

Finding Our Identity in Jesus Series

Blessed with Safety and Security (Ephesians 1:13-14)

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At A Glance:

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These sermon study notes are designed to be a tool used after listening to the sermon. This resource is a guide to help deepen understanding regarding the Scriptures and ideas presented in the sermon. Those who use these study notes are encouraged to look up, read through, and think about Scripture references in this guide. There is more information in these notes than what is presented in the sermon. These study notes are designed to be used as an independent study tool to help the formation of Biblical convictions, character, and conduct.

Blessed with Safety and Security

I. Introduction

A. Illustration: \$12 Million Dollar Security

1. Reality TV celebrity Kim Kardashian spends a lot of money on personal security. Her security is suspected of being approximately twelve million dollars a year.¹ Why does she spend so much money on her personal security? In 2016 two masked men (one armed with a gun) entered the hotel room Kim was staying at in Paris and stole ten million dollars' worth of jewelry.² Being robbed at gunpoint was, understandably, a very traumatic experience that changed how Kim handles her personal security. Regarding the incident, Kim said, "The crime was the most terrifying experience of my life, leaving a lasting impact on me and my family." The robbers were convicted in 2025.
2. The reason Kim was left by herself and defenseless was because her personal bodyguard, Pascal Duvier, was guarding her sisters elsewhere. Kim was able to make one call to her bodyguard during the incident before the robbers took her phone from her. The robbers left the hotel room before the security guard could return. The whole incident lasted about ten minutes.³

- B. For Kim Kardashian, a failure of personal security traumatized her and cost a minimum of four million dollars, as her engagement ring was never recovered. This security failure permanently changed her and the way she lives her life. It is important to realize the significance of our soul security without having to learn that lesson through a traumatic event. Our personal security matters, but our soul security matters even more.
- C. The final spiritual blessing found in Paul's list of benefits brought to the children of God by Jesus relates to our spiritual security. Unlike Kim Kardashian's human bodyguard, our divine soul guard is never caught off guard and doesn't leave us vulnerable to danger. While most people don't feel the need to hire personal bodyguards, we all have a need for a personal bodyguard for our soul, and his name is Jesus.
- D. In Ephesians 1:13-14, our attention is drawn to the spiritual protection provided by Jesus for every child of God. The safety, security, comfort, and confidence that results from a knowledge of the truth being communicated by Paul will positively impact how we feel and act as a disciple of Jesus. As we walk with Jesus in the Christian life, we can do so with the assurance that we are safe. If spiritual danger comes our way, Jesus will intervene and protect us. This protective activity of Jesus is called being sealed by the Holy Spirit.

¹ https://www.yahoo.com/entertainment/articles/kim-kardashian-reportedly-paying-12-102717810.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAMyBm7J_2ACvltgHkRH97pI5g8BqPUfD9FgdyHPEmG8GymA5tHg2a88dsjtWjR8nl6Zv8nrlv4zoWcjqGr-txoxl0sDGs_C6szSqcePMS37zJQBDA_sJdb_Jjag43ITJ8KqusQZZP-GhxG6GLJDUQZx4GujqXOtyiuCkUsgVYi8

² <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c79elz25vpno>

³ <https://www.vanityfair.com/style/story/kim-kardashian-paris-jewelry-robbery-trial?srsId=AfmBOoplATqpg3NuLKLlx97IQHkqWBWsnBMwMnOFVlhqmo72APJTqv4>

II. How to Receive the Holy Spirit

- A. As we are finishing this sermon series on our identity as children of God who are drawing spiritual life from Jesus, we are going to look at the last blessing mentioned in the long list coming from the apostle Paul in Ephesians 1:3-14.
- B. The final blessing is being sealed by the Holy Spirit:

