

This is tape number SHS312. Unless otherwise noted, all biblical references are quoted from King James Version.

So Paul, in talking to the Ephesians about the many wonderful blessings that they have, begins the chapter by saying,

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. (Ephesians 1:3)

And he is talking now about these wonderful spiritual blessings. He has called us, adopted us, and forgiven our sins. And now he says,

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14)

In Paul's writing to the Ephesians, he talks about their being sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. In the days when Paul was writing to the church in Ephesus, it so happened that at that particular time in history, the city of Ephesus was one of the major seaports of Asia Minor. Most of the goods coming from the East to be sold in the western empire of Rome came through the port of Ephesus. It was the merchandising center of the world. Great caravans would come from the East bringing their wares. Merchants from Rome would gather in Ephesus to purchase these articles that were brought, in order that they might be sent to Rome and distributed through the Roman Empire.

The great port city of Rome was Petiole and the merchants would purchase the goods there in Ephesus and then pack them for shipping to Petiole. And having packed their goods, they would then seal them. They would put this wax seal on the merchandise and then they would put the imprint of their signet ring, which was their mark of ownership. And then the goods would be placed on the ship and sent to Rome. When they would arrive at the port of Petiole, the servants of these merchant men would go down, as the ships were being unloaded, and they could identify their masters' goods because of this seal that was upon them. It was the stamp or the mark of ownership.

Paul is saying to the Ephesians that God has put His stamp of ownership on them. And that stamp of God's ownership is His Holy Spirit. How glorious it is to receive and to have the Holy Spirit because I have that assurance that I belong to God. That is His seal on my life to prove His ownership of me. Jesus, you see, purchased you from the slave market. You were once a slave to sin. You were in the bondage of corruption, but now you belong to Him.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians,

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? (1 Corinthians 6:19)

In other words, do you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? You are not your own. “You have been bought,” he said, “with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are His” (1 Corinthians 6:20).

I am really not my own to direct; I am not to live as I please. It is not mine to order my own life—to choose the way I would go. I belong to God. He purchased me. He put His mark of ownership on me. And now I live according to His will for He purchased me. I belong to Him.

Peter wrote,

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. (1 Peter 1:18-19)

You have been redeemed. You have been purchased, not with corruptible things like silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus. God purchased you and now He claims you as His own. You are His purchased possession. He has placed His seal of ownership on your life. Actually, we are like merchandise on the ship headed for the home port of heaven. And when we arrive Jesus is going to say, “Yes, that is Mine. I have My stamp on it. There is My seal. They are Mine.” And Jesus will acknowledge you as His possession.

Now as a child of God—think of that one for a moment—as a child of God, He has promised you a rich inheritance. Paul, in writing to the Romans said,

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. (Romans 8:16-17)

Peter said,

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God. (1 Peter 1:3-5)

This is a glorious inheritance. Thank God! We have this inheritance that is incorruptible. It is undefiled and it fades not away. It is reserved in heaven for you who are being kept by the power of God. The psalmist said,

Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men! (Psalm 31:19)

Oh how great is the goodness that God has laid up for you and for me. How marvelous! How great is that goodness. Paul speaks of the riches of God's goodness, the riches of His glory, and the riches of His grace.

Now, Paul tells us here that the Holy Spirit is the earnest of that inheritance. The earnest was a down payment or a deposit. We have the phrase earnest money, and that is the money that you put down to show that you are earnest in your intent to purchase certain merchandise. If I want to prove to you the earnestness of my intention, but I do not have all the money with me right now, I am going to give you a deposit of earnest money. This money indicates to you that I am intending to complete the transaction.

Should you advertise a car for sale and someone comes over to look at the car, they might take it for a ride. They might say to you, "I like it. I want it. I am going to buy it. Save it for me. I do not have the money, but I am going to go to the bank and see if I can negotiate a loan. But I do not want you to sell this car to anybody else. Save it for me because I really want this car."

Now if you are wise you will say to them, "Well, give me a deposit. Show me that you really intend to buy the car—that you are earnest about this." Because you see, if you just say, "Okay, it is yours," and they go off, you may never see them again. And it might be that many people will come by and say, "Oh that is just what I am looking for. I want to buy that." "Oh no, no, I have already sold it." However, that first person may never return and you may pass up a lot of potential buyers because you are holding it for someone who is never going to come back, simply because you did not get a deposit. Maybe while they are on the way to the bank they went by a used car lot and saw another one that was a little better than yours at a cheaper price and so they bought it. You know, they do not have any obligation to you except their word because they did not give you any earnest money.

So, God wants you to know that He is really sincere about redeeming you. He intends to go through with this transaction. He does not plan to back down. And so, to show His intent, He has given you the deposit of the future glory that He has promised to give to you. And that deposit is the Holy Spirit. And when a person is filled with the Spirit, the fruit is love, joy, peace, and longsuffering. When you are filled with the fruit of the Spirit and you are so blessed and so overjoyed, you might think, "Oh, this is such a rich and glorious life, filled with the Spirit!" Hey, that is just the deposit. That is just the beginning. And so, God is just showing you that He is earnest and sincere in His intention of that full redemption. And so, Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.

