive salvation.

However, we also see that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise at the moment that we believe. A seal is an official mark of identification. Throughout history, governments have placed a seal on something to make it official. The seal shows ownership, authority, security or is a sign that something is genuine or authentic. When John the Baptist went before Christ to prepare the way, he said in Matthew 3:11, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” Christ baptized us with the Holy Spirit at the moment that we placed our faith in Christ.

In 2 Corinthians 1:21-22, we read, “Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us *is* God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.” In this verse, we see that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit as the down payment and guarantee of our salvation. In 1 John 4:4, we read, “You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” Here, we see that the Holy Spirit who is in us is greater than Satan who is in the world. As a result, the sealing of the Holy Spirit points to the fact that we belong to God and are secure from Satan.

We also see that God sealed us to the praise of His glory. This phrase is repeated both in verse 12 and verse 14. Then, Ephesians 3:20-21 says, “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” In each of these verses, we are reminded that God is the One who deserves all of the glory. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that God has worked in their lives and sealed them so that they no longer need to be fearful or afraid. Satan cannot destroy them because they have been sealed by God. As a result, they are safe and secure in Christ. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand that they have been sealed by the Holy Spirit.