

F.B. Meyer:

Sealed with that holy Spirit of promise - Ephesians 1:13

Possessed.--The saints have been purchased at great cost by the precious blood of the Son of God. Not only their spirits, but their bodies, have been bought with an infinite expenditure. Is it not a wonderful thought that God should have thought it worth His while to expend so much on us! But, since He has done it, we cannot suppose that He will not make all He can of us! He will bring His estate under cultivation; there will be no corner of it that will not yield Him produce.

To be redeemed.--Our bodies are owned by God, but they are not yet entirely redeemed. And if we should die before the Lord's advent, they will return to their mother earth, possessed but not redeemed. Hence the apostle says that we are waiting for our adoption--to wit, the redemption of our body (Rom 8:23). We are under the sentence of corruption for Adam's sin; but we are to be redeemed.

Sealed.--In Ezekiel's day a mark was set on the foreheads of the men that sighed and cried for sin (Eze 9:4); and in the Apocalypse we read of the sealing of God's servants (Rev 7:2-3). For sealing there are needed the softened wax; the imprint of the beloved face; the steady pressure. Would that the Spirit might impress the face of our dear Lord on our softened hearts, that they may keep it forevermore!

This sealing is an earnest of our inheritance. The eternal future is all unknown, yet we may guess at it, because the work of the Spirit within us is the first-fruits--the grapes of Eshcol, showing what the vintage will be; 'the earnest penny, which is the pledge as well as part of the entire payment; the first streak of the coming day.

We are his workmanship - Ephesians 2:10

The Greek word might be literally rendered His poem. As the metre varies in the poems of a laureate, so does the course of one life differ from another; but God has a thought, a plan, a purpose for each. This lyric, that heroic, another dramatic.

Created for good works.--How carefully the apostle defines the true position of works in the divine life. In the foregoing verses he insists that we are not saved by our works, that none should boast; but, as though to meet the objection that his system was inconsistent with holy living, he affirms that the whole intention of God was that we should manifest our new life in Christ by the holy life in which it fruits. We were created in Him unto good works. Whatever good works may be demanded of you, dare to believe that you were created in Christ Jesus to do them. There is a perfect adjustment between the two.

The good works prepared.--Our new creation in Christ Jesus and the preparation of our lifework are due to the same mind. God who made us has prepared our path for us. It may lie up hill or down dale; may be lined with grassy sward or be full of jagged stones; may be short with the years of childhood or long with those of old age; may consist in lying on a couch to suffer or in strenuous activity--but every yard has been prepared.

Our daily walk.---We have not to cut or make our path but simply to follow it, one step at a time. And when the heart or flesh fails, when the way seems too difficult, or the door too strait --we must look always unto Jesus, who has gone along the same track, asking that His righteousness may go before us, and set us in the way of His steps (Psa 85:13).

To make all [men] see what [is] the fellowship of the mystery - Ephesians 3:9

This chapter is parallel with Colossians 2. To the stewardship of the apostle Paul two mysteries were entrusted, with the intention that he should unravel and explain them to our race.

The mystery.--A mystery is a hidden secret. The word does not imply that there is no solution, but that the solution has not yet been communicated. God has many secrets, which unfold as the ages are ripe for them, but not before. This secret, which was hid in the Divine heart from all ages, was that the Gentiles are on an equality with the Jews in the Church. Under the old covenant they were alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise; but under the new they are fellow heirs, fellow-members, and fellow-partakers of the blessings of the Gospel.

The stewardship of the mystery.--The apostle felt that whatever had been communicated to him was not for

himself alone, but for all his fellow disciples. Hence he was ever accounting himself a steward of the mysteries of God (1Co 4:1). This is the clue, also, to his assertion that he was a debtor to all men for Christ's sake. What was given him was on deposit for others. See to it that you count nothing you possess or know as your own; look on all as a sacred trust.

The exercise of His stewardship.--"To preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men know." It is not enough to proclaim, as a herald might; we must stay with the dull of wit and slow of thought, elaborating, explaining, and insisting, till we have made them see what a Saviour Jesus is, and how rich the soul may be that uses His unsearchable wealth.

