

The Believer's Glorious Inheritance

Scripture: Ephesians 1:11-14

Code: 49-4

I want to draw your attention back into the first chapter of Ephesians, and I want us to look at verses 11 through 14—and that is the final blessing. We have already talked about the fact that in verse 3 we have that amazing promise: “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.” And we said the primary and first blessing was election, verses 4 through 6, we were chosen “in Him before the foundation of the world” and predestined to be adopted.

The second blessing was redemption, in verse 7: “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.” And as we come to verse 11 we come to the final blessing. Election happened in the past, redemption is going on in the present; this is the future, verse 11: “Also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory. 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 promise, 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.”

While redemption goes on in time, redemption is only complete in eternity. And we know it is not only the redemption of those who belong to the Lord, but it is the redemption of everything, as verse 10 says: “the fullness of times, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on the earth.” So we’re laying a foundation for what this marvelous epistle of Ephesians is going to teach us in the months ahead, and it begins with this doxology of praise for what God has done in the past: election, what He is doing in the present: redemption, what He will do in the future: glorification.

It was about a dozen years ago that a popular book came out written by Joel Osteen. The title of the book was *Your Best Life Now*, and it sold about eight million copies at the time. It’s been twelve years since then, and twelve rather dramatic years, particularly the more recent ones. Such a jarring, disturbing shift has taken place in the social order that we have in our country and around the world, that I think few people are convinced that this is their best life right now. That would be a hard sell; probably good that the book came out before the current stress began, or it might not have been very popular. In fact, there may be a number of those eight million who would like to get their money back, since this didn’t turn out to be what they had hoped.

We are now living under dominant deception, dominant lies, hatred, crime, anger, selfishness, immorality, a pandemic, wickedness that most of all hates the truth and will assault the truth every possible way it can. And that means that the church of Jesus Christ is going to experience things that we haven’t experienced in this country—or even in the West—ever, perhaps. The noble experiment of America to have a just and civil society based on biblical morality and firm legal control by government exercising the threat and the reality of punishment to those who violate the law is essentially over. It’s essentially finished. Even the revered Constitution has become irrelevant and

subject to whimsical manipulation so that it no longer offers any strong barrier to the forces of evil and civil destruction. We are watching our country freefall into godless darkness, sexual perversion, gender insanity, crime of all kinds, the breakdown of law and order, family destruction, and above all, the constant flood of lies and efforts to silence the truth. Many of us feel this is the end of what we have hoped for, when we hope for the best for our place in history.

The final step, the final step in the demise of any society is when the truth is under assault. And you can almost tell what is true because if it's true, they cancel it. It's not hard to figure out what is true; if it's true, they attack it. Freedom to do evil. Evil, in fact, is now legal in many cases, and righteousness is criminalized.

So our nation has succumbed. Eighty-one million people voted for a president who supports abortion, lies, childhood sexual transition, transgender, homosexuality in every form. Eighty-one million people voted him into office. And you ask, "How could a society fall so fast? What is it about human nature that allows them to be so easily victimized by corruption, wickedness, and sin?" Well the same question was asked and has been asked ever since the second World War. The question was, "How could Hitler be so easily able to persuade normal German people to murder hostages, send people into forced labor camps, euthanize people, starve them to death, kill them medically, terror-bomb them, let them die in camps so that as many 31 million people were killed outright in that regime, including a million children, at least, and 6 million Jews?"

How does that happen? How can a whole population turn so easily from normal life to being murderers? You could ask the same question of Russia. How could Stalin convince the Russian people to slaughter something over 20 million people? So collectively, 50 million people are slaughtered. You might think the answers are complex; actually, they're not. The answers to those two questions are pretty simple: All the unredeemed are of their father the devil, who is a liar and a murderer. And unless you restrain that in human life, it will run amok. It's easy to get people to do evil; it's the way they're hardwired. It's their bent.

When the restraint of government is loosened at all, taken off, or perverted, or when government no longer acts to punish evil and reward good, all kinds of sin will explode. Whether human government allows evil or commands evil—in the case of Hitler and Stalin—people will come together to do evil because they are evil. You don't see any people amassing in the streets to rush someplace to do good. They don't run to do good. It's easy to gather people to do evil; that's their natural bent.

In case you question that, let me remind you of what the Word of God says in Romans chapter 3. And we'll look at verse 10: "There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one. Their throat is an open grave, with their tongues they keep deceiving, the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood, destruction and misery are in their paths, and the path of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes." That is biblical anthropology. That's a biblical definition of humanity: People run to do evil. And unless they are restrained by conscience, by family discipline, by government authority, all hell will break loose because that's the most natural expression of the children of Satan. He is their father, and he is a liar, and he is a murderer.

So many times we've gone back to Romans chapter 1. But just a reminder: verse 28, "Just as they didn't see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those

things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.” They not only do those things, they make them legal.

Now I understand that you know all this; I’m just encapsulating a little bit because I understand also how discouraging this is. We have been an incredible beneficiary of God’s kindness, haven’t we, here, because we’ve been able to go through this horrible time and be together and worship and proclaim the gospel and the Word of God. While at the same time we enjoy this wonderful island of sanity in the midst of the sea of insanity, we’re not unaware of what’s going on around us. Nobody really seems to care to hide any wickedness anymore. Hearts are unmasked, while faces are masked. This cannot be our best life; and it’s not going to get better. Evil men grow worse and worse. This is a freefall, not temporary. We are going down, and we’re going down under the sheer force of unbelief and sin, unprotected and unrestrained by the judgment of God.

Can we fix it? No. Should we join it? Of course not. We can’t join the hate and the anger and the racism masquerading as virtue. We understand what the Bible says. Let me just remind you of 1 John 2:15, “Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.” And then this, “The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.” That’s what we wanted to hear, right? The world is passing away, but we live forever.

Also in 1 John chapter 5 we are reminded that “the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.” The whole world lies in the power of the evil one, and it is passing away. The contrast to that, Philippians 3, tells us that “our citizenship is in heaven, from which we wait eagerly for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform” us into His own likeness.

This is not our best life, not by any means. To all who are in Christ, our best life is yet to come. Our best life is the glory of heaven. And what you have in the verses that I read, verses 11 to 14, is the promise of God about that life to come. We have an inheritance, and that inheritance was predestined from before the foundation of the world according to the purpose of God who works all things after the counsel of His will, “to the end that we who are the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.” We have an inheritance. This is not our best life.

The only question is, “Can we trust God’s word?” Well, Hebrews 10:23 says, “He is faithful that promised.” And Romans 4:21 says, “What God has promised, He is able to do.” The God who is truth, who defines truth, who speaks truth and only truth, promises to all who are in Christ every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ. And that is summed up by the past act of election, the present act of redemption, and the future act of glorification. The first blessing was to be chosen, the second blessing to be redeemed, the final blessing to be glorified.

So let’s look at 11 to 14 and at least get a little bit of an insight into this incredibly wonderful promise. You’ll notice the keyword is inheritance. It appears a couple of times in these brief verses: once in verse 11, and then down again in verse 14. *Klēroō* is the Greek verb. It basically means “to obtain as inheritance.” The idea is—what you read in the NAS apparently on the surface is, “We have obtained

an inheritance”; but the idea is really more, “We are an inheritance.” We are an inheritance.

So let’s think about that. Or another way to translate it would be, “We have been made an inheritance.” This is remarkable language. It doesn’t discount the fact that we have an inheritance—and this can be translated that way, as it is in the NAS. But it also can be translated, “We have obtained” or “we have been made an inheritance,” as well as “have obtained an inheritance.” So it’s got two sides to it. And I just want to point that out to you.

“We have been made an inheritance.” What does that mean? Whose inheritance are we? We are Christ’s inheritance. He purchased us at the cross. He inherits us. We are His offspring, to use the language of Isaiah 53. We are Christ’s inheritance. The Father has given us, as we saw in John 6 and John 17, to the Son as love gifts. The reason we are redeemed is that we might be the Son’s inheritance, that we might be His bride that the Father gives Him out of eternal love. We are His inheritance. The Father expresses His love to the Son by giving the Son a redeemed humanity who will love Him and serve Him and honor Him and praise Him forever and ever and ever. And it also gives the ultimate compliment by making them in some way reflect His very image.

So yes, we have an inheritance that we will receive. But to begin with, we *are* an inheritance. And the language allows that. In fact, I think that’s the way the Legacy Standard Bible accurately translates it. So we are His inheritance, but on the other hand, we don’t want to discount the fact that we have also obtained an inheritance. You can look at it in the way the hymn writer wrote many, many years ago: “I am His, and He is mine.” He inherits us, we inherit Him. That shouldn’t be surprising, not in the language of Romans 8:17: We are “joint heirs with Christ.” “All things belong to you,” 1 Corinthians, “and you belong to Christ.”

Again, Christ is in us, and we are in Christ. We are Christ’s inheritance, and it is Christ who grants us an inheritance. And the inheritance that we receive is what the Father promises to His Son in the fullness of summing up everything in Him. I just want you to see the breadth of this. You are a love gift given from the Father to the Son. You are in that sense the inheritance that Christ gained from His Father for His work.

The Bible is clear about this. We could take a lot of time to cover many scriptures, but let me just give you a few to think about. First Peter chapter 1, verse 3: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.” So we will obtain an inheritance; we are an inheritance. We are Christ’s inheritance given by the Father to the Son as His inheritance. But we also, because we are joint heirs with Christ, receive all that He is given by the Father as well. That inheritance, verse 5 of 1 Peter 1 says, is “protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed at the last time.”

In Colossians, just a few scriptures, chapter 1, verse 12, “Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” So we have redemption, and beyond redemption we have the inheritance. We are qualified by the work of Christ to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. Over in the third chapter of Colossians, just one more text there, I think it’s verse 24, “Knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance.”

So just to stress the idea that this goes two ways: We are an inheritance, and we receive an inheritance. This is literally summing up all that could possibly be said about future glory. We are Christ's inheritance. That is why you will notice down in verse 14 that redemption has made us God's possession, God's possession. God owns us, purchased us with His own blood, says Acts 20, and then gives us to the Son as His inheritance, in response to which the Son gives all of us back to the Father, as 1 Corinthians 15 points it out; and wrapped up in our being an inheritance is the fact that we also receive an inheritance.

We are joint heirs with Christ. And God promises in Christ peace, love, grace, wisdom, eternity with Him, joy, victory, strength, guidance, all our needs met, power, knowledge, mercy, forgiveness, righteousness, gifts from the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit Himself, fellowship with the Trinity, instruction from the Word, illumination, truth, spiritual discernment, heaven, a room in the Father's house, eternal riches—all of this. And we begin to taste this in this life. "But eye has not seen, nor has ear heard, the things that God has prepared for them that love Him." As wonderful as the enjoyment of our Christian experience is here, it can't be compared to what is yet to come.

Again, in 2 Peter chapter 1, it says that God through "His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness"—everything. Verse 4, "He granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust." He promises that we will escape, we will escape the corruption in the world and become partakers of the divine nature. This is our inheritance. "All the promises," says Paul, "all the promises of God are in Christ, yes."

So I just want to start by pointing out that this inheritance idea goes two ways: We are or have been made an inheritance, and we will also receive an inheritance. It's God's way of just sweeping everything up and saying, "It's all going to belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to you, and you belong to Him, and it's all yours." This is not our best life now. The only way this could be your best life now is if you're going to hell; that's the only way. And then this is your best life.

So let's look at this inheritance. Just three things to consider. Number one: the ground of our inheritance. And you know this. "We have obtained"—or been made—"an inheritance." And how did this happen? What is the ground of this—on what basis? "Having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will." That's where it all started. And we go right back, don't we, to verses 4 through 6: chosen, predestined.

The ground of our inheritance is the fact that we were predestined to this end. "Predestined"—verse 5—"to adoption as sons . . . according to the kind intention of His will." "Adopted as sons" of God "through Jesus Christ to Himself." Again, this speaks to the fact that we belong to Christ. We are His heritage, His inheritance, because God determined that when He chose us, as verse 4 says, before the foundation of the world. That is the ground of our inheritance.

And please notice how many times it says in this section "in Christ." Verse 3, "in Christ." Verse 4, "in Him." Verse 6, "in the Beloved." Verse 7, "in Him." Verse 9, "in Him." Verse 10, "in Him." Verse 12, "in Christ." Verse 13, "in Him, in Him." All of this is tied to our union with Christ. We were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. We're redeemed in Him, verse 7, and our inheritance is in Him. It is our union with Him that brings us all spiritual blessings.

It starts with predestination. I don't need to go back over that just to remind you that predestination doesn't cancel out your own responsibility. How do you know that? Let's keep reading: "Predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory. In Him, you also, after listening to the message of the truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed." The ground of our inheritance is that we were predestined, and we believed. It started with His purpose, which is, we pointed out some weeks ago in 2 Timothy 1:9. He purposed in pledging to the Son of God, in eternity past, a redeemed humanity. "Predestined" is *proorizō*, we get the word "horizon" from it. It's intensified with a preposition at the beginning. It means "to mark out the boundaries." God literally marked out His own people, chose them. And they were in God's plan and in God's will and in God's purpose and in God's mind, eternally connected to His Son. In their being chosen and in their being redeemed, they were there with Him. They were in Christ when He died, they were in Christ when He rose again; they now live in Christ, and they will be even more intensely and perfectly joined to Him in the future.

