

## The Marvel of Our Redemption—Part 2

### Ephesians 1:13-15

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Would you turn with me to Ephesians 1 as we continue in our study of this wonderful, wonderful book. We're looking at the marvel of our redemption. Earlier we looked at the sphere of our redemption. Who all is involved? God did not exclude the Jews. Oh no! The key is, He included the Gentiles, and we are so grateful that He did. All that believe in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, now have been made one in Him. We are heirs in the Lord Jesus Christ. Again the Phillip's translation puts it this way, "...in all which will one day belong to him [speaking of Jesus] we have been promised a share." That ought to already make us begin to praise God for what He has promised us in our inheritance in Him.

Now we continue to look at the marvel of our redemption. We want to look at the standard of our redemption. Is there a standard that we who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus go by? Often somebody may come around us and say, "Oh, I have been born again. I am a Christian. I am a believer." Is there a standard that helps us measure those people who are quick to say, "I know Christ," but their life does not back it up? I believe there is. Some people say, "Well, Wayne, isn't it enough to come down the aisle? Isn't it enough to cry and be remorseful over sin?" Well, it might be, and it might not be. What is the standard that we have to measure those who are claiming to be redeemed? Well, there are a lot of things, but I think we'll see in our text two that must be there.

I want us to look at that in Ephesians 1:13: "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,..." Now what is in this that might help us have a standard to measure those who claim to be redeemed? As we marvel at our redemption, let's remember there are certain things that must be in place if that redemption has taken place in our life. It says, "...after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation." The first thing I want you to see is that the message of truth, the gospel of our salvation, has to be heard.

Now let's break that down and look at it. When he says the phrase "after listening to the message of truth" the word for truth there is the word that means "that which is absolute truth and has nothing in it which is error, nothing whatsoever." It has a definite article in front of it which means **the** truth. It's obviously speaking of the Word of God. The word for message there is *logos*. It refers to a message, a thing that is communicated. However, again, the definite article is in front of it which means literally **the** word of **the** truth. Implicit in this is the Word of God. You see, hearing starts with the gospel, the Word of God, with the truth that is without any error.

I have many people say to me, “Well I can receive Christ perhaps, but I don’t believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God.” Well, that kind of bothers me a little bit, because if that’s the standard, and the Bible speaks, who is man to say that it is or it isn’t. In other words, we’ve got to accept that it is truth without error.

What he’s talking about here is not just truth. He’s talking about the gospel of your salvation. “In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—...” That word “gospel” is the good news of your salvation. In other words, the seed which must fall into the human heart in order for salvation to take place is the Word of God. It’s not just truth, but the truth about our salvation, about what Christ has done for us.

What is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ? Look with me in I Corinthians 15:1-5. Paul is speaking of what the gospel is, and he gives the definition as he speaks to the Corinthians there. This is what the Word of God, the word of truth without error, says the gospel is. He says, “Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.”

You can see the key ingredient there of the gospel. It’s that Christ came to die for their sin, that He was buried, but on the third day He resurrected according to the Scriptures. So therefore, the gospel is what the Word of God says about what Christ has done for you and me. It’s the good news. It is truth without any error. So many folks think that a person can get saved by just hearing a testimony. No, he can be inspired, he can be convinced, he can be moved emotionally, but until the Word of God, falls into that heart, how can there be any salvation? That is the key.

In the parable of the sower there are several kinds of soil. The key there is not so much the sower, but it’s the soil that receives the seed the sower is scattering. It says in the parables in Mark, Matthew and in Luke that seed is the Word of God. It falls into the human heart. Only one of the soils was saved, and that is the good soil, which received the seed and held on to the seed, as one of the gospels said, and then produced fruit as a result of having received the seed. Those are the ones who have truly been saved.

Look at I Peter 1:22. I want you to see again how that the Word of God is the seed. It is the truth of God. It is Scripture which speaks of that which Christ has done for us. That’s the gospel, the truth of your salvation. In this passage Peter reminds the believers in Asia Minor who are going through the awful persecution, “Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart.” What he’s saying is, when you get saved, you have a potential that you didn’t have when you were lost. The Holy Spirit of God comes into your life. Now you have a love in you, wrapped up in a person that needs to be released to other people. Jesus said, “By this all men will know that they are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” Peter is reminding these believers of that. Then he says in verse 23, “for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and abiding word of God. For ‘all flesh is like grass, and all of its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off, but the word of the Lord abides forever.’ And this is the word which was preached to you.”

