

Sealed For The Day Of Redemption

Ephesians 4:30-32

30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.
(Ephesians 4:30-32)

For several weeks now, as we have been studying about “putting off the old man” and “putting on the new man”, we have echoed the warning in these words over and over again that we must be careful not to “grieve the Holy Spirit”, because we truly can do that, we can “grieve”, we can “resist” and we can “quench” His precious work within us.

But how is such a thing even possible, that you and I, so small and seemingly insignificant when considered in the giant scope of all existence, how is it that we can “grieve” the heart of such an Almighty and Omnipotent God? It is because we are not really small and insignificant in God’s eyes. You and I are His beloved children, precious in His sight. And because He loves us with such a great love, He has opened up His own heart to us which brings with it the possibility of our “wounding” His heart when we do some of the things we do.

And we can bring grief to His heart in so many different ways, with who we are, with the way we think, with the way we treat other people and especially with the way we fail to trust in Him and acknowledge Him. Listen carefully to these words! They begin with a plea and they end with a promise. Proverbs 3

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;
6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.
(Proverbs 3:5-6)

The simple truth is, the moment that you and I received Christ as our Savior, we were immediately adopted into God’s family. We became sons and daughters of His, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. And He loves us with an everlasting love.

And as part of His adoption, He has placed His Holy Spirit within us to be our constant companion, involved up close, in all the things that take place in our daily lives, sanctifying and cleansing us from all the influences of sin and protecting us from the attacks of the demonic world that swirls all around us each day.

And folks, for all these reasons, and for many, many more, you and I really ought to get to know the Holy Spirit so much better than we do!

In thinking these thoughts about the Holy Spirit, I am reminded of a conversation that I had with my granddaughter some weeks back. She asked me if I really believed in the individual natures of the members of the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The question was asked during a discussion about some of the Jehovah Witnesses' beliefs and how they differed from the beliefs held in the mainline Christian Churches. Regarding belief in the Holy Spirit, how that the Jehovah's Witness doctrine teaches that God is only One Person, that Jesus was just an ordinary man who became holy and to some extent "like God". And that the Holy Spirit is not an actual Person but is rather simply a manifestation of the inner being of God the Father, much like our spirit is simply a manifestation of our inner being.

I responded to my granddaughter that, yes I do believe in the Trinity and that God truly is "One God", but that God exists in the personage of three separate and distinct people, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. And while such knowledge is too "high and lofty" and too incomprehensible for our small minds to fully grasp, it is still nonetheless absolutely true. And that whenever our intellect falls short in its ability to understand such "high and lofty" matters, "faith" must step forward and become the means to help us apprehend such truths.

But then again, such is also the way of any part of our acceptance of God, whether we be debating about the Trinity or simply clinging to "hope" in times of trial, "faith" is the pathway that must be taken by each of us, else we will be left completely without hope.

Our conversation took place while we were visiting with our daughter to celebrate our most recent birthdays. And our conversation gave me pause to think about what my advancing birthdays really mean to me personally. While I know that some people rue the passing of the years, I don't mind the thought too much, because they are a reminder of God's continuing grace towards me. And I truly do look forward to the promises of heaven, those days when my time here on earth will be no more, that day when future eternity will become the "ever-present now".

And I confess to you that I could not face even one of these days now if I had any doubts about my future days in heaven, and especially if I were like so many people today who have "no hope" at all about their life to come. The Apostle Paul voiced those concerns in speaking to the believers in Thessalonica. He told them . . .

13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.
(1 Thessalonians 4:13 (ESV))

Thankfully, I do have “hope” and I have a firm confidence that just as God has been so generous in His blessing toward me in this natural life, He will surely continue with that same loving provision throughout eternity. And it is in the words of today’s text and in other scriptures like them that I am provided that blessed confidence.

Note with me in these words that they contain far more than just a warning to not “grieve the Holy Spirit”. They also tell us that the Holy Spirit has “sealed us” for the day of redemption.

30 . . . do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (Ephesians 4:30)

Consider these words for a moment. The clear intention of these words is to assure you and me that the Holy Spirit is far more than what the Jehovah witnesses believe . . . that being that the Holy Spirit is nothing more than the thought processes of God. A “thought process” cannot be “grieved”, but a person can. And the Holy Spirit truly is a very real “Person” whom we can “grieve”.

