

Sealed by the Spirit, Seated with Christ

November 16, 2025

Sermon Recap

Pastor Paul Smith begins a two-part series out of the Book of Ephesians. This message focuses on the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, sealing us and guaranteeing our inheritance in Christ (Ephesians 1:13-14). The Holy Spirit helps us to know God better—relationally, not just conceptually—so that we can love in ways that draw others to Himself. Being filled with the Spirit entails the daily, ongoing surrender of our own will, yielding to God's greater purposes.

Ice Breaker

As a child, when teams were being chosen on the playground, how did it typically turn out for you? [God has chosen us for riches! Notice the language: "And you also were included with Christ." (Ephesians 1:13, cf. 1:3)]

Discussion Questions

1. Pastor Paul emphasized that the Holy Spirit is "*God himself working in you to bring about what He desires.*" In what way are you encouraged or challenged by this statement?

- The message of Ephesians begins with a celebration of God's extraordinary plan that involves the entire Godhead: The Father's work of *election* (verses 3-6), the Son's work of *redemption* (verses 7-12), and the Spirit's work of *sanctification* (verses 13-14). At the end of each section, Paul affirms God's purpose—to *the praise of his glory* (vs 6, 12, 14).
- The primary work of the Holy Spirit in our lives is our transformation into the image of Christ (sanctification). This is the Holy Spirit's job description (notice, 1 Peter 1:1-2; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 6:11).

2. **Read Ephesians 1:13-14.** What does it mean to you personally that you are 'sealed' with the Holy Spirit when you believed in Christ?

- God's seal through the Holy Spirit is His divine confirmation that you belong to Him. This isn't just a temporary arrangement or something you can lose - it's His guarantee that He will complete everything He started in your life. This seal represents God's ownership of your life and His promise to fulfill His purposes in you. It's His deposit on your future, ensuring that no matter what storms you face, no matter how weak you feel, He will finish what He began.

3. The 'Spirit of wisdom and revelation' is given that we might know God better (verse 17). In what ways have you grown to know God better (relationally, not just conceptually) since five or ten years ago?

4. What's the difference between having the Holy Spirit and being filled with the Holy Spirit? Why is this distinction important?

- The Holy Spirit is promised to all who believe. As Christians, we have all of the Holy Spirit. The question is, "Does the Holy Spirit have all of you?"
- Living a Spirit-infused life can be compared to holding two sponges. One sponge is held with an open hand in a bucket of water while the other is held with a tight fist. Which of the two sponges will be filled with more water?

5. **Ephesians 4:30** says, "*And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*" What is one area where you sense the Holy Spirit saying 'no' that you've been resisting, or one He's extended that you've been avoiding?

- Pastor Paul offered these instructive words, "You don't drift into surrender. You don't drift into it. You ask for the Holy Spirit's filling. Fill me. Fill me more. Take more."
- Being filled with the Holy Spirit is an ongoing, daily surrender. The Holy Spirit desires two main things: that we would know God better and that we would love others with the love of Christ.

Prayer

- Read Ephesians 1:15-19, pausing as you read (as a prompt), inviting group members to offer their own prayers.
- Holy Spirit, I don't want to just know about God - I want to know Him personally. Open my spiritual eyes to see His heart, His love, and His character more clearly. Make my faith vibrant and real, not just routine. In Jesus' name, Amen.
- Ask the Lord to use the Spirit's ongoing transformation in your lives as a means of demonstrating His grace to those around you, for His greater glory (1 Tim. 1:15-17).