

Ephesians 1:11–14 | “Guaranteed an Inheritance”  
*Preached on March 23, 2025 by Pastor Matt Brown*

You can turn in your Bibles to Ephesians 1, verses 11–14 today. *[pause]*

We are chipping away at Ephesians 1, for it is just so thick with theological truth, but with every glance at it, it’s like looking at a diamond. *[pause]*

Paul has been explaining some of our blessings in Christ, and they are monumental...

We found that we are chosen, adopted, forgiven, and made aware of God’s great plan. *[pause]*

All of that in itself could soak your soul with truth for a lifetime, but Paul doesn’t end there.

Rather, like another glorious wave of truth hitting us, he hits us with the blessed truth of our inheritance in Christ here in verses 11–14. *[pause]*

Let’s READ the passage. *[READ]*

If you are older, and your parents have passed away, what did you inherit from them? *[pause]*

Maybe it was a certain amount of money, or a precious heirloom, or something like that.

I’m sure you are thankful and cherish anything that you received from what your parents left behind. *[pauseeee]*

Now if your parents are still alive, what do you *think* you will inherit from your parents? *[pauseeee]*

While receiving an inheritance should be a happy, grateful time, it isn’t always for many families.

Rather, it’s often a time of bickering and fighting. *[pause]*

It’s said that there’s a massive estate deep in Southern Mississippi that is owned by a large family.

But apparently “it gets messy with eight brothers and sisters, each having strong opinions and owning an eighth of the massive estate. *[pause]*

Some of the siblings have long ago moved out of state and want nothing to do with the discord or the small dividend check that comes every quarter from their inheritance. *[pause]*

Others believe their father would never have wanted his children to break relationship over something as petty as property.

Yet resentments have grown, angry emails have been written, sides have been taken, and, most of all, relationships have been damaged and probably lost completely.”<sup>1</sup> [pauseeee]

Isn't that so sad? [pause]

An inheritance should be something that is good and beneficial to individuals, yet they are fighting over it.

Well the passage that we will be looking at this morning talks about our inheritance. [pause]

Thankfully, this inheritance is not something that we have to fight over, and it's infinitely better than any earthly inheritance found in this life. [pauseeee]

Looking at our passage this morning, the first truth that we discover is that...

### **I. In Christ, we have an inheritance! (11–12)**

Verse 11 says, “In him we have obtained an inheritance.” [pause]

The “him” referred to here is none other than Jesus Christ.

So it's because of our union with Christ that we can be those who receive an inheritance from God. [pause]

This “in him” or “in Christ” language permeates all of the blessings found here.

And so we must never walk away from this all-important truth—the only way that we can have all of these amazing spiritual blessings is because of Christ. [pause]

We did not earn these blessings, or acquire them by ourselves, but they only come to us through and because of Jesus. [pauseeee]

Jesus should be the most important person for us as Christians, always and forever.

May it never be said of us that we have turned away from lifting up Christ as Head and Leader and Lord! [pauseee]

Christ is our all, and so Christ should be our focus and love. [pause]

Has your focus and love for Christ been diminishing lately?

Get back to the glory and priority of Christ! [pauseeeee]

Now think with me about an inheritance. [pause]

You do not earn an inheritance by doing amazing things. [pause]

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew J. Bauman, *Stumbling Towards Wholeness*, NavPress, 2018. Found at: [https://thepastorsworkshop.com/sermon-illustrations/andrew-j-bauman-the-estate-id\\_2716](https://thepastorsworkshop.com/sermon-illustrations/andrew-j-bauman-the-estate-id_2716).

You do not get an inheritance because you accomplished a certain amount of things in your life. [pause]

You receive an inheritance simply because you are in a certain family. [pause]

So an inheritance is unmerited, and therefore, it is really a gift. [pause]

You are born an heir, not made an heir by great deeds.

So also, we are heirs of God, not because we did something amazing. [pause]

You do not do a certain amount of good deeds and then you earn the badge of inheritor.

No, God adopted us into His family when we simply believed in His Son. [pause]

Galatians 3 tells us that “in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.”<sup>2</sup>

And John 1:12–13 says...

“But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” [pause]

Those who believe in Christ are born again, and so born into the family of God, and that means that we are truly in the family of God and truly heirs! [pause]

You see, the only way to receive the inheritance of God is *by grace*. [pause]

God must work in our hearts, softening them and leading them to simply trust in Christ, who did the work for us.

It’s only *in Christ* that we have received an inheritance, for through His redemptive work He has opened up the way for us to become children of God. [pause]

And now, we can’t help but rejoice in being able to be called children of God, who have received an inheritance. [pause]

Many Christians think of themselves as poor and not rich, but when they do this, they are only thinking in terms of material possessions. [pause]

True, genuine Christians are rich, for they are heirs of God!

They have an inheritance, it is *theirs*! [pause]

If you were an inheritor of some massive estate, you wouldn’t view yourself or your future as poor, but as rich.

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<sup>2</sup> Galatians 3:26.

So also, we must remember that we have obtained an inheritance in Christ. *[pause]*

We may not see the fullness of that inheritance until later, but even now it is our's. *[pauseeee]*

As we look to the future, how could we in any way see it as hopeless, dull, or lowly?

We are heirs of God!—Wake up to the reality of that massive truth! *[pauseeeee]*

If you have trusted in Christ alone, then you have an inheritance! Our names are already on it! *[pauseeee]*

When you have those moments of looking at your life, and feeling like you have nothing, remember this verse...

You have an inheritance, and so you have so much. *[pauseeeee]*

Now the question remains: what exactly is this inheritance that the Bible is talking about because it can be kind of hard to grasp what exactly it is. *[pause]*

Well the inheritance is really Heaven and all of its eternal blessings. *[pause]*

In various places, the Bible talks of the inheritance as the kingdom of God, eternal life, or even salvation.<sup>3</sup> *[pauseeee]*

So right now, it may feel like we don't have much. *[pause]*

Our physical life is very precarious, always being open to danger or disease. *[pause]*

We only own a small amount of things, and we are a part of earthly, fragile, wicked nations.

But our inheritance is the complete opposite of those things! *[pause]*

Our inheritance means that someday we get to live forever in Heaven in perpetual bliss!

We will have glorified bodies that will not decay or grow old, and Christ will be King and we will reign with Him.<sup>4</sup> *[pauseeee]*

Just read the descriptions of Heaven and remember how glorious it will be!

It will be amazing, perfect, and breathtaking. *[pause]*

Our minds cannot even fathom how truly spectacular it really will be.

Heaven and its blessings await us as our inheritance, given to us by God in love. *[pauseeeee]*

What else are we told here concerning this inheritance?

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<sup>3</sup> See Matthew 25:34, