

The Riches of His Glorious Inheritance in the Saints

Ephesians 1:11–23 ESV

¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

¹⁵ For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, ¹⁶ I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸ having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Introduction

Today is “All Saints Sunday” which occurs on the closest Sunday to All Saints Day (which was yesterday).

As I hope to show in this morning’s sermon, the celebration of All Saints is ultimately a celebration of God’s grace in the life of his people.

Grace that is given “in Christ” and “sealed by the Spirit” all to “the praise of God’s glory”.

On All Saints Sunday we rejoice that we are united with all the saints of Christ through our union with Christ.

And in this union we have obtained an inheritance far more glorious that we could ever have asked for or imagined.

So as we consider the blessed nature of our sainthood this morning I want to accomplish two things:

1. First, I want you to know that you have an inheritance.
2. And second, I want you to know what that inheritance is.

These two things will be the two points of this morning’s sermon.

1. Part 1 is: You Have an Inheritance (vv. 11-14)
2. Part 2 is: Do You Know Your Inheritance? (vv. 15-22)

You Have an Inheritance (vv. 11-14)

[Ephesians 1](#) is perhaps the most profound and glorious portion of all of the Apostle Paul's writings.

The Church historian Philip Schaff said that Paul's letter to the Ephesians is,

The Epistle of the Heavenlies, a solemn liturgy, an ode to Christ and his spotless bride.

Our sermon text this morning drops us right in the middle of Paul's famous opening words to the Ephesians.

Verses 3-14 of [Ephesians 1](#) are one continuous sentence in the Greek.

One long sentence about the glory and grace of God displayed in Christ.

But it is in verse 11 that Paul begins to speak of the "inheritance" that Christians have.

"In Christ"

And, in typical Pauline fashion, Paul speaks of this inheritance as being "In Christ".

Verses 3-10 have spoken at length about the glory of Christ.

And here, in verse 11 Paul says that it is "in him", that is "in Christ", that Christians have obtained an inheritance.

This is the first of three things that Paul gets at in our first section about this inheritance.

What Paul wants *the Ephesians* to know...

and what I want *you* to know...

is that the glorious inheritance you have is found in your union with Christ!

"Sealed by the Spirit"

The second thing that Paul states about this inheritance is that it is sealed by the Holy Spirit.

In verse 13 Paul states that, "***when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in [Christ], [you also] were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.***"

In verse 14 Paul goes on to explain further the role of the Spirit in our possession of this inheritance we have in Christ.

The Holy Spirit "***is the guarantee [or down payment] of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it.***"

In Christ, the fullness of salvation has been accomplished; *past tense*.

But this salvation gets *applied* to believers *in time* by the Holy Spirit.

There is a sense that you *have been saved*, you are *being saved*, and you *will be saved*.

Paul likens the sealing of the Holy Spirit to a "down payment" of the fullness of our inheritance.

The sealing and presence of the Spirit with the saints *now* is the guarantee that we will come in to the full inheritance of our salvation at the end.

"To the Praise of God's Glory"

The third and last thing I want to point out about this inheritance is something Paul makes clear a couple of times in this opening passage.

In verses 11-12, when he speaks of saints possessing their inheritance in Christ:

and verses 13-14, when he speaks of saints possessing the guarantee of this inheritance by being sealed by the Spirit;

Paul highlights that all of this is “**to the praise of God’s glory.**”

Everything about your inheritance is given to you by God’s grace in Christ.

And the demonstration of his grace to the Church brings glory to God’s name.

This is the unshakeable foundation of your inheritance from God.

God’s glory is magnified through the demonstration of his grace to his Church in Christ by the Spirit.

This teaches that not only should we glorify God for his grace to us, but we can also have confidence in his grace.

Because his grace to you in Christ rests on the exaltation of his own perfect glory!

And confidence in his grace means you have confidence in your inheritance.

But do you know what your inheritance is?

This is the question of the second part of this morning’s sermon.

Do You Know Your Inheritance? (vv. 15-22)

In verses 15-22 Paul essentially writes out a prayer to the Ephesians.

The basic gist of the prayer is that Paul wants the Ephesians to know the glory of their inheritance.