¹³ In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of the promise, ¹⁴ who is a first installment of our inheritance, in regard to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory. (Eph. 1:13-14)
- C. The spiritual benefit we will be focusing on comes to us in a specific way, through the Holy Spirit (“with the Holy Spirit of the promise”, v. 13). If we are going to receive and experience this benefit from Jesus, it only comes to those who have the Holy Spirit in them. Since this is the case, before we begin talking about the benefit, we need to clarify and understand how a person can experience this benefit. We need to know how to receive the Holy Spirit.
- D. A brief description explaining how to receive the Holy Spirit is the exact point at which Paul begins presenting this spiritual benefit to us. There are two necessary steps to receive the Holy Spirit. First, people must be exposed to and become familiar with the gospel—the message of Jesus (“after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation”, v. 13).⁴ Anyone who is unfamiliar with or hasn’t heard the message Jesus shared about Himself to the world can’t have the influence and benefits of the Holy Spirit. The message of truth must come first.
- E. To hear the message means more than sitting for thirty minutes while a person is talking about Jesus. To listen to the message of truth, the gospel of salvation, means to hear with attention.⁵ The person who is being exposed to the life-giving message of Jesus has their mental abilities intentionally focus on and interested in what is being communicated to them. Their mind isn’t wandering or thinking about other topics. They aren’t distracted. They aren’t disinterested, waiting for the talk to be over so they can move on to something they want to do. People who are listening to the message of God are hearing with interest and are actively paying attention to what is being said. This is the first step in receiving the Holy Spirit.
- F. Just because we are present when someone else is talking doesn’t mean we are hearing while paying attention. While sitting in one of my college classes, I found myself in an awkward situation because I wasn’t paying attention to what was being said. Apparently, the professor had asked me a question. I didn’t know this until the person sitting next to me (we were sitting closely together in a half circle of chairs) elbowed me to get my attention. When I looked up, I noticed the professor was looking directly at me. The person next to me said, “he asked you a question.” Busted. I apologized to the professor and explained to him that I was still thinking about something he said a couple minutes ago that impacted me and expressed what I was thinking about. While I wasn’t paying attention to what was currently being said, I did so because I was contemplating a statement that had impacted me. I was on task; I just wasn’t up

⁴ For those who want to learn more about what the gospel is, I recommend the excellent yet short book by Greg Gilbert, [What Is the Gospel?](#), 9Marks (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010).

⁵ Logos 10 Bible Study Software Exegetical Guide on Ephesians 1:13 “listening”

to speed. Hopefully, this made a difference. I asked the professor to ask his question again. I got caught not paying attention.

- G. The second step every person must take to receive the Holy Spirit is having the right response to the message of Jesus (“having also believed”, v. 13). A person must trust in Jesus as He is described in the content of the gospel—mainly Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.⁶ To believe in Jesus is not simply to make a decision to accept Jesus as an act of will. Believing in Jesus means to become persuaded and convinced as a personal conviction that Jesus is the person He claimed to be and accepting that He is able to do what He said He can do. Faith in Jesus is grounded in the facts about Jesus (2 Pet. 1:16, Jn. 19:35, 21:24, 1 Jn. 1:1-3). A person who believes in Jesus should eventually grow in their strength of conviction about Jesus that they become fully assured or fully convinced in their own mind about who Jesus is and what He can do (Rm. 4:20).⁷ Faith is not wishful thinking; it is a reasoned response. It is through faith that a person receives the Holy Spirit (Gal. 3:2, 3:14).
- H. If I were to ask you how confident you are that Christianity is true, how would you respond? Using the following scale, where would you place yourself? What is the strength of your personal conviction about Jesus?
- 1 I can't take Christianity and the Bible seriously
 - 2 I'm open to considering Christianity, but I don't currently have a good reason to think it's true
 - 3 I believe in Christianity, but I have many questions and doubts
 - 4 I believe in Christianity, but I'm not convinced it makes a big difference in my life
 - 5 I believe in Christianity and I can't take other worldviews or religions seriously

III. Blessed with Protection that Comes from God

- A. Those who fulfill the steps above and are given the Holy Spirit from God are positioned to receive the final blessing from God:

¹³ In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of the promise (Eph. 1:13)

- B. Children of God are secure and safe in their spiritual condition with God because God has put His stamp of ownership and protection on them (“you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit”, v. 13). To be sealed is to be or become designated and made secure as a sign of authentication or ownership.⁸ Children of God are marked as God's property and are notarized as such. Like a professor who has been tenured, we receive our ID card, and we know we will never be fired. To be sealed by the Holy Spirit is to be safe and secure.⁹ The children of God are preserved and not tampered with so they can arrive intact until they experience their full salvation.¹⁰

⁶ Logos 10 Bible Study Software Exegetical Guide on Ephesians 1:13 “having believed”

⁷ The principle of a fully convinced mature conviction is found in Romans 14:5. See also 1 John 5:11-13.

⁸ Logos 10 Bible Study Software Exegetical Guide on Ephesians 1:13 “you were sealed”

⁹ 2 Corinthians 1:21-22, 5:5, Romans 8:23

¹⁰ Grant R. Osborne, *Ephesians: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017), 31, Glenn Graham, *An Exegetical Summary of Ephesians*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, TX: SIL International, 2008), 59, Francis Foulkes, *Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 10, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 64.

- C. What does it mean to be sealed by the Holy Spirit? This spiritual activity of God can be unfamiliar, and some people have never thought in these terms before. We're going to take a closer look at several important passages of Scripture that will help us develop an understanding of what it means to be sealed by God as an activity of the Holy Spirit.
- D. Perhaps the best place to start is to examine what Jesus said about this spiritual activity. While Jesus didn't use the term "seal" He did explain the dynamics that are at work in our lives when a person is sealed in the way Paul is talking about:
- ²⁷ My sheep listen to My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand. (Jn. 10:27-29)
- E. Jesus begins His explanation of being sealed by making a profound and important claim: people to whom Jesus gives eternal life will receive that eternal life and will never perish ("I give them eternal life, and they will never perish", v. 27). When Jesus provides spiritual life to a person, it is a permanent gift that no one will be able to take away. Children of God will not be spiritually harmed or abandoned by God—what Jesus refers to as eternal perishing. Jesus makes this point clearer when He supplies the fact that both He and God the Father are protecting and securing the eternal life that has been provided. Jesus begins with Himself ("and no one will snatch them out of My hand", v. 28) and makes the same point about the other hand that is holding the children of God ("no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand", v. 29). Jesus is taking pains to emphasize the security and protection provided by God so that disciples will have eternal life and will not perish.
- F. Jesus is using the imagery of disciples being held in God the Father's hand and being in Jesus' hand on the other side. On the one hand children of God are spiritually protected and kept safe by Jesus ("no one will snatch them out of My hand", v. 28), and on the other hand, God the Father keeps the children of God safe ("no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand", v. 28). The children of God are spiritually protected in all directions from the challenges and obstacles that might draw them away from Jesus and the eternal life He has given to them. Think of a person at the beach with food who has their meal stolen by a seagull. No one is going to be able to rob Jesus.
- G. Some will object to the idea of God guaranteeing spiritual protection that results in a person remaining faithful throughout their lives (called eternal security or perseverance of the saints). Perhaps you have heard the thinking: while Jesus and God are protecting people as He holds them in His hands, the person can still choose to jump out of God's hands. The problem with this thinking is that God also gives disciples His Holy Spirit who works inside them to want to stay in God's hands (Phil. 2:12-13, Phil. 1:6, Rm. 8:28-32). It is not wise to reject the blessing of comfort, confidence, and peace being given to us by Jesus for the sake of trying to hold onto a mistaken understanding of freedom.¹¹ To remain faithful to Jesus throughout our lives by the

¹¹ It is the height of foolishness to be upset with God for not allowing us to choose to abandon Him and knowingly go to hell. Why be mad at God for preventing you from choosing misery, pain, and destroying yourself? This demonstrates how we can take a wonderful and good gift provided by God and distort it through our corrupted thinking to make it feel like something bad.

power of the Spirit is the path toward freedom, not the path away from freedom (2 Cor. 3:17). We freely choose to continue to stay attached to Jesus throughout our lives because God is working in our life to produce that endurance. Our freedom of choice is not violated.

- H. Jesus further explains the theological concept of sealing when He explains that those who belong to Him will be kept safe until the very end,
- ³⁹ And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of everything that He has given Me I will lose nothing, but will raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰ For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.” (Jn. 6:39-40)
- I. The sealing being done in the lives of the children of God by the Holy Spirit is future oriented, as well as being a present dynamic in a person’s life. Jesus said He will not lose a single person whom the Father has given to Him to be part of His spiritual family and kingdom (“that of everything that He has given Me I will lose nothing, but will raise it up on the last day”, v. 39). Those who belong to Jesus and are given eternal life will be kept safe by the Holy Spirit, Jesus, and the Father until the last day of our world’s existence when Jesus initiates His full kingdom in our world.
- J. The point Jesus is making here is also made in our main text (“who is a first installment of our inheritance, in regard to the redemption of *God’s own* possession,” v. 14). Paul also confirmed this same truth Jesus taught—individuals who belong to Jesus will be kept safe and secure by the power of God until the end when they receive their full salvation (Eph. 4:30, 2 Cor. 5:1-5, Jude 24).¹² God’s power keeps the children of God spiritually safe so they will be faithful and endure until the end. The Holy Spirit keeps disciples on the right spiritual course until the end of their life or until Jesus comes back. Jesus will not lose anyone whom the Father gives Him (Jn. 6:37-39).
- K. A good summary of what it means to be sealed by the Holy Spirit as a child of God is that we,
- ⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in *the* last time. (1 Pet. 1:5)
- L. As children of God, we can be encouraged and comforted knowing that God is watching over us and protecting us spiritually. This assurance is described as a “promise”, “a seal”, and a “guarantee” in Ephesians 1:13-14.¹³ God’s spiritual care of us and our soul is so effective that we will be brought safely into His presence and kingdom. God’s power working in our lives will not be overcome by anyone or anything. With God’s help, we will be faithful and committed to Jesus our entire lives. Children of God will remain connected to Jesus, even though it isn’t always easy and it takes intentional effort. Challenges must be overcome. Setbacks must be navigated. Discouragement will need to be resisted. But through it all, God’s power is continually moving us forward. No matter how difficult the course of life becomes, every true child of God will walk their own personal course faithfully by the power and protection of God.

¹² Paul talks more about the final redemption in Romans 8. Ralph P. Martin, [Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon](#), Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1991), 19.

¹³ John R. W. Stott, [God’s New Society: The Message of Ephesians](#), The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 48.

- M. Since being sealed by the Holy Spirit is a spiritual benefit provided by Jesus, disciples can face the difficulties of life and any crisis of faith with confidence, courage, and strength. We can be encouraged during our seasons of life in which we struggle spiritually. Our ability to remain faithful to God throughout our lives is not secured by our own abilities, but the power of God. The more we grow spiritually, the more obvious our unwavering commitment to Jesus will become. The stronger we get, the less we will struggle. Jesus will not lose anyone who belongs to Him!
- N. If we are constantly struggling in our spiritual life, that indicates something is wrong, like being in constant pain in our body (Pr. 24:10). If we experience the Christian life to be a constant struggle and we never seem to flourish in our soul, we need to make significant changes in the way we are living in relation to Jesus. We will need to learn new ways of pursuing the things of God and develop new habits that are healthy for our soul. The provisions and power of God are sufficient to empower us to live effectively using the resources of God (Jn. 16:33, Rm. 8:37, 2 Cor. 4:7-10). While spiritually struggling is not the norm of the Christian life, it is an inevitable outcome within the Christian life. Everyone will struggle spiritually at some point along the way as they pursue Jesus. But this should not become the norm.
- O. What about people who do walk away from Jesus? This shouldn't shake our trust and confidence because those who walk away never really belonged to Jesus—they only gave the appearance of following Jesus. Or if those who temporarily walk away have received the Holy Spirit, they will come back to Jesus eventually because the Spirit will so convict them that they will be motivated to return to Jesus. If a person gives the appearance of living for Jesus for a time and then permanently walks away, these individuals were never correctly attached to Jesus in the first place (1 Jn. 2:19-21, Mt. 7:15-20, 7:21-23, 13:20-21, Jn. 15:2, Lk. 13:2-9, 1 Cor. 15:1-2, 2 Pet. 2:1-3). They weren't really changed on the inside to think differently and develop a love for Jesus. While some people conform to certain external behaviors connected with those who are children of God, that behavior doesn't mean the person's internal heart attitudes have been aligned with Jesus. A person must genuinely believe by becoming convinced of the truthfulness of Jesus.

IV. Summary of Our Blessings

- A. As this series is being concluded, it will be good to look back and briefly review the ground we have covered. We will do this by taking a quick look at a summary list of all the spiritual blessings that are made available to us as a child of God. We've covered twelve wonderful and inspiring spiritual benefits that Jesus provides those who belong to Him.
1. **Become a new person with new resources:** God supernaturally changes our heart and makes His power available.
 2. **Holiness:** Set apart from those who don't know God so we can live an eternally meaningful life.
 3. **Blamelessness:** Ability to fix and correct all our moral and spiritual defects.
 4. **Adoption:** Welcomed into God's spiritual family.
 5. **Favor:** Having a warm and friendly relationship with God filled with His spiritual blessings.

6. **Redemption:** Rescued from spiritual danger by being bought back by God so that we can be free.
 7. **Forgiveness:** Released from our moral debts to God so we don't have to be punished for what we've done.
 8. **Knowledge of God's will:** Access and the ability to understand all that God wants us to know and do.
 9. **Reconciliation and Peace:** Brought into harmony and unity under the leadership and authority of Jesus.
 10. **Hope:** Promised and guaranteed positive outcomes from God.
 11. **An Inheritance:** God's power provides benefits we experience now, and even better benefits in the future kingdom.
 12. **Sealed:** Protected by the power of God so our salvation and future are secure.
- B. Paul was certainly correct when he summarized all the blessings and benefits the children of God inherit from Jesus when he said God, "has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3).

V. Conclusion

- A. God watches over our lives as a protective Father to make sure we arrive safely at our spiritual destination. God also works from the inside through the activity of the Holy Spirit to empower us to stay faithful and obedient until the very end. We are protected by God from within, from the outside, and on every side. Our spiritual condition with Jesus is safe and secure and it results in our final salvation being guarded in the hands of God.
- B. As children of God, we can be comforted and live confidently knowing:
- ¹⁹ Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His;" and, "Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to keep away from wickedness." (2 Tim. 2:19)