In Ephesians 4, Paul said,

And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. (Ephesians 4:30)

So, God has His mark of ownership, the Holy Spirit, upon your life. It is the seal. It is God's mark of ownership. It is the deposit, which God has given to you as sort of a down payment to show to you that He is earnest in His intention of redeeming you. But now Paul tells them, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God that has sealed you unto the day of redemption."

One day God is going to come and He is going to claim you as His. He has agreed to redeem you. He has made the deposit and He has given to you the Holy Spirit to prove His earnest intent. In 2 Corinthians 1:22, Paul said,

Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

This is much the same idea as in Ephesians. God has sealed us and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. And then Paul goes on to say in 2 Corinthians 5:5,

Now He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of His Spirit.

Thus, the gift of the Holy Spirit gives me great comfort and great consolation. I know that God is going to complete that which He has begun of my redemption. He is going to claim me as His own.

Now in Ephesians 4, Paul exhorts them not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, “whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption,” and in the context of that verse, Paul shows to us things that do grieve the Holy Spirit. Beginning with verse 25, Paul said,

Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another. (Ephesians 4:25)

One of the first things on the list that Paul gives us of things that grieve the Holy Spirit is lying. Under the law, God said you are not to bear false witness. You are not to lie. God desires truth in the inward parts. And lying grieves the Holy Spirit. He said,

Let not the sun go down on your wrath. (Ephesians 4:26)

And being wrathful is another characteristic that grieves the Holy Spirit. Actually it sort of grieves us at times too, when we have lost it and we lose our temper and we do some dumb thing or say some dumb thing. We are often grieved ourselves over our display of wrath and anger. And we often feel very badly after such an experience, but it also grieves the Holy Spirit. Then in verse 28 he said,

Let him that stole steal no more. (Ephesians 4:28)

Taking something that does not belong to you grieves the Holy Spirit. And then Paul said,

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.
(Ephesians 4:29)

Corrupt communications, filthy stories, stories with unclean innuendoes, these things grieve the Holy Spirit. Corrupt communication grieves the Holy Spirit. And that is where he says,

And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God. (Ephesians 4:30)

It comes there just as he is listing these things, because these are the things that grieve the Holy Spirit of God. And then he goes on with the list, which includes bitterness. “Let all bitterness...” What a horrible thing bitterness is. We are warned that bitterness can actually hinder our prayer lives. It can take hold in your life and defile you. The Bible tells us to put away all bitterness.

There was a classic example in the Old Testament of a man who became bitter. And his bitterness led to his ultimate suicide. He was bitter. The man was Ahithophel and you may recognize that name as a name that is associated with King David. Ahithophel was one of David's chief counselors—a close friend and confidant. In speaking of the breach that came in their relationship, David said, "If it were an enemy that had reproached me, then I could have born it. But it was you, my close friend. We went into the house of God together. We enjoyed the companionship. But to have you turn against me..."

Ahithophel had become bitter with David and he left David. He left the court of the king and lived in bitterness until the time that Absalom, the son of David, decided to rebel against his father and by force take the kingdom from his father. And Ahithophel came to Absalom and volunteered his services. He volunteered to help Absalom drive David from the kingdom and bring the kingdom into the hands of Absalom. As Absalom came with the army that had gathered to him in Jerusalem, and David had fled the city, this man Ahithophel, so bitter against David, said, "Take and put the tent on the roof of the palace and go in publicly in the eyes of all of the people to your father's concubines." He was just wanting to totally disgrace David, to show total disdain for this once great king. And then Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Let me take some of the army and let me pursue after your dad and I will kill him and the kingdom will be established in your hands." He was wanting to kill David himself.

How is it that bitterness can get such a hold on a person that he turns against someone who was once a close friend—someone who used to go into the house of God with? Such was the case with Ahithophel and this bitterness was eating him up. David had put a spy in the camp of Absalom. David left his son another wise counselor. He was an older man and he said, "David, I am going with you." David said, "Oh no, you can do me more good by just staying back here and trying to thwart the counsel of Ahithophel." And so he stayed back. And when Ahithophel said, "Let me take the men, we will pursue after David. He is tired and all. We will catch him. I will kill him. And the kingdom will be yours."

This friend of David said, "That is not good counsel. You know, when you get a bear cornered, I mean, that is when he is really dangerous. And David is cornered and his mighty men that are with him. When you get those fellows cornered, you have a wild—it is like cornering a wild animal. You have gotten into a dangerous situation. Better to wait and get the whole army, so that when you go after David you will be insured of victory."

And Absalom listened to the counsel of this other fellow and Ahithophel realized that it was poor counsel. And thus, he was so angry and so bitter, because his counsel was rejected and he realized that this other counsel could be disastrous. Ahithophel went out, knowing that he had cut the bridges with David, and he killed himself.