All of this is God's plan. Go back to verse 11: He is the one "who works all things after the counsel of His will," *energeō*. He energizes everything. So when you think about salvation, I want you to think about it as the purpose of God, the will of God, the plan of God, the intention of God. He chose you.

But sometimes people get a little bit confused with this, and they wonder, "Well where is the necessary faith in that?" And it's side by side, down into verse 13: "You also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed." Salvation doesn't happen apart from faith. Through the years that's been a question that is asked of me over and over again: "How do those go together? If salvation is all of God, if it's monergistic, if God does the choosing, God does the predestining, if God has to give the life to the dead person, if God has to do the regenerating, if God has to grant the faith, if God has to give the sinner sight and life in order to respond and believe—how is it the sinner's responsibility? The answer is, I'm not sure the dynamics of that, but I know that God's purposes in election never come to fruition unless someone believes the gospel. And we've been told to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

One illustration of this—if you look for just a moment at Acts chapter 2—Peter's preaching, verse 23, Acts 2, in his Pentecost sermon, "This Man,"—speaking of the Lord Jesus—"delivered over"—handed over for crucifixion—"by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death." There you have divine predetermination and human responsibility. God predetermined it, but you're guilty because you killed Him. God raised Him up.

If it was God's predetermined plan, why are they held responsible for doing what they did? Well, obviously, God predetermined the death of Christ for the salvation of sinners, but the fact that God predetermined that doesn't justify the hatred and the rejection of the people who had Jesus killed. You cannot be a believer without believing—basic. You say, "Well I still don't understand how that goes together." Again, let me just push the issue a little bit.

John 1:12, "As many as received Him"—that would be the same as believing—"to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name." Who becomes a child of God? Those who believe. Then verse 13, "Who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." There you have the same thing again. It's the will of God, not the will

of man—and yet you must believe. In fact, if you don't believe, you weren't elect, because election will be confirmed by faith.

That's not the issue. The struggle that people have is, "Why am I responsible for something if only God can do it?" And my answer to that is, I don't have any other answer than what Scripture says. But let me tell you, this is a very broad issue. And I often illustrate it this way: Who wrote the book of Romans? Are you struggling with that answer? Yes, you are immediately, because you don't know whether to say Paul or the Holy Spirit. And you know it wasn't an alternate-verse thing: Paul did one, and the Holy Spirit did one. And you know it was not apart from Paul's experience and Paul's thoughts and Paul's vocabulary; but every word was from the Holy Spirit. Wherever you have—in every major doctrine, wherever you have God and man combined in a divine act, you have that same challenge, that same apparent paradox.

I can ask the question another way: Who lives your Christian life? I hope you can figure that out, because you're responsible for it, aren't you? You say, "Well no, it's the Holy Spirit." Really. Do you want to blame Him for what you have become? "Well I can't do it without Him." That's right. If—whatever's good happens in your life, you give Him the praise; whatever wrong happens in your life, you take the blame. There you are again with the same reality that you cannot do anything in the flesh, you can only do it by the power of the Spirit—and yet you are responsible to conduct your life in a sanctified way.

So when you come to the issue of predestination, election, sovereign regeneration, and human responsibility, I don't know what the answer to that is. But that should encourage you because it means it's a far more glorious issue than any human being could ever understand. But it doesn't happen without believing. That's why the New Testament is filled with the command to believe, to believe. "Faith comes by hearing, hearing the word of God."

"If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, believe in your heart God raised Him from the dead, you'll be saved." You can't think for a moment that you are supposed to figure out whether you're elect; that's absurd. As Spurgeon said, we can't run around and see if people have an E stamped on their back. But you are commanded to believe, and, "You'll die in your sins if you believe not on Me," Jesus said. The reality of all of this is you have an apparent paradox in every major doctrine in Scripture that brings God together with man.

So we have an inheritance. The ground of that inheritance is basically predestination, verse 11. But the ground of that inheritance is also, according to verse 13, believing. Your responsibility is not to figure out God's predestined plan; your responsibility is to believe. And whoever believes, the Lord will never turn away, right? So that's the foundation understanding; the ground of our inheritance is bound up in God's predestined plan and our response of faith.

A second point that I would just direct you briefly to is the guarantee of our inheritance. Verse 13 at the end, it says, "Having believed, you were sealed in Him"—in Christ—"with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession." What is the guarantee of our inheritance? The guarantee of our inheritance is the Holy Spirit. "You were sealed in Him"—in Christ—"with the Holy Spirit."

You can go all the way back to Ezekiel and back to the promises of the New Covenant, Ezekiel 36

and Ezekiel 37, and you will find that one of the promises that God gave in the New Covenant is that He would give His Spirit—that He would take away a stony heart and give you a heart of flesh, and put His Spirit within you. And one very essential ministry of the Holy Spirit is sealing, sealing with the Holy Spirit of promise. I love that title, “the Holy Spirit of promise.” All that the Holy Spirit does is not just now, in the immediate, in the moment. The Holy Spirit does illuminate us. The Holy Spirit is our resident teacher. The Holy Spirit does convict us of sin. The Holy Spirit does an ongoing work in our lives of enabling us to minister through spiritual gifts. But He is also “the Holy Spirit of promise,” and that is to say He guarantees the fulfillment of the future inheritance.

Now it says the *seal* of the Spirit: “You were sealed in Him.” What does this notion of sealing mean? Well let me see if I can just give you some illustrations of it. In looking at it maybe from different facets. First of all, we’d say sealing is a sign of security.

Just borrowing from Jewish culture a little bit, back in Daniel chapter 6—you don’t have to go there, I’ll just refer to it. Back in Daniel chapter 6, a man had a signet engraved as his identifying mark—sometimes a ring or some kind of signet that he would use to identify anything that was his. Any legal document, this was his stamp. It might have been on his finger, it might have been around his waist, around his neck; it was his mark. And when the king commanded Daniel to be confined, and the king wanted everybody to do exactly what he said they were supposed to do, he gave his signet to be affixed to the seal on the lion’s den. It only meant that no one could break that seal unless they had greater power than the king.

You remember that Christ’s tomb was sealed with a Roman seal, which meant that no one could break that seal. No one had the power to break that seal unless they had more power than Rome. That was a way to secure something. And that is exactly what the seal of the Spirit is. We are secured, and we are secured by the Holy Spirit, and no one has greater power than He. No one can break the seal. The seal also in Jewish culture was a sign of authenticity. You remember back in 1 Kings 21 when Ahab wanted Naboth’s vineyard, and through Jezebel’s deception she got it for him by writing letters and sealing them with Ahab’s seal. This was the official mark of authenticity, the royal signature. So God seals us to secure us, and He seals us so that it is labeled that we belong to Him. We are legitimate, authentic sons of God.

We find a seal also in Jeremiah chapter 32. God instructs Jeremiah to purchase a piece of property that He wants him to have; and his descendants will have it much later in time after the return from captivity. The seal indicated ownership, ownership. So the seal of the Holy Spirit means that we are secure, we are authentically the children of God; we are His, and in the end we will belong to Him.

In the Old Testament we find a seal also used as a sign of authority. You remember the story of Esther, when Ahasuerus wanted to give to Haman the delegated power to kill the Jews, he sealed it with a signet ring. Later on when things changed and he was confronted with what Haman was going to do, chapter 8, he gave to Mordecai and to Esther his pledge and promise to protect the Jews and to destroy Haman; and he again sealed it. It is a symbol of authority: “You can carry out this action; you have authority delegated from me.”

I think that’s a marvelous way to think of the Holy Spirit. He is the one who grants to us delegated authority to access all divine resources. Jesus said, “Ask anything in My name and”—what?—“I’ll give it to you—anything according to My will.” Being sealed with the Spirit is a sign of security, authenticity, ownership, and authority; and we exercise all those things as believers.

So the ground of our inheritance is predestination and faith. The guarantee of our inheritance is the promise, the Holy Spirit of promise who secures us and our inheritance. One other comment on verse 14: The Holy Spirit is “given as a pledge”—not only a seal, but a pledge. What is a pledge? It’s the Greek word *arrabōn*. It’s used a couple of ways. One is “a down payment.” The Holy Spirit is the first installment on our inheritance yet to come. The Holy Spirit is God’s down payment on our eternal inheritance. And every believer has the Holy Spirit. “If any man have not the Holy Spirit, he’s none of His,” Romans 8:9. So the fact that the Spirit has taken up residence in us and we are the temple of the Spirit of God means that God has given us the first installment on our eternal inheritance. *Arrabōn* was also used another way: It was used for an engagement ring. So the Holy Spirit is for us not only the down payment to our future inheritance, but the engagement ring that means we are the bride, and we will be married to the bridegroom, Jesus Christ.

As a believer, I think you know that your best life is yet to come, right? Paul is really calling on these troubled believers living in the worst life of their day to suffer patiently and wait with hearts full of praise for the eternal inheritance that was promised to them. He’s calling for them to understand the spiritual heavenly blessings that were already secured for them by the redemptive work of Jesus Christ and the elective purpose of God in eternity past, and they were just waiting for the full realization of them when they entered glory.

You are a child of God. You are the temple of the Holy Spirit. You are an heir of God. You are the heritage of Christ. You have a heavenly inheritance. You are joint heirs with Him. Heaven is preparing for your arrival. Jesus said, “I go to prepare a place for you.” The best is yet to come—far and away, incomprehensibly.

But sometimes we’re like a child prince who, before his years of maturity, can’t grasp the enormity of his inheritance. We have little understanding, really; that is why down in verse 18—for a preview of what’s to come—Paul says, “I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. I am praying for you that your” understanding, “the eyes of your heart may be enlightened,” illuminated, “so that you will know the hope of your calling, the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.”

That would be my prayer for you. Don’t get caught up in this world. We can’t fix it; it’s not going to turn around. This is it. Get ready for it to be less than what you want it to be. You’re waiting “for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time,” to borrow Peter’s words. Fix your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.

The ground of our inheritance is predestination and faith. The guarantee of our inheritance is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of promise who is both a seal and a down payment, engagement ring, a pledge. Finally, the goal of our inheritance. What is the purpose in all of this, end of verse 12? “To the praise of His glory”; end of verse 14, “to the praise of His glory.” God is going to finally redeem us into glory as His “own possession,” verse 14, “to the praise of His glory.” That is always the reason for everything. It’s not about us; it’s about Him.

This is what’s remarkable, and I want you to grasp this as a final thought. If you’re like me, you wonder why the Lord even tolerates you. After all, He is perfect—perfect in every way. It’s

incomprehensible to imagine a situation where you are altogether, in every way, exactly what He wants you to be so that you have capacity for only one thing, and that is to bring praise to His glorious name. That's what heaven is all about. It's not about you getting your own mansion, it's not about you traversing the New Jerusalem and counting the jewels; it's about God having made you like His Son so that you fully satisfy His holy desire. You are to Him as His own Son is to Him. *That's* your best life.

Father, we thank You for Your Word. So much could be said about all of this, and we are scratching the surface in so many ways to grasp the wonders of eternity. Thank You for revelation in Your Holy Word. It's incomprehensible to us that You would ever, ever save us from our wretchedness and sin, wickedness and corruption—lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, the pride of life—that You would ever save us out of the kingdom of darkness, that You would ever deliver us from bondage to the liar and the murderer, Satan, who is the father of all sinners. We are unworthy.

We thank You for Your grace. We thank You for the grace of election, the grace of redemption, and the final grace of glorification. We can't even imagine being in Your presence and being as perfect as Your Son, but we know You've said we'll be like Him when we see Him as He is. That's our best life. Anything short of that, we thank You, is very, very brief—"a vapor that appears for a little time and vanishes away."

Help us to get through this life enjoying the foretastes of heaven—enjoying the reality of our being in Christ, but longing from the depths of our heart for the day when there'll be no sin, no transgression, no iniquity, no trespasses, no shortcomings. All will be holiness and holiness and holiness, nothing but holiness; and we will be as holy as Your Son is, and we will be to the praise of Your glory. Until that time, may we "cleanse ourselves from all the filthiness of the flesh" that still remains, "perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Sanctify us until the time when we are fully sanctified.

Our Father, we are overwhelmed that we have been chosen before the foundation of the world, that Christ redeemed us by name, by identification personally in His death on the cross and rose for our justification, and that You in predestining us predestined us to an inheritance, laid up for us, as Peter said, undefiled, untarnished for us, and that inheritance is that we will be the inheritance of Christ Himself. You give us to Him as the inheritance passed down from You, the Father, to Your Son. And at the same time, we will receive a full inheritance of all that He possesses as joint heirs with Him.

May we set our affections on things above and not on things on the earth. May we not get caught up in all the disappointments, all the distractions. May we see Christ clearly, keeping our eyes fixed on Him, being transformed into His image from one level of glory to the next. That is our prayer, in His name who asked us to come boldly, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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