So when we’re talking about salvation, what are the standards of measuring people who say, “Oh, I’ve been redeemed. Oh, I’m a Christian. I’ve been born from above.”? Well, it starts

with how it all happened in your life. The Word of God is that seed. It is what God's Word says about Christ. It is what God's Word says in reflection of your own sin that must be received before salvation can take place.

Now if it's got to be heard, then somebody has got to be telling it. Look at the verse again. "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth,..." Somebody has got to be telling it if they're listening to the message of truth. Let's think for a moment about when you got saved. Who was it who came and shared it with you? Who opened the Word with you? Who helped you understand your condition and what Christ did for you, and why it was necessary in your life? Somebody did. Somebody has got to be telling it.

Look in Romans 10:14. There's a beautiful thought here that comes out of simple observation when we're dealing with our salvation: "How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!'" You see, this was Paul's mission. What he was doing with the Gentiles was to take the Word of God. By the way, he did not have all that we have today. All he had was the Old Testament and the gospels. He would take that to the people and document who Jesus is, the fact that He came and lived a sinless life, the fact that He went to the cross and died for their sins, resurrected the third day and that it was all according to what the Scriptures had to say. That's important. As he told it they were able to listen to it. That's what missions is all about, folks. Salvation starts when the truth is preached, when a person hears the message of Jesus Christ and the gospel of your salvation.

You see, the first key is they've got to hear the message of truth. They've got to hear the gospel of their salvation. The word "listening" there is an important word. It's the Greek word *akouo*. It means "to hear." That's why it's translated "listen" here. It means "to hear with an understanding." You see, there can never be a response to the gospel unless the person who is hearing understands what the gospel is saying in their life. God's truth of the gospel must be heard with understanding. Basically, man cannot do that. It's through the work of the Holy Spirit of God that a man hears and understands.

I believe this is why Paul said something in I Corinthians 2:1. You see, he understood as an educated man. Let's remember that. Paul was the most educated man aside from Jesus Himself in the whole New Testament. You'll not find anybody who could touch him. "You can tell sometimes," Peter said of Paul, "that old boy is so intelligent some of the things he writes, they're hard to understand." He had submitted his heart to the Lord Jesus Christ. Look what he says to the Corinthian church as he writes to them. "And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God" [or "the mystery of God which is the gospel"]. He said, "I didn't come with eloquent words. I didn't come with superiority of speech." Paul had the education. He had the vocabulary that he could woo and wow and convince any audience. Paul understood that when you preach it's got to be under the anointing of the Spirit of God. If not, people may hear but they won't understand.

So, the first common denominator that has to be there for all the people who claim to have been redeemed, is they have heard with understanding the truth of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. They have heard it from God's Word, and they understand clearly that Jesus is God's Son, that He came and lived a sinless life. Why did He go to the cross? Because all men under Adam are doomed to hell unless they are reborn and adopted afresh

back into the family of God. We must understand that or how can we be saved? The seed that falls in the heart is the Word, the truth of God, the gospel of our salvation.

Secondly, not only hearing and understanding it, but responding to it with belief. That has got to be there. There may be other essentials that are parts of this standard, but I know that these two parts are there and must always be there. The gospel must be heard with understanding which is the work of the Holy Spirit of God. But not only that, there has to be a response to what we've heard in what we call belief. Say John 3:16 with me again. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but having everlasting life."

Let's look at Ephesians 1:13 again and look at the tense of "having believed." "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed,..." That's an aorist participle. In other words, at the same time that you were listening to it, something was responding to it within you. There was a response coming back to it. It wasn't three weeks later. It wasn't five days later. The aorist tense means that in a specific time there was a response back to what you clearly understood coming from the Word of God. Something inside of you was responding, and that response is called "belief." It says, "...having also believed..." Now what does it mean to believe? I wish just for the sake of argument we could go up and down the rows during any church service and ask you what you thought it meant to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Then you would understand why I'm taking some pains to try to understand this. So many people think that belief is only associated with understanding. No, we've already covered that. You hear it with understanding. When you believe, you respond in belief.

Well, what is that belief? First of all the word "believe" is *pisteuo*. It comes from the word *pistis* which means "faith." In other words, *pisteuo*, believe, means "to put your full trust and your full faith into Jesus Christ," the Jesus Christ who is God's Son. The Scripture clearly brings that out in the gospel of our salvation. But what does that mean? This is where we're left hanging. *Pisteuo*, to believe, means "to put your faith into, to put your trust into."

Well, let's take it one more step. *Pistis* comes from the word *peitho*. I think this begins to help us better understand. The word *peitho* means "to be firmly persuaded to the point that you're willing to abandon and surrender and obey that which you've heard." What does it mean to believe? Does that mean I just simply believe what you say? I understand it, and I believe what you say? No. It's more than that. Having heard the message we're so persuaded by it that we're willing to turn and surrender to it. How do I receive the Lord Jesus Christ? By opening myself in full surrender and by believing in Him. That is the way I receive Him into my life.

Let me give you some examples of that. It might help us a little bit more than what I'm saying here. Look at James 2:14-26. This is the passage that nobody likes to deal with. It's so controversial, and a lot of folks just don't deal with it. He talks about three kinds of faith. Only one of them is saving faith, but each of them has a part of the other. There are three areas to each of us. There is the mental, that which we understand with. There's the emotional, that which we feel with. And there's the volitional, that which we surrender with, that which we commit to, that which we decide with. That's what we want to look at because all three of these are brought out. Which one is the real faith?

Well, first of all he mentions dead faith in verses 14-17: "What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him?" Now what is the work

he speaks of? He uses the illustrations of Abraham and Rahab. It has to be the work of obedience, that which shows and expresses what has taken place on the inside. If I believe who Jesus is, if I believe the truth of the gospel, my response to it is to bow down to Him and surrender myself to Him and be willing to obey Him. Now I may not understand all that at this time, but somehow it all works itself out.

If there's a root, there's going to be fruit. The root is the willingness to surrender and abandon myself to Him. He is God. He stands before me. He's worthy to be served. A six-year-old can understand that. How? By the anointing of the Holy Spirit of God. A sixty-year-old can understand that. How? By the anointing of the Holy Spirit of God. I can never make you understand it. It's something that happens when that message comes into your heart. When the Word of God is preached or shared the Holy Spirit grabs hold of that thing, and you see God like you've never seen God. You see yourself like you've never seen yourself. You fall down before Him. Your attitude is an attitude of being so persuaded that you're willing to give yourself over in obedience.

James 2:15-17 says, "If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, Go in peace, be warmed and be filled, and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead *being* by itself." That's dead faith. Maybe your name is on a church roll, and you've heard all your life about Jesus Christ. You've understood it. You could tell people better than I'm telling them, but you have never responded to what you understood in belief. You've never fallen down before Him and been so persuaded by what you understood that you're willing to surrender yourself to the one the Bible has clearly brought forth.

But secondly, not only does he speak of dead faith here, he speaks of demonic faith in verses 18-20. There was somebody going around during that time trying to comfort everybody. James was getting on people's case. They didn't like James. James was saying, "Hey man, listen, talk is cheap. Show me by your life." He's the kind of guy that nobody likes to hear. He's saying, "I'm tired of hearing your talk. Show me by your walk whether or not you've been redeemed." Well, someone's going around trying to make everybody feel better. "Oh, don't worry about it." He puts it in such a way that sometimes we get confused: "But someone may *well* say, 'You have faith and I have works.'" He's not talking about the someone. He's referring back to James because James is writing this. In other words, "Hey, don't worry about old James. He's always trying to tell you there's got to be some fruit in your life. Oh, no man! If you just do certain things, if you say it the right way, you're okay." James says, "show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." In other words, "I don't have to tell you. Live with me for a week. Watch me live, and I'll show you that my faith is real."

Then it says in verse 19, "You believe that God is one." You see, this is where sometimes we lose it. The Jews of that day had a confession they would make in the morning and one in the evening. Do you know what it was? "We believe that God is one." They're still doing that today. As long as they were saying it right, this old boy says, "Hey, that's okay. You believe that God's one, you're saved. James has his works. Let the old boy suffer, but we're alright as long as you confess it in the morning and as long as you confess it at night. You're saying it right. You're saved." James says, "You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder." Uh Oh! "You mean to tell me I'm no better than a demon at that point." Folks, you don't think the demons knew who Jesus was? You see, folks, in the dead faith you can have mental acceptance. You can understand.

In the demonic faith you can have feelings, and they get all worked up.

Technically He died for all, but the last step is that volition when you surrender your will. How do you know somebody surrenders their will? You don't know right when they're praying. They may not have the same emotion that somebody else had, and they didn't even get saved when they prayed. How do you tell? You watch their life down the road. If there's a root of belief inside of an individual, there will be the fruit of that belief in obedience to the one whom they have bowed down to. I John 3 says there's no possible way a person can claim to be saved and live like he wants to Monday through Saturday. You cannot live habitually lawless before God and claim to be a believer.

James uses the examples of Abraham and Rahab. Just take Abraham for instance. How do we know that Abraham was saved? How do we know that he was justified? Verse 21 says: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works,..." Now careful, careful. He's not saying what Martin Luther accused him of saying. He's not saying that by a man's works he's justified. Oh no! What he's saying here is he was shown to be justified back there by the fact that he was willing to obey over here. That's what he's saying. That's all he's saying. He's not contradicting anything Paul said. He's just simply showing the fact that if a man's saved, he's going to live like it. Now he might get off track, he may have a sin that bothers him, but he can never again live habitually lawless before God. That is not the heart or character of a true believer, a new creation in Christ.

He gives Rahab as an example. I like those two examples because Abraham had a lot of information, and he responded to it. Rahab had a little, and she responded. Both of them were brought in. It's not how much truth you've heard added on to what you needed to hear. It's whether or not you've responded in belief to the critical gospel of your salvation.

Let me show you this over in I Thessalonians 1:3. If there's a root, there's going to be fruit. I can hear people now saying, "I'm going to take this home, buddy. I'm going to check this out." Well, I hope you will. Please do because I'm checking it out myself as I go through. Paul was in Thessalonica three weeks. That's all, just three weeks. Look what happens. He says, "...constantly bearing in mind your work of *the* faith..." There's the definite article. "...and labor of *the* love and steadfastness of *the* hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father."

Well, what does he mean by labor of faith? I just want to show you that one in verse 9. He's talking about how others are even talking about the Christians there at Thessalonica: "For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols..." Oh that's so important. It's not that you turned from idols to God. You turned to God from Idols. "What's the difference, Wayne?" Listen, it's not what you've come from and what you've gone to that necessarily saves you. Some people have come off of one high and gone into another high. They've missed Jesus in the process. They didn't turn away from their idols to God. They turned to God away from their idols. The focus of your turn is all the difference in the world. He says, "I see that in you, the work of faith. There was a root of belief. Now there's the fruit that you turned to God away from the idols of your life."

We've got to see that folks. We are living, I think, in the Laodecian age when people have joined the church and missed Jesus. We've got people on church rolls everywhere. They don't know the Lord. How do you know that? Only by the standards set forth in Scripture. If there is not fruit showing, there's not a root of belief in their life. I'm not trying to make it "works salvation." I'm just trying to understand that word "believe" in Him.

Let's go back to Ephesians 1:15. "For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which *exists* among you, and your love for all the saints,..." Oh! Oh, are you kidding me? That's what Jesus said, wasn't it? Hey, he said, "By this shall they know you're my disciples," whether or not you truly bowed to me. That's all I'm saying. You don't understand everything I've said when you get saved. It's something you understand later on. But hey folks, it's all built into it when that surrender comes to that Deity who Christ is.

One of the first things you'll note and the world notes is when we love one another. If there's a root, there's going to be fruit.

There are two things. First, it must be heard and understood. It must be what the scripture says about Christ. That's the seed, the gospel of our salvation. But secondly, once it's understood, there's got to be a response, and that response is the response of belief.