He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth - Ephesians 4:9

We fill a cup or bucket from the bottom upward. And Jesus obeyed a universal law when, in His desire to fill all things, He first descended into the place of a servant, the death of the cross, the lowly bed of a borrowed grave, and thence into the abyss of Hades. "He descended into hell," by which we mean, of course, Hades, the place of disembodied spirits. If we would sit with Him in the heavenlies, we too must be subordinated to the same law. We must also descend.

There is the low place of contrition for sin.--We must go thither; lying in the dust before God; placing the leper's covering on our lips; smiting on our breasts. Be willing that the Spirit of God should reveal all the selfishness, the subtlety, the impurity, of your heart. Let your cry ever be that God would not spare your eyes and heart from the pain of knowing what you are in His sight. From this low place you shall ascend to the bosom of God. "Blessed are they that mourn."

There is the low place of humility.--Be willing to take the lowest place with no mock modesty, but because you have learned to esteem others better than yourself. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. :Be willing to perform lowly deeds of service to your brethren and sisters in Christ. Reckon that you have not attained. Ascribe all that is good in you to the grace of God. God giveth peace to the humble; He raiseth up the poor out of the dust.

There is the low place of death.--The more we are delivered to the death of Jesus the more will His life be manifested in our mortal flesh. Life through death, ascent after descent, the glory after the cross of shame. "If it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children - Ephesians 5:1

Children mostly resemble their father. There is often an unmistakable family likeness, which compels the most casual observer to exclaim, "The very image of his father." Oh that in each of us there might be that which would make men think of God!

Put away your former manner of life (Eph 4:22).--The old man stands for the collection of habits, sayings, and doings which characterized our unregenerate days. The apostle says that they are to be put away suddenly, instantly. Evidently this is possible, or such a command would not be issued. Men speak of a gradual reformation, and advise the piecemeal discontinuance of evil. God, on the contrary, bids us treat the evil past as a company of soldiers would bandits and outlaws. There is the greater reason for this, as the old man waxeth corrupt. Even Martha could not bear the opening of her brother's vault.

Be renewed in the spirit of your mind (Eph 4:23).--We are reminded of Rom 12:2. The mind needs to be brought into daily, hourly contact with God's thoughts, as contained in Scripture, that it may be renewed; else our constant association with the men and women of the world, their maxims and practices, will inevitably and sorrowfully deteriorate it. The only source of daily renewal is fellowship with God.

Put on the new man.--Of this the apostle affirms that it is according to God, and has been created. Our Lord created this beautiful dress when He rose from the dead. The day of resurrection was one of creation. All the habits and dispositions of a holy, godlike life have been prepared for us in Him, and await our appropriation; and as they are according to God, so soon as we put them on we shall become imitators of God as dear children.

Praying at all seasons in the spirit - Ephesians 6:18

The dying Monod regretted he had not prayed more. We should pray at all seasons. Prayer is never out of place.

There is no conceivable circumstance in life where it would be inappropriate to pray. At the wedding or the funeral; as we engage in work or finish it; whether the wind blow from the cold north or the balmy south--it is wise and right to pray. "Prayer and provender," the old proverb says, "hinder no man."

We should pray in the Spirit. Reversing the order of the words, but bringing in their true meaning, we might say, "Let the Spirit pray in the soul." It is well in prayer to wait until the scum of our own choice and desire has passed off, that the yearnings of the Holy Spirit may arise and manifest themselves. We need to be in the Spirit, not only on the Lord's Day, but always, that He may be mightily in us, teaching us the will of God.

We should pray unselfishly. "For all saints," said the apostle, "and for me."

We should watch. Do not give runaway knocks. Stand at God's door till it opens. Be on the alert. Wait on the watch-tower. Many of God's ships pass in the night, and many of His gifts arrive at the wharf when those to whom they were consigned are asleep or gone.

We should persevere. God keeps us waiting that He may test and humble us, and know what is in our heart. Delays are His winnowing fan, discriminating between the chaff and the wheat. What we asked so vehemently we did not ask wisely. When we pray according to His heart, He graciously sustains us. Persevere; you do not know how near you are to the blessing you have sought for years.