Bitterness. You say, "Well, what could make him so bitter? If you will check the biblical record closely, you will discover that Bathsheba was his granddaughter. And when David had gone in to Ahithophel's granddaughter and then had his grandson by marriage (Uriah) put to death, -he became bitter. And this bitterness was there and festered until it finally destroyed him.

If you allow bitterness to fester in your heart, ultimately it will destroy you. But in the meantime, that bitterness grieves the Holy Spirit. If you have bitterness in your heart today towards someone, you may have every right in the world to be bitter as far as rights go. It could be that they have genuinely, deliberately injured you. And you say, "I have a right to be bitter over this!" And you can maintain your right to be bitter. But let me tell you something: your

bitterness is hurting you more than it is hurting them. And the bitterness will ultimately destroy you, because it grieves the Holy Spirit. None of us can afford to hold on to bitterness.

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. (Ephesians 4:31)

These things—this is a list of things that grieve the Holy Spirit. Put them away from you. Do not keep company with them. “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God by which you have been sealed unto the day of redemption.” But Paul goes on with the list in Ephesians 5:3 where he said,

But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints.

These kinds of attitudes: (bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and malice) grieve the Holy Spirit. But these kinds of actions also grieve the Holy Spirit: fornication, sexual impurity, and covetousness. And he goes on: neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient (that is not proper). There is an undertone of suggestion and evil. “For this know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man who is an idolator, hath any inheritance” (Ephesians 5:5).

Now we have talked about the glorious inheritance. God has sealed us till the day of redemption. But you can grieve the Holy Spirit of God; and if you get involved in these things, you will grieve the Holy Spirit of God. And if you become a fornicator, or whoremonger, coveter, or idolator, know that you will have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

Paul said,

Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. (Ephesians 5:6)

Do not let someone deceive you into thinking that you can go ahead and do these things and still inherit the kingdom of God. Do not think that you can allow these attitudes or you can participate in these kinds of activities as a child of God and still maintain a relationship with God. He is a holy Spirit and He is grieved by these things. We are exhorted not to grieve the Holy Spirit, who has sealed us until the day of redemption. So Paul said do not be a partaker with them. But then he goes on to show the things that enhance the Holy Spirit’s relationship with us, and us with Him. He said,

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.
(Ephesians 4:32)

Do not hold on to bitterness. Do not hold on to anger, to malice, or to covetousness. But be kind, be tenderhearted, forgiving one another even as God, for Christ’s sake, has forgiven you. You say, “Chuck, that is all well and good, but you do not know the evil that they did to me—how it has scarred me, how it has almost destroyed my life, and how I just am tormented in my mind over those things that were done. And I cannot forgive them.” And I do understand that

there have been things that people do that are so vicious, so vile in the natural, that you cannot forgive. I understand that. But we are not talking about the natural. We are talking about the supernatural. We are talking about what God wants to do in your heart and in your mind if you will but let Him. We are talking about the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit's indwelling you, sealing you with God's mark of ownership, until the day that God claims that which is His own—that which He has purchased.

We have been dealing with the subject of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, to give us power to be conformed into the image of Jesus Christ. Peter said to consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, who when He was reviled, reviled not again. Instead, He prayed for those who were so abusing Him saying, "Father forgive them." And He can give you the capacity—the Holy Spirit can give to you the power to forgive. And you will not start being healed in your own mind until you do forgive.

The reason why this thing still troubles you, and the reason why you still have so many problems as the result of it, is because you have not forgiven. You are holding on to it. It is festering. That bitterness is just festering and it destroys. It is really not an option but a necessity that you forgive. It is vitally important because bitterness defiles. It is vitally important that you bring this thing to the Lord and say, "Lord, help me! Give to me the power of the Holy Spirit to forgive those wrongs, those evils that were done against me by those evil persons. God, help me to forgive them that I might be freed, and that I might be cleansed from this which will only defile."

As long as I am hanging on to it, it is going to keep me defiled and less than what God would have me to be. Unforgiveness will hold back the blessings of God as I hold on to these things. It grieves the Spirit of God. Ask for God's help. He will give it. He can do it. He can wash this out of your mind. He can wash this out of your life. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature. The old things are passed away." Let them pass away. Let them go. "All things become new." Go on from there. But grieve not the Holy Spirit of God who has sealed you to that day of redemption.

Father, we thank You for the wonderful work of the Holy Spirit in sealing us. Thank You, Father, for this gift of the Spirit whereby we know that we are Yours. Your mark and stamp of ownership is on our lives as the down payment. Thank You, Lord for the joy, the glory, and the blessedness of walking in the Spirit and living in the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit. Thank you for that overflowing cup and that rich overflowing life. Father, how we thank You for it. Lord, help us that we would not allow any attitude to master our hearts that would grieve the Holy Spirit of God. And may we not get involved in any activity that would grieve the Holy Spirit of God. But may we be holy for You are holy. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.