

Benefits of Belief VII -- We continue the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of every believer.

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[0 : 00] A very remarkable passage, and if you will keep your Bible open to that portion, we will be commenting on some of the verses that are found therein. Of late, we have been dealing with the issue of what the benefits are that have accrued to the life of everyone who is a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I want to really emphasize everyone, because no child of God is omitted. No one is shortchanged on what God has provided through the finished work of Jesus Christ.

While it is true, there is a great deal of variation regarding abilities, aptitudes, talents, etc., that exist among believers that help to establish our personality and our individuality.

Yet, the things that we are considering now are true across the board for everyone who has faith in Jesus Christ. Whether or not they even realize these things, whether or not they implement them, whether or not they derive the benefit from them that they should, because all of these have been accomplished for you by virtue of what Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross.

And we pointed out to you that passage in Romans 8, in verse 32, where it is the argument, the logical argument from the greater to the lesser, that He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

[1 : 43] In other words, the price that Jesus Christ paid was the ultimate that God could do. And everything else is minor compared to that.

So, because He has already demonstrated His love and care for us in providing for us the ultimate, do you think that He is going to be stingy or not forthcoming with the benefits that accrue as a result of that?

Of course not. In fact, were He to do so, that would even tend to depreciate or to negate what Christ accomplished on the cross. So, we derive the full benefit from it, and it is variegated.

It just goes on and on. No believer has ever plumbed the depths of all that has been provided for us in Christ. It is just wonderful. And we started out by emphasizing the reality of forgiveness in Colossians 2, in verse 13.

We talked about the provision for our standing in positional forgiveness, and a provision for our state of practical forgiveness, and how that that was rooted in the principle set forth in John chapter 13, and having to do with the forgiveness that is fellowship-related, as opposed to the forgiveness that is relationship-oriented.

[3 : 10] And we made a careful distinction between those. We have dealt with the item of regeneration. When a believer becomes a believer and places their trust in Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God, in a way we do not understand, the Spirit of God moves upon the human spirit of that individual and enlivens them, makes them alive toward God.

That is spiritual life. And it is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He has saved us by the washing and regeneration, renewing of the Holy Spirit.

And this washing is a spiritual cleansing, has nothing to do with water. In 1 Corinthians 6.19, we discover that we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

What? Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Spirit of God, and you are not your own? You have been bought with a price. The Spirit of God dwells in you.

I cannot really get a handle on that. And sometimes, I don't feel like the Spirit of God is anywhere near me, much less in me.

[4 : 36] When you have a real good case of the flu, and you're losing all over again, what little you had for lunch, don't you really feel spiritual?

Isn't that just warm fuzzies? Of course not. The only point I'm trying to make is this. These realities that we are discussing, what God has provided for you, is based on the fact that God says He has provided them for you.

It's not based on how you feel. Sometimes you feel pretty rotten. Sometimes you feel really lousy, depressed. You're having a blue day.

Sometimes you're not even sure why. Some days things just all seem to go... You just don't... You don't feel anything spiritual or godly. And sometimes you may think that God is so far off that there's no way you could possibly make contact.

None of these things are negated or changed by that. Do you know what all of those feelings are attributed to? Normality. You're a human being.

[5 : 54] You're made of the same stuff all the rest of us is. You're sure you have your time on the mountaintops, and it's wonderful. But you also spend some time in the valleys. Do you know what you call that?

Call that life. That's what comes from living in a fallen world. We sometimes experience that spiritual rollercoaster ride, and we don't feel like God is indwelling me at all.

So I guess if you don't feel it, that means that maybe he used to indwell you, but since you're all out of sorts now, he says, Hey, Marv, I'm getting out of here. I'm leaving. But he'll never leave us nor forsake us.

So none of this is contingent upon how you feel. Feelings fluctuate. They change. We are fickle. We are human. We are weak. None of us is as strong as we think we are.

And, bless the Lord, probably none of us is as weak as we think we are. But that's just part of the human condition. I only want to emphasize this because you need to know these benefits and provisions that are made for you by virtue of the finished work of Christ have everything to do with who God is and his integrity, and nothing to do with how deserving you are or how you feel about it.

[7 : 15] And that's wonderfully comforting to me because I know he can't change even though I can. And we talked about being baptized by the Spirit of God into the body of Christ.

What? Know ye not that as many of you as were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death? Romans 6.3 And again, this is a dry baptism.

There's no water here. And 1 Corinthians 12. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jew or Gentile, bond or free, male or female, and have all been made to drink of one Spirit.

That Spirit baptism is an operation that the Spirit of God does when he places us into the body of Christ and we become a believer in him.

This causes us to be identified with Jesus Christ so that we are bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. It is an amazing thing.

[8 : 21] And this is true. Not because, oh yes, I well remember the day I was saved. I just felt God baptizing me, the Spirit of God baptizing me into the body of Christ.

That's how I know it's true. I felt it. Well, you probably didn't. You may have felt something. You may have had some emotional response. And there's nothing wrong with that.

But the reality of it is not based on your emotional response. We sing a wonderful hymn. It's one of my favorite hymns. I love it. We sing it every time. Around Easter especially.

He lives. He lives. Christ Jesus lives today. You ask me how I know he lives?

He lives within my heart. That's not to be the basis of your knowledge.

[9 : 21] Because tomorrow, you may not feel like he's living in your heart at all. You may feel like the devil done moved in. We know he lives because God's word says he lives.

Not because you feel it. It's wonderful to feel it. It's okay. I'm not knocking that. But that's not the basis for your assurance. The basis for your assurance is God said so.

And that's, what have I told you for the last 37 years? More than anything else, God wants to be believed. He wants to be trusted. You ask me how I know he lives?

God's word says he lives. That's a lot better response. With all due respect to the hymn writer, I don't mean to be critical of hymn writers because he wrote a lot better one than I could. But that's just a minor point of theology.

So, we are indwelt. And we've talked about being adopted here in Ephesians 1 and verse 5. We are adopted into the body as adult children.

[10:28] And today, we want to undertake a couple of others. One is that we are sealed. And here in Ephesians 1, from which we were reading earlier, in verse 13, we read this glorious truth.

In him. In him. This phrase you find repeatedly in Paul's epistles. He places great emphasis on these two words.

In him or in Christ. And the reason that Paul makes so much of this term is because he is describing a reality that never existed until God revealed it to him about this being placed in union with Jesus Christ.

That becomes the basis for our assurance, for our stability, for our security, for our peace of mind. Everything. Everything. And just the sheer fact that you are in him.

How did you get to be in him? Simply by faith. That's it. You just believe. You just receive. Oh, that's too simple. Well, it isn't too simple because God did all the hard part.

[11:50] Giving his son to do for us what we could not do for ourselves. That's the hard part. We just have the easy part, which is simply to believe on his son.

As I've often said, God did the very most that he could do so that he only had to require from us the very least that we could do.

And that is believing. That is justification by faith. In him, verse 13, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, you see, you have to hear the message.

The message is what you believe. If you do not hear the message, you don't have anything to believe. That's what the proclamation of the gospel is all about.

You give people something to listen to so that they can respond to it. And when they respond to it, it is positively or negatively, or they put it on the back burner and they say, well, I need to think about that.

[13:08] I need more information. I need more data. There's nothing wrong with that. But you have to hear the word. This is why the word is so incredibly important.

I mean the word, W-O-R-D, is terribly important. Because it's the essence of communication. This is why Jesus Christ is referred to as the word of God.

In the beginning was the word. The word was with God, and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. The word, let me just put it this way.

God had something that he wanted to say to his creation, and he took the message and wrapped it up in a human body and sent it down here to this earth.

And Bethlehem is where it all began, in the incarnation. Jesus Christ is the word. He is the message of God. He is the essence of communication. You have to hear the word before you can respond to the word.

[14:18] That's why great emphasis is placed upon the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having also believed, you were sealed in him with the Holy Spirit of promise.

Sealed. Shut up. Locked up. Bound up. Confined.

Confined. You are confined. You are confined in Christ. And you can't get out.

What if you don't deserve to stay in? But you didn't deserve to get in. You got in on the basis of grace.

You are confined on the basis of grace. God has made an incredible investment in you. And we are sealed in him with the Holy Spirit of promise.

[15:36] This has a... It's facts of permanence, of closure. Sealed.

Sealed. Conveyed ideas to them that it probably doesn't to us. When I think of sealing something, I think of wrapping up a package and sealing it with tape or glue so that it won't come open in shipment.

So it will be secure. And that's exactly what God has in mind when He seals you. He doesn't want you to come open or come apart. We are in Christ.

Sealed in Christ. Our hope of glory. That's our absolute guarantee. Our complete confidence of future glory.

Because we are in Christ. That's our guarantee. There is no guarantee apart from that. And there is no guarantee needed apart from that. Sealed.

[16:39] The word conveys the idea in the Greek of a signature seal. Like an official seal.

If you get a document, an official document from the state government or the federal government or you buy a... You get a marriage license. It's got a...

Down in the corner there is a seal of the state of Ohio that is placed on it. And what that seal indicates is that everything that is prescribed on this document and everything that is written out is backed up by the authority and the integrity of the issuing party which in this case is the state of Ohio.

It is a... It is a state official recognition of what is on that document. And it gives it additional leverage, additional...

additional authority. It carries some clout with it to have the official seal on. The... The office of the President of the United States. Every time you see the President of the United States at a press conference, he's usually behind a podium and right on the front of the podium in front of him is this beautiful embossed seal, the official seal of the United States of America with the eagle and the arrows and the talon and all of the rest.

[18 : 25] And that signifies that the authority and power of the United States government is behind that seal. Well, you are sealed.

There's another usage of this and maybe it'll give us a little bit of a connection. Come back. Leave your place here in Ephesians and come back for just a moment to Matthew chapter 27.

First book in the New Testament, Matthew chapter 27. Interesting expression that is used here and it really ties in with what we're talking about.

And come down if you would please to verse 62. This is in connection with the burial preparation of our Lord Jesus Christ after he's taken down from the cross.

And we read in verse 62, Matthew 27, Now on the next day, which is the one after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate and said, Sir, we remember that when he was still alive, that deceiver, they're talking of course about Jesus, that deceiver said, after three days I am to rise again.

[19 : 39] Therefore, give orders for the grave to be made secure until the third day. Now, they weren't concerned in the least about Jesus Christ coming back to life after three days.

That possibility never entered their mind. But they are recalling that that is what he said. Well, we know that's exactly what he meant.

And they had every reason in the world to fear that. But they didn't know that. And they relate what their real fear was and it is given in verse 64.

Therefore, give orders for the grave to be made secure until the third day lest the disciples come and steal him away and say to the people, He has risen from the dead and the last deception will be worse than the first.

Pilate said, You have a guard. That meant I am delegating a portion of the Roman guard to be there at the tomb.

[20 : 54] You have a guard. I will assign a guard. Go, make it as secure as you know how. And they went, verse 66, and made the grave secure and along with the guard they set a seal on the stone.

What was that seal? The seal was the emblem of the Roman Empire. It was a seal that was entrusted to authorities of Rome, one of whom would have been Pontius Pilate.

And he had a signet. He had a large ring with the insignia of the Roman government on that ring. He could dip the ring in a pad or in ink and stamp it on something and leave the mark of the seal on whatever item he wished to place it.

What that conveyed was, contents beyond this seal are hereby secured by and under the authority of the government of Rome.

and he who disturbs this seal or breaks this seal must answer to the Roman government. It was not a thing to be taken lightly in that day.

[22 : 32] Oh, you don't want to disturb anything that has the Rome seal on it because there would be a terrible price to pay. The idea being that this was a threatening gesture to the disciples if they had such a ridiculous scheme cooked up so that they would come out and try to steal away the body, they're going to think twice about it when they see that it is sealed with the authority of Rome which literally meant if we disturb the contents of this or remove the contents our neck is on the noose.