But, as he shows in verses 17-18, that too is accomplished by God’s grace.

You Need Your Heart’s Eyes Enlightened to Know:

Paul says that he continually prays for the Ephesians that God would give them “**the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him**” and that “**the eyes of [their] hearts [would be] enlightened**”.

And the reason why Paul prays for these things is because he wants the Ephesian Christians to know just how good their inheritance is in Christ.

Paul’s concern is that these Ephesian Christians don’t even know how much wealth they have in Christ.

You could imagine someone who had an extremely wealthy uncle who passed away and left 100s of millions of dollars to them as an inheritance.

But they would only get the inheritance after they turned 25 years old.

But imagine that this person didn't know about the inheritance they were about to receive.

Imagine that they are 22 or 23 years old, just a couple years away from this great inheritance.

But because they don't know about this inheritance they are living in despair because they are hardly scraping by financially.

They are suffering and can't get a job.

What difference would it make for this person if they knew about their inheritance?

Paul's concern for the Ephesians, and my concern for you, is that there are Christians who don't know how good they've got it.

And, what's more, that there are Christians who won't live in light of their great inheritance.

They will despair in their current suffering.

Not knowing that these light and momentary afflictions are preparing them for an eternal weight of glory!

So Paul prays that God would open the eyes of believers so that they would know.

And Paul prays that they would begin to know specific things about the blessings they have in Christ.

The Hope God Has Called You To

The first thing Paul prays for is that you would come to know "***the hope to which God has called you***".

Christians are a people of hope.

Hope is one of the three great theological virtues, along with faith and love.

And hope has everything to do with this talk of inheritance.

Before the return of Christ, Christians, and all creation, groan for the final consummation of Christ's kingdom.

And we groan because life is hard.

We bear our own burdens and one another's burdens in the hope that "the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

To know of your future inheritance fills you with hope in the present.

The Riches of His Glorious Inheritance in the Saints

The second thing Paul prays is that you would come to know "***the riches of [God's] glorious inheritance in the saints***".

I chose this phrase as the title for this morning's sermon because it draws us back to the theme of All Saints Sunday,

and, because it is perhaps the most striking statement in this passage full of striking statements.

Here, Paul uses the word “inheritance” again, but he flips its object to reveal a profound truth.

Up to this point, Paul has focused on the fact that believers have an inheritance.

But here, Paul speaks about the fact that believers themselves are God’s inheritance.

A part of your inheritance, as a Christian, is that you are now God’s inheritance!

In addition to receiving a great inheritance in the future, Christians are the “heritage” of God in the present.

Because of what God has done for you in Christ, he has made you into a rich and glorious heritage for himself.

As Peter states about Christians in [1 Peter 2:9](#), the Church is “a people for God’s own possession.”

When we consider the incredible privilege that we have in Christ, it makes sense that Paul would pray that Christians would come to know and believe these things!

Further, as you consider what it means to be a saint, it means that you, along with all the Christians who have ever lived, are united as a single people, who are God’s people, God’s chosen possession.

To know that the saints are God’s inheritance reveals the true glory of your own inheritance in Christ.

His Power Toward Those Who Believe

The last thing that Paul prays for is that you would come to know “***the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe.***”

Not only do you have a sure foundation to hope;

not only do you belong to the people of God;

beyond these things, the immeasurable power of God is for you.

Worked In Christ

And Paul describes this power by stating that this power is none other than the power God worked in Christ “***when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named.***”

Given to the Church

This power is indeed immeasurable power, but Paul emphasizes that this power is for the Church.

As Paul continues to describe the great power and glory that God has worked in Christ he states in our final verses:

Ephesians 1:22–23 ESV

²² God put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

This risen and ascended Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the immeasurable greatness of God’s power is at work, is given to the Church, his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

And this is done so that we might live in the hope that we truly have obtained an inheritance in Christ, sealed by the Spirit and indeed are God's inheritance.

This is a deep mystery.

But this mystery sheds light on what all the saints must be reminded.

In our union with Christ, we are made into a people.

And as God's chosen people, we are God's special possession.

In this is a call not only for hope, but also for love.

Love toward God and also love toward one another.

Because we are a people united to one another even as we are united to Christ.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN!