

A Mind for the Spirit Within

The Godly Mind

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Well, thank you all for joining us. We are always mindful that there is a broad spectrum of people that join us on times like this, people that are new in Christ, those that have been in Christ for many years, those that perhaps are still searching for the Savior, and we're doing a series that we've titled "The Godly Mind," and tonight's message if you're wanting to put a title on your notes, you could title "A Mind for the Spirit Within." A mind for the Spirit within.

There is an important progression that happens when a man comes to Christ, just in terms of his self-awareness of what has happened to him when he has been saved. You hear the Gospel, you believe in Christ, and then you go to the word, you go to Scripture and you begin to read what God's word says about the nature of Christianity, what it means to be born again, what it means to be a Christian, and what you find is over time as you study God's word, as you hear it preached, as you read it, you find that there are invisible things that have happened to you; that there are spiritual things that have taken place that have changed you. And part of having a godly mind is being aware of those spiritual invisible things that have taken place, what you could say the Holy Spirit has done and is doing in your life, and that's what we want to talk about both this evening and I'm going to finish this series on Sunday morning as well to kind of wrap it up.

Now, the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead. He is a person with intelligence and will and emotion. He is God as fully as the Father is and as full as the Lord Jesus also is, and his particular ministry is to apply redemption to the souls of those for whom Christ has died, and I want to just draw out some very basic things from Scripture about the work of the Holy Spirit in your life as a believer, and that will kind of set us up for a more specific message on Sunday. But the godly mind knows these things about which we are going to speak this evening, trusts them to be true based on the testimony of God's word, and then responds to them in obedience and in trust.

So what I want to do is break out three principles here this evening starting with the promise of the Spirit. The promise of the Spirit and like so many things in salvation, when you step back and look at them if you could say chronologically, there is a very broad sweep that covers the centuries, if not eternity to eternity, that gives you a profound sense that God had a plan in mind from before time began in the way that salvation would work out, and this has a very calming and settling and maturing effect on a godly

mind to recognize that to be a Christian is to be part of an eternal plan that was in place long before you were ever born. Long before you believed in Christ, God had a plan that he was inexorably working out throughout the ages and you can see this with the promise of the Spirit.

The promise of the Spirit, and if you would turn to the Gospel of John, we'll jump into a few different texts in that way here this evening. In John 14, here's what I want you to see, is that in the wonderful love that our Lord Jesus has for his church and the wonderful love that he has for his disciples, he made provision for us while he was on earth and he promised future provision for us to come afterwards. We know, of course, that Christ died for our sins. We know that he was raised from the dead and that that was the signature token from God that he had accepted the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf. The wages of sin is death. Christ died and was buried. God raised him from the dead, showing that the price required for your sin had been paid so that everyone who believes in Christ will no longer taste death themselves. Christ has already tasted it on our behalf.

Well, there is another aspect of the ministry of Christ that he spoke of. You see, Christ didn't simply make provision for us in his death and resurrection in the atoning work that he did for us at the cross, even while he was on earth he was looking beyond the cross, looking beyond the empty tomb to make provision for us afterwards, and in John 14:16, we can see that he promised to send the Holy Spirit to be our Helper and to be our strength in the midst of the Christian life after he was gone. In John 14:16, you can look at it with me, he says,

16 "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you."

So Christ says, "After the cross, I am going to send the Holy Spirit down for your sake. He will be with you and, indeed, he will be in you." And his role is such that he can be understood by the title "Helper." "The Holy Spirit is going to be your Helper and I will send him to you."

So we see this promise that Christ made and he repeats it in other language in chapter 15, verse 26, as he speaks of this future ministry of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the redeemed. He says in verse 26,

26 "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, 27 and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning."

Here again, beloved, what I want you to see with a sense of reverence and gratitude toward your Lord Jesus, is the fact that Christ was anticipating the fact that you would have spiritual need during your Christian life, and he made provision for that and he

promised prior to the cross, he promised to provide for that need in the person of the Holy Spirit. He promised. He knew what we would need and he made arrangements for it in advance.

In chapter 16, verse 7 of the Gospel of John, he says,

7 ... I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

Notice the future promise that is embedded in that. Jesus says, "I will send the Helper to you." Now if Christ is going to send help, you can know that it is help of the most particular kind. It is the best suited help that you could possibly have in the midst of your need and Christ says, "I'm going to go away but fear not, I will send a Helper to you. I will send the Holy Spirit to you in just a little while," he says to his disciples that were gathered around him at the time. And in verse 13 he says of chapter 16, he says,

13 ... when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. 15 All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you.

And so multiple times in the upper room, Jesus tells his disciples, "I'm going to send the Holy Spirit." By way of promise he says, "I am going to send you another Helper, a Helper that is like me in his ability to sustain you in your spiritual need."

Then if you'll turn over to the book of Acts 1, Christ makes such a point of this after his resurrection now. He gathers his disciples together in Acts 1:4 and Scripture says,

4 Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me."

So after his resurrection he says, "You need to wait here until the Holy Spirit comes. Remember, I promise this to you. You need to stay put until the Spirit comes." Verse 5,

5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.

And if you read on in the book of Acts, you see in Acts 2 that the Holy Spirit came with power. In Acts 2, the church was born and men began to respond to the Gospel. That's all we'll say about that for now but enough to say that Christ kept his promise to the church. Christ sent the Spirit upon them. They knew in Acts 2 that he had arrived because of the miraculous nature of his coming and that they were given the ability to speak foreign

languages that they had never spoken before in order to testify to those who were gathered about them of the great deeds of Christ to those who would hear. So shown by the tongues as fire, as it were, shown by the miraculous speaking in other languages, they knew by these miraculous signs that something miraculous had happened and therefore that was the indication that the Holy Spirit had come, just as Christ had promised.

So Jesus made the promise before the crucifixion, repeated it after the resurrection and before his ascension, and now we know that the Spirit has come to comfort and to teach his people, and the purpose of the Holy Spirit as we are going to see more on Sunday, is to help us live a godly life, and all I wanted you to see in this little bit of introductory comment here in this first point was that this was something that Christ had promised beforehand; that this was part of the plan; that this was part of the provision that God has made for us. So in order for us to have a godly mind and for us to think rightly about the Christian life, there is a wonderful principle for us to recognize: we are not left, and I'll say this a time or two before we are done today and Sunday, let me put it in the second person: you are not left alone to live the Christian life. You are not left simply to your own native ability, to the power of your own self-will in order to live a godly life, in order to think with a godly mind. God has provided supernatural help in the person of the third person of the Godhead to come to you, to indwell you, to help you, to enable you to do and to live the life that God has called you to. So rather than thinking about the Christian life from a position of fear and intimidation and a sense of legalistic inability, you realize that in the great love of Christ for his church, as part of his great love for you, that Christ has given you a supernatural provision, a supernatural person to indwell you, to help you, to be a part of your Christian life from now until the day that you enter into glory. He didn't leave you as an orphan, he sent the Helper to be with you.

Now that leads us naturally into our second point for this evening. We've seen the promise of the Spirit, now I want you to see in point 2 here: the provision of the Spirit. The provision of the Spirit, and for this we should turn to the book of Ephesians 1. And just to kind of set the stage here, let me read from Ephesians 1:3 and then we'll skip down to verse 13. Paul as he opens this great epistle, opens on a note of praise, opens on a note of exalting God for his goodness in salvation, and he says in verse 3,

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

Paul opens up with this burst of fireworks of giving glory to God, and the reason that he is praising God as he opens this book is he says, "God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. God has done so much for us, God has been so good to his people, God has done such supernaturally wonderful things for us, that the only proper way for us to respond is to give him praise and to bless his name." So the spirit of praise is animating everything that Paul says here in Ephesians 1.

As part of that, toward the end of this long prayer from verse 3 to verse 14, he thanks God for the provision of the Holy Spirit and uses this as a further ground for praise. Look at verse 13, he says,

13 In Him [that is, in Christ], 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 promise, 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

Now, there is an awful lot wonderful things packed into those two verses. Here's what I want you to see for now tied in with the way that we opened the message at the beginning. We said that there is a progression that takes place, sort of, a progression in our own mind and in our own understanding; there is a growth of understanding that should take place in the life of someone who is truly saved. He understands that he has heard the Gospel. He has heard the good news that Jesus Christ saves sinners just like him, or just like her. You, let's put it in the second person, somewhere along the line you heard the message, the good news that Christ saves sinners and you said, "Well, I'm a sinner. I need a Savior," and you came to Christ. You came to him in a spirit of repentance, a spirit of faith, and you entrusted your soul to the Lord Jesus Christ for your salvation, believing that he was able to save you just as he had promised as you had heard in the Gospel message.

And this is what Paul is speaking about, look at verse 13 there, "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth," Scripture says that faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of Christ in Romans 10, Paul is saying something similar here in verse 13, "after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also believed," that Gospel produced belief in your heart, he says, "you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise." Now that brings us to the point that I've been trying to make here this evening. This is something that you did not see happen. It's not like a great big HS started flashing on your forehead to show that you were now indwelt by the Holy Spirit. There wasn't a visible physical manifestation like that, rather it was something invisible and the wonder of this, the beauty of this is that God has revealed to us in the Scripture to help us understand what happened when we were saved. He didn't simply do it, he also gave us his word that would explain to us the change that took place when we believed in the Gospel. So what he is saying here is that the Holy Spirit has done something to you. He has done something for you. He uses it in the language of saying that you were sealed in him with the Holy Spirit of promise.

So the provision of the Spirit, we're going to talk about it in two subparts here, the provision of the Spirit is seen, first of all, in the seal of the Spirit. The seal of the Spirit. And beloved, this is really far too wonderful for us to fully comprehend and we've talked about this in years gone by in our church, but it's good for us to come back to it again. When you believed in Christ, when God saved you, the Bible says that he sealed you with the Holy Spirit. You see it there again in verse 13, look at it with me again, "you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise."

Now I want you to notice something very basic about this. It is wonderful the way the basic grammar opens up the truth of salvation to your mind. Notice that the words "you

were sealed in Him," past tense. Paul is talking about something that happened to you at the moment of your salvation. Speaking to you now as a Christian, somewhere down the road in your Christian life after you have believed, down the road in your Christian experience, he points you back to the moment that you believed and says, "Let me tell you what happened at that time that you believed. What happened was God sealed you with the Spirit." It's a past tense. It's a completed past act of God. And brothers and sisters in Christ, what God did when you were saved in this sealing work with the Spirit of God, he did something that was irreversible. He did something that would never change, that was permanent, that was eternal in its consequences.

What does it mean that God sealed you with the Holy Spirit? Well, if this is new to you and your understanding of what it means to be a Christian, prepare to have your heart thrilled with the wonder of it. Let's talk about this concept of sealing for just a moment. Back in the day when Paul wrote this some 2,000 years ago, ancient documents were often sealed with a waxy substance that was used to close them, to seal them, and that was done in order to protect the contents, to authenticate them as being from the owner of the seal. So there would be this waxy substance and the seal would be imprinted in the wax and when the wax hardened, it would bear the seal of the owner, showing that this document was truly from the owner of the seal. The contents of that document were protected by the seal. The seal protected the content from alteration or from being fabricated, being stolen or whatever. And here's the point: the owner's distinct seal – oh, watch this – the owner's distinct seal on that document guaranteed that the document was real, that it was authentic, that it truly came from the owner of the seal, and what Paul is saying here is this: is that when God saved you, he did something that was like putting a seal on a document, a physical seal on a physical document, only he put a spiritual seal on a spiritual work in you. And what Paul is saying here is that God has marked you out as his own by imparting his Spirit to you. God put his Spirit within you. God sealed you and claimed you as his own in a way that is irreversible, that can never be changed.

Look over at Romans 8:9 as we start to see some interrelated terms about the work of the Spirit in God's own. In Romans 8:9, he says,

9 ... you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. 10 If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Notice this, beloved, in a way that cannot be physically manifested, the Spirit of God has marked you out and the Spirit of God has come to indwell you as God's own, and that indwelling presence of the Spirit of God is the signature indication that God now owns you. Before as we've said multiple times, before your salvation, you were in the realm of Satan. You belonged to the kingdom of the devil. Colossians 1:13 and 14 makes that abundantly clear. You belonged to your father, the devil. You were a son of the father of

lies. But what God did in salvation was he transferred you out of that kingdom and he impressed his Spirit upon you. The Spirit came to indwell you and now something remarkably wonderful has taken place. The presence of the Spirit of God in your life is now the mark that you belong to God; that you are his; that you are under new ownership. And God owns you and we could put it this way, to state it differently: every true Christian and only true Christians, are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

And how is it that you know that you belong to the Spirit of God? How do you know that the Spirit of God indwells you? Well, it's not as charismatics would have you believe, it is not by coming around with strange manifestations of bizarre behavior. You know, there are charismatics that think that the presence of the Spirit causes a person to lose control of themselves so they speak in ecstatic babble; they fall down when a man waves his hand over them on a stage in a controlled entertainment environment; they will run around in circles; they will do all kinds of silly things designed to be the proof that the Spirit of God dwells within them. But beloved, that's not the mark of the Spirit. Scripture tells us what the mark of the Spirit is and it's something far more noble, it's something far more sanctified, and if you look at Galatians 5, you can see this written out by the hand of the Apostle Paul.

What is it that is the mark that the Spirit has been provided to you? Well, there starts to be this change in character that is a reflection of the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22,

22 ... the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,
goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things
there is no law.

There is a cluster of fruit that comes in the life of the true believer and the mark of the work of the Spirit of God in that life is the mark of the righteous character of God starting to be manifested. Whereas before there was hatred and conflict and animosity that motivated your heart, that was the mark of your inner character, God takes that out and places in you something new, something that shows the mark of his character, the mark of his love, of his righteousness, the mark of godliness coming out.

Now, we understand that this fruit is visible not in perfection in us, but the fact that there might be on an apple tree or a peach tree, you see fruit hanging there, the fruit might not always be perfectly round and perfectly juicy but the fruit is there. You can recognize an apple tree by the presence of the apples that it brings forth. Well, in like manner with a true Christian, you start to see this evidence of the Holy Spirit coming out in the mark of the one who has truly been redeemed. That impress of the Spirit shows that you are a true Christian. It is shown by a change in your nature, a change in your character, not in silly things that you do in front of others that call attention to yourself. This fruit of the Spirit is more noble, it is more quiet, it is shown in the transformation of a character that takes place over time.

Now, when you start to see that happening in your life, you start to see that kind of fruit coming out, the Spirit of God is showing by the fruit that he produces in your life that

you belong to God and now you are under his authority and that has a whole lot of consequences. When you start to see that change, some of you that are new Christians just within the past year or two or so, it starts to dawn on you, and I remember this from my own experience in the months after I was truly converted. You know, let me just kind of illustrate it that way. I hadn't planned to do this. All I was conscious of on the day of my conversion was the fact that I really badly needed a Savior and I was giving my life to Christ, and I knew that I needed to read my Bible and I needed to pray after that, but I had no concept, I had never been taught about what to expect the Christian life to be. I just knew that I was a guilty, sinful, hateful man and I was giving my life to Christ unreservedly, unconditionally as if I were writing a blank check. "Lord, take my life and do with it what you want." I had no idea all the consequences of that. Something happened that I noticed almost immediately was that my inner heart had changed. All of a sudden the vulgarities that came out of my mouth so freely were absent. The hatred and the anger that marked who I was, all of a sudden it just started to dawn on me, "I'm content. I'm happy. I'm joyful."

I had no idea whatsoever at the moment of my conversion on that Sunday morning, November 20, 1983, I had no idea that that was part of it. I had no intention at the moment of my conversion to start changing in that way. It just naturally happened. There were things coming out of my life that had never been there before. These fruit of which Paul speaks in Galatians 5, the love, the peace, the patience, the kindness, totally foreign to whom I had been before, were now coming out naturally. A new nature had been given to me and it was weeks if not months before I started to understand the connection between the two, but I just realized something profound has changed in me as shown by what's coming out of my heart and the attitudes and the aspirations and the desires that are there that were totally foreign beforehand. The fruit of the Spirit being the mark that God had put his seal on me, and the fruit of the Spirit being the mark that I was under new ownership now. And those were delightful, wonderful wonderful days.

I may have said this. I've told this story privately. There was a fellow student, I can't quite remember his name as I stand here right now but it doesn't matter. But there were a small group of people that knew me both before and after my conversion. There weren't many but there were a few, and one of the guys who knew me from summer school and then I was saved in November and he started seeing the changes in my life, he came to me and he said, "Don, there is something different about you," and you know, I wasn't trying to be different. I just was different. And this conversation couldn't play out now 30 years later in light of changes in our society, but he looked at me and kind of winked at me and said, "Who is she?" You know, he thought I had a girlfriend. And I said, I think his name was James, I said, "James, it's not a she." I pointed up and I said, "It's a he." And he thought that was weird because he wasn't getting the play on words that I was making there.

But my whole point of it is, is that that change of life was the mark of the Spirit of God and it was visible to those around me without me even trying. This is what the Spirit of God does and for the point of our series here tonight in the godly mind, is to recognize that as we seek to live the Christian life, there is a power greater than earthly ability that

comes upon us that enables us to change, that produces change, that helps us in this way, and that person is the Holy Spirit himself. He has sealed us. He has marked us out as belonging to God in a way that will always be true.

Now there is a second aspect of this provision of the Spirit. You can go back to Ephesians and we can talk about the seal of the Spirit and here we are going to talk about the filling of the Spirit. The filling of the Spirit in Ephesians 5, beginning in verse 18. Ephesians 5:18. Paul says,

18 ... do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,

Be filled with the Spirit. Christians are to be filled with the Spirit as the pattern of their lives. Now what does that mean? Well, I think it's helpful to understand this in terms of the contrast that Paul makes in verse 18. He says, "do not get drunk with wine." If you are drunk, what can we say about you? You are under the influence of the alcohol. When he says to "be filled with the Spirit," he is saying to bring yourself under the control, under the influence of the Spirit of God. When a man is filled with alcohol, he is under the influence of that alcohol. Beloved, for you to be under the influence of the Spirit, to be filled with the Spirit is to be under his influence, and this is shown by lifestyle evidence that flows from his control.

Look at verses 19 through 21. What does a Spirit filled life look like? Verse 19,

19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; 20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; 21 and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

So the Spirit has this ongoing sense, this command here to be filled with the Spirit is a present tense command. Paul is not talking about something that happened in the past as with the seal of the Spirit, he is saying your Christian life is to be marked by this. You are to seek this going forward as a continual matter, as a routine aspect of your Christian life, to be under the Spirit of God, to be under his influence.

Well, it would seem kind of important to know how the Spirit exercises his influence, then, wouldn't it, if this is to be the mark of it? And you can see where this comes in with the godly mind if you'll turn over to Colossians 3, just two letters to the right in your Bible. Colossians 3, it's a parallel passage. You can interpret these passages in light of each other as shown by the commonality of theme that flows through them. In Colossians 3:15, Paul says,

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you,

Now watch what happens here. He says,

with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

What does that sound like? That sounds just like the passage we read in Ephesians 5, the point being that to be filled with the Spirit is to have the word of Christ dwelling within you richly. And here's the point, beloved: the Spirit of God mediates his influence in your life through the word of God which he inspired through the human authors. The Spirit of God administers his influence to you not through ecstatic things as done in charismatic circles, he does it through the truth, the teaching, the intake of the word of God in your life. So for you to be under the influence of the Spirit of God, you need to be doing the kinds of things that you're doing right here. Right here tonight. Right here in this room. You have your Bible open, most of you. You are reading it. You are seeing it. You are taking it into your mind. You are letting it influence and inform the way that you think, influence and inform your desires. That is the work of the Spirit of God being manifested in your life. So the Spirit controls and directs us through the word that he inspired.

So, beloved, let me say it this way by way of encouragement and affirmation to you because I know virtually every one of you in this room and I know that almost without exception you are people that open the Bible, you read it on your own, you study it, you love it. Well, here's what I want you to see is that as you read the Bible, as you submit yourself to its teaching, as you let it change the way that you think and live, you are being filled with the Spirit. You are being influenced by the Spirit of God because he takes the word of God and he applies it to the minds of God's people. The work of the Spirit is tied directly to the word of the Spirit and that's what makes time like this together so eternally valuable, so greatly important, is that this is the means that God has given us both privately and corporately, to come under his word and let the Spirit of God direct our minds and our thoughts. So this is, I'm trying not to be self-serving in what I say here, but when we gather together to hear the word of God taught, this is the most important hour of the week, and not just in this public teaching time but as you are studying God's word and reading it on your own. Let's put it this way, this is a better way to put it: the time that you spend in God's word is the most important time of your life because that is where the Spirit of God is at work most directly in your mind. As he is filling your mind with the thoughts of God from the word of God, you are being filled with the influence of the Holy Spirit.

So this becomes very very critical in your Christian life and you can see the connection with what we've been talking about with the godly mind. You use your mind to read the word of God, to take it in, and then the word of God starts to shape your mind and to influence it away from the things of your flesh, away from the worldliness that is all around us, and into that realm which God approves and which God has authored for us. So all of this, all of this is a work inside your heart mediated by the Holy Spirit as he uses the word of God in your life. So don't ever think that you are wasting your time when you

spend time in God's word. It is that consistent intake of the word of God that is going to be the instrument which the Spirit of God uses in your life.

Now, let me ask you a question in that regard: wouldn't you want the blessing of God in your life? Knowing that God is good and that God is love and that he designs good for his people, wouldn't you want that God to be influencing the direction of your life so as much as possible you could live under the realm of his blessing? Of course you would. Well, understand that the realm in which that is dispensed is the realm of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit uses the word of God in order to accomplish that work.

So we see the promise of the Spirit. Jesus said, "I'm going to send the Holy Spirit to help you." We see the provision of the Spirit in the fact that he marked us out, he sealed us at the moment of our salvation so that we would irretrievably belong to the God of our salvation, never to be changed, never for ownership to be transferred back. You know, you can't find any of that kind of language in Scripture. You find language saying that God has delivered us from the domain of Satan and brought us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, one of the ways that you know that you cannot lose your salvation, that Scripture does not speak about that, because Scripture does not speak about the process going in reverse. And that is part of the work.

The seal of the Spirit, the filling of the Spirit, thirdly, let me say this just briefly as we close soon: the pledge of the Spirit. The pledge of the Spirit, and with this, go back, if you would, to Ephesians 1:14. Ephesians 1:14, and again, it's just so precious. It's so wonderful to see. What we are about to see here is enough to encourage the most downhearted and downcast believer in the midst of the deepest struggles of life. What we are about to see here is that which can raise the whole tide of your spiritual thinking; that can encourage and lift up the whole downcastness of your spiritual existence in the midst of your trials and sorrows, the pledge of the Spirit is it. And here's the point: God has given you the Holy Spirit, those of you that say, "I know that I'm a Christian. I know I have believed in Christ." The consequence of that is to say, "That means that every true Christian is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, that means I have the Spirit of God dwelling within me. I belong to the Spirit of God. He indwells me." And this is part of what it means to be a Christian, for every true Christian, every true Christian has the Holy Spirit without exception. There is no such thing as a Christian without the Holy Spirit, contrary to what some would say. Well, here's what I want you to see as we have emphasized that, to say that, "I have the Spirit of God dwelling within me," the Spirit of God is given to you as a Christian at this point in your spiritual existence, the Spirit is given to you – watch this – as part of a greater whole. The Spirit is given to you as a pledge. You have the Spirit now and that is wonderful. That is encouraging. That is powerful to know. But what's even better is to realize that Scripture speaks about the presence of the indwelling Spirit in your life as saying that is simply a down payment on much more to come, and the godly mind embraces this and finds in it its greatest hope.

Look at verse 14 of Ephesians 1. Actually, let's go back to the end of verse 13. He says,

13 ... you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance

The "who" here is a reference right back to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit who is given as a pledge of our inheritance. What is Paul saying here? This is the language of a down payment. God by giving you the Holy Spirit in this life, putting his Spirit within you in this present earthly existence, has done this for you: he has made a pledge to you that there is more to come; that as you go through this life with the Holy Spirit, the presence of the Holy Spirit is the guarantee from God that the fullness of your salvation is still ahead and will most certainly be given to you. God will give you still more in the future. The Spirit is a pledge that a greater inheritance is yet to come.

So you step back from that. You step back from that and if you're a Spirit filled Christian, you say, "Do you know what? It's really wonderful to be a Christian right now here on earth, to walk with Christ, to know the joy and the peace that comes from being a true Christian, knowing the true God, knowing my sins are forgiven, knowing that God is now reconciled to me through the blood of Christ. That's wonderful," you say. "This is the greatest privilege that a man could ever have walking on this earth." And you would be exactly right. But here's the thing, beloved: that's just part of something greater. That is connected. That present experience of the work of the Spirit in your life is connected to something still greater in the future to come, your inheritance that will one day certainly belong to you.

Look at Ephesians 4:30 where Paul brings these themes out in this book again. He says,

30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

The future day coming, the Spirit of God sealed you in the past with a future object in mind that when Christ is revealed with all his glory, with all of his saints, you will be there and you will be a part of that wonderful event; that God has saved you. Let's put it another way: God has saved you not merely for this life alone, God has saved you for a future salvation yet to be revealed to you that will be far surpassing in its wonder, far surpassing in its glory, far more excellent than anything that you have had here on earth as a Christian. You say, "But that's hard to believe. I'm really joyful as a Christian right now." Amen. I'm with you right there, but the wonder of God, the glory of the gift of Christ, the glory of the gift of your salvation, is that it gets better from here in ways that go far exceedingly beyond anything that we could ask or think. We are going to be with Christ in glory and the whole point of what Paul says about the Spirit being a pledge, is that it is the presence of the Spirit of God in your life now, is a promise that God will fulfill what is still yet to come. That which is still future is so certain to come that you could think about it as a present possession, this inheritance that belongs to you. There is a place in heaven, Peter says, reserved for you that cannot be taken away; that God will certainly deliver you to; that God will certainly bring you to. It's what Christ saved you for, is that ultimate destination.

So the marks of the Spirit in your life even if they seem somewhat faint at times because you stumble along the way, those marks of the Spirit of God are the promise from God that there is more yet to come. And I love I think more than anything else about salvation in his life that very truth, the very truth that as wonderful and privileged as we are to be Christians here tonight, that's exceedingly wonderful, but isn't it even better to know that something better still awaits that we will certainly enter into? And the Spirit of God is given to us, indwelling us, producing fruit in us, and that becomes the sense, the promise from God that what's better in the future will be as certain as our present experience is now. That's why when we go through times like we have as a church over the past few days saying goodbye to a member in death, that's why we can grieve but not without hope. There is the surpassing hope, the surpassing certainty, whereby which we know that death isn't the end. Death doesn't have the final victory on us. Death has lost its sting. Death is simply the passageway by which we enter into the fullness of which our salvation was meant to be. Death becomes the hallway that leads us into the full possession of everything that we were saved for. Now we know in part, now we have in part, now we have the Spirit dwelling within us, in that day, beloved, the promise will be fulfilled. The pledge will be vindicated. The down payment will yield into the fullness of blessing.

So how does the godly mind pull all of this together? Well, just talking about in the realm and limiting it to the realm of the Spirit, you look back to the past, beloved, and you see Christ promised this even while he was here on earth. You say, "That's wonderful." You see the provision of Christ for your spiritual life today, Christ was providing for that 2,000 years in advance. You come forward to today and you understand that the Spirit of God has sealed you; in your salvation, you were sealed and now you belong irrevocably to God and the Spirit is producing fruit in you in this life. You realize that you are not living this Christian life alone, that there is a supernatural Helper alongside to help carry the load. And as you see those things, you realize that there is a golden thread of mercy that ties the promise of Christ to your present experience that leads into heaven where the fullness of your salvation will become yours. This is all the guarantee of final glory.

So you see the sweep of sovereign grace, of sovereign love, the promise of Christ, the coming of the Spirit in your own life and the great culmination in heaven, and what does that do to the godly mind? It produces a great sense of gratitude to give thanks to God in all things for great things he has done for your soul. It produces a sense of reverence, of holy fear mixed with that gratitude that says, "God, what a wonderful salvation you have given! What tongue is worthy to speak of such things let alone to actually have them as my own possession!" And your mind is captivated by the grandeur of salvation, the grandeur of the grace, and then you come back to today, you come back to your present experience now and you realize even in this life where I struggle and I stumble and sometimes I fall repeatedly, I realize God hasn't left me alone. I have a Helper with me, the indwelling Spirit who is going to guarantee, who will make sure that I reach the final destination. Scripture says he is at work in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure. When you see the beginning of the work of the Spirit of God, you remember that he who began a good work will certainly perfect it in you until the coming day of Christ Jesus, Philippians 1:6. So the godly mind looks at Scripture, sees this testimony to

the work that has happened, and it produces love and joy and fear and gratitude toward the one who has bestowed such a wonderful gift on such an unworthy sinner as you and me.

Let's bow together in prayer.

Our Father, we thank you for these truths from your word. We thank you for the indwelling Holy Spirit and we thank you, Father, for what his presence means. It means that you have kept your promise to your people and we individually are on the receiving end of that grace. You have given us a Helper to sustain us, to walk with us through life, who lives within us. And yet, Father, we realize that that's not the fullness of it, that's not all that there is, the presence of the Spirit is a promise from you that you will fulfill the greater things that we have yet to see, the greater things that eye has not yet seen, that ear has not yet heard, all which God has stored up for those who love him. Well, Father, we thank you for that. We do love you. We do look to you and with hopeful encouraged hearts we acknowledge our trust and our confidence that what you have begun in us, you will perfect, you will certainly complete, and we look forward to that great day of glory when our redemption is made full. Strengthen each one, Father, through these words from the Scriptures as we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

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