We are in jeopardy of being arrested and even executed by the Roman government just for doing so. well, God has put a seal upon you.

Now, we can look closely at each other and we can't see it but God can see it and each of us is sealed and who is the authority and the integrity who does it belong to?

The one who placed the seal there. You are sealed by the spirit of God. That means he is claiming you as his permanent purchased possession and nobody has the authority or the power to tinker with it or to remove it or to change it in any way.

It has the seal of heaven itself upon it. Now, there is one more that we need to consider and I want you to turn please while we were in Ephesians let's go back there Ephesians chapter 5 and this has to do with the ministry of the spirit of God that is in some respect really radically different from all of the others because you did not have anything to say about being indwelt by the spirit of God God just did that.

[24 : 34] You didn't have anything to say about being baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ He just did that. You didn't have anything to say or to do with being sealed.

There is no place where anybody prays for the sealing where anybody prays for the indwelling or where anybody prays for the baptism of the spirit none of these exist because they are things that God does independent of anything that you do.

All you did to trigger the release of all of these things regarding the spirit of God on your behalf all you did was you believed on Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and instantaneously just like that with regeneration all of these things became true of you.

you didn't know it at the time you probably didn't feel it if somebody had told you you might not have even believed it but it makes no difference.

The scriptures make it quite clear these are part and parcel of every believer and no one in the body of Christ is devoid of any of these things that we have discussed.

[25 : 44] They are for all believers without exception. However the one we are going to consider now very definitely involves you and your volition your will and that is in Ephesians chapter 5 where the expression is given in Ephesians chapter 5 and verse 18 do not get drunk with wine for that is dissipation but be filled with the spirit filled with the spirit what does that mean and I want you to note it is not a suggestion it is a command and God will not make any unreasonable demands of us if this is something that is just beyond us I just can't do that that is just not within my capability then we have got a serious problem because we are told that we can

God does not give orders that we do not have the ability to carry out and we are commanded to be filled with the spirit I suppose that there have been multitudes of books written on this but I am going to simplify it and cut to the chase as much as I can it is not a question please understand this this is really important it is not a question of someone having more of the spirit of God than someone else the Holy Spirit is not apportioned out in quantities you get a bucket full you get a barrel full you get an eyedropper full that's nonsense being filled with the spirit has nothing to do with having more of the Holy Spirit but it does have everything to do with the spirit of God having more view a good synonym for being filled with the spirit is just this being controlled being under the authority and the dominion and the power of the

Holy Spirit how do you do that you do that with your will you do that by submitting your will as a believer now this is not for non Christians non Christians can forget all about the filling of the spirit it is not even available to them this is solely for those who are in Christ and once you are in Christ the degree of submission of your will and your energies and your talents and your everything to him is what determines whether or not you are filled with the spirit it is a very what shall I say it is a very plain and simple thing it is not esoteric it is not vague it is not deep dark and mysterious and all of the rest of it although some people tend to make it that way it simply means that you are living a life under the authority and lordship of

Jesus Christ as you are submitted to him with your will in fact he goes on to tell us what the consequences of being filled with the spirit will be in verse 19 if you are filled with the spirit speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord one of the first things that a spirit filled believer will exhibit is an attitude of joy attitude this is more about attitude than anything and nobody's attitude should be characterized by gratitude more than a believer always verse 20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ well you won't do that if you are not filled with the spirit you won't do that

I'll tell you what you'll do you'll gripe and belly ache and complain and moan and groan and criticize that's what you'll do if you are not filled with the spirit do you know what those things are called works of the flesh nastiness orneriness meanness duplicity deception complaining griping why me

what did I do to deserve this blah blah blah and on this is a Christian who is walking in the flesh they are not fun to be around nobody enjoys the company of these people they are just a downer for everything a critical a critical spirit is somebody who finds nothing good in anything everything something wrong with everything and it's infectious and it's death to a congregation

[31 : 24] I mean it'll flatten it quicker than anything that's walking in the flesh and if we are filled with the spirit we will not only exhibit thankfulness but verse 21 and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ subject to one another submissive spirit to one another means I don't have to have my way in this I don't have to be always right I don't have to always push my agenda submitting to one another means kindness consideration thoughtfulness somebody else may have a better idea than you do what's wrong with that nothing everybody benefits a submissive spirit one to another is a precious commodity it ought to be characterized by every congregation that knows and loves the

Lord where the members have a care and a concern for one another where they're looking out for one another and Paul said look not only on your own interests but everyone also on the interests of others that's a characteristic of a believer who is filled with the spirit as opposed to filled with self we don't have a problem being filled with self that's the ego that's the me first I mine my we come by that quite naturally that's the flesh and the flesh is always in there pitching flesh always wants to be foremost the flesh always wants its own way everybody else is stupid I'm the only one that's got the right idea that's the flesh and it is contrary to being filled with the spirit and if we are wives hmm be subject to your own husbands as to the

Lord if a wife is filled with the spirit of God under the control of the spirit of God she will have a submissive spirit to her husband and it will not be a begrudging spirit it will not be a have to thing I guess this is what I have to do to be an obedient wife it's attitude she will not only have a submissive spirit to her husband but she will find it a joy not a chore and the reason she finds it a joy and not a chore is because if her husband is filled with the spirit he will love his wife like Christ loved the church that too is the mark of a husband who's filled with the spirit all it means is controlled by it means under the domination of and he uses the analogy about being drunk with wine we all know what happens when somebody really gets lathered up they just become a different person they are under the control there's even a legal term for that isn't it called DUI driving under the influence what are you influenced by Jim Beam or whatever and you go weaving down the road from one side to the other you are under the control of that alcohol you are not controlling it it's controlling you it affects your motoring skills and your nerve skills and your response rate and all the rest because you are under the influence of it and Paul says what you really need as a believer in Jesus Christ is you need to be intoxicated by the spirit of God and when you are you will not have taken leave of your senses you will not be impaired motor controlled or visually you will be what God wants you to be you will be submissive to him and submissive to each other it is a beautiful thing this is up to you the baptism the indwelling the sealing the regenerating you don't have anything to do with that you just believed on

Jesus Christ as your savior and all of those things God provided automatically for you at the point of salvation you've got a lot to say about this one it's up to you whether or not you want to be under the control of the Holy Spirit it's an entirely volitional thing I can promise you this I have been controlled by the Holy Spirit and I have been controlled by the flesh and it's no contest it's no contest as to which is preferable and as to which the Lord will use and as to which the Lord will set aside and not use it is wonderful that this is within our realm of capability think of it think of it this is a decision that God has entrusted to you tremendous decision consequences that issue forth from that have to do with a dynamic abundant fulfilled life that exhibits the godly attitude on a consistent basis and you are maximizing the spiritual life that Jesus

[38 : 17] Christ has provided for you the opposite of that is the average Christian life take your choice it ought to be no contest may we pray father can't believe that anybody here would be willing to live in a sphere of spiritual mediocrity when you've already provided everything and more that is needed for us to rise above that you've made gracious provision for us and you have entrusted this tremendous capacity to us we do not want to abuse it we want to use it the way that you intended we pray that the desire of each heart here and we realize father we cannot make anyone have the right desires if it is not within them

I can't put it there and you have provided us with volition and you will not invade and override our volition so that we have no choice but to be filled with the spirit you've graciously given us a choice and our prayer is that every child of God here will just out of a sense of gratitude for who you are

and what you've done for us in Christ just out of a sense of gratitude not in any wise a repayment but from a thankful heart we may say Lord Jesus I want this I want to be submissive to you I want to be in control of the Holy Spirit I know how powerful and how available the flesh is I fall into it often but now

I'm more aware of that I'm also more aware of what you've provided and I want all that you want me to have and I want to surrender to you anything and everything that I have that in any way shape or form stands as an obstacle to having what you want for me because I realize your will for me is the very best there is for anyone who may be struggling with that decision we pray that tender and gracious and patient spirit of God will continue to work with them in Christ's name Amen You are dismissed