And the next words in this verse that speak of the Holy Spirit being a “seal for the day of our redemption” . . . A thought process cannot be “seal”. It is only a real “Person” who can be an ever-present “seal” to protect and “keep” us until the day of our redemption. Verse 30 again,

30 . . . do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (Ephesians 4:30)

The question and the answer that I shared with my granddaughter directly related to all of these attributes of the Holy Spirit. And they also directly related to my ponderings concerning my advancing years and my confidence about the eternal life that I will enjoy with Christ in Heaven.

You see, it is not just the doctrines concerning the Trinity that the Jehovah Witnesses have corrupted. It is also their views about heaven and hell that have gone completely off course, especially their beliefs about hell which are absolutely and irreconcilably corrupt. In their quest to make God into an image that they can accept, that have completely ruled out the possibility of an actual hell, especially the pit of burning fire that we read about in the Book of Revelations. They teach that those who are unsaved

simply go to their grave and their existence completely ceases, no penalties and no retribution.

Sadly, for them in their misguided beliefs, that is not what the Book of Revelations teaches. Listen to these words!

11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.
(Revelation 20:11-15)

Can these words get any clearer? When you, when I breathe our last here in this life, immediately we are transported into that timeless existence of God, and then, as the words of Hebrews 9:27 remind us, we are judged, just as these words of Revelations 20 declare.

And this judgment is absolutely final, a point in time when all of the decisions of life will have already been made, "cast in stone" with no further work to be done and no further appeals to be made. It is then folks that we had better have our beliefs and our doctrines straight. Because as we read here in these words of Revelations 20, If a person's name is not written in the "Book of Life", the very next step is the burning "lake of fire", not a comfortable grave where our minds are shut down completely and we think no more. No, hell is an eternal burning pit where the people will be constantly aware of their awful pain and suffering.

But folks, we know that it is not just the Jehovah Witnesses that have a corrupt understanding of these truths, it is most all the people of the earth who have it wrong, blinded by the "evil one" as to the unchangeable consequence of their unbelief. Sadly, such penalties and the eternal sufferings in hell are not preached in most of our churches today. To give what some call a "hell fire and brimstone" message is passé, out of fashion in today's deliverance oriented church settings.

But we must understand . . . just because it is not preached does not mean that it is any less true, that such verses of scripture are no longer valid. They really, really are!

These words are eternal truths that cannot change! If your name, if my name is not written in the "Lamb's Book of Life" the eternal burning pits of hell will become our eternal penalty and our absolute end.

So, for you and me today, as we read these words, we need to take serious the warnings given to us in these scriptures.

Now, with all of that being said . . . if we really are saved and have our names "written in the Lamb's Book of Life" then the second part of this verse 30 is also absolutely true, that the Holy Spirit has placed His Holy and unbreakable seal upon us, and His "seal" will keep us safe and secure for the day of our final redemption. Those words again in verse 30 of our text,

30 . . . do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (Ephesians 4:30)

May we take another moment and consider what this "seal" really means to us who are saved. By using these words, God is generous to our meager understanding. He wants us to fully grasp His promise regarding our eternal salvation, so He gives us these assurances using simple, earth related examples, such as the one that calls the Holy Spirit our "surety", our "deposit", guaranteeing our final redemption. Listen to these precious words, first in Ephesians 1,

13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14 (NIV))

And in 2 Corinthians 1

21 And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, 22 and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. (2 Corinthians 1:21-22 (ESV))

And in John 10,

27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. 30 I and My Father are one." (John 10:27-30)

The Holy Spirit is God's guarantee of our final redemption. And in giving us this "visual" example of a seal, we are able to better understand and grasp the permanence of His pledge and promise. And that is why we can have not only "hope" but absolute assurance that in that moment when we breathe our last, we will immediately be welcomed into heaven where we will be greeted with the words "well done my good and faithful servant".

So then, while yes, these words of verse 30 give us a stern warning about not "grieving" the Holy Spirit, they also give us blessed confidence that once we have received Christ as our Savior and Lord, we are His eternally and all the promises of heaven are ours.

Before we close, may I strongly urge you and me to get to know God's Holy Spirit more and better than we do! Not only will we be blessed by knowing Him better, we will also have right and good answers to share with those who come knocking at our door, those Jehovah Witnesses that truly believe that they have the right answers, but are so sadly mistaken. But not only them . . . we have only to look around us and we will see untold others who are just as sadly "without hope", many of whom are our friends and family members.

But listen . . . it must begin with you and me! And I must ask? Are you saved, truly saved? Is your name written in the Book of Life? If you are not absolutely sure, may I plead with you to surrender your heart today! Today is the day of salvation. Tomorrow may never come!

Again, these precious words . . .

30 . . . do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (Ephesians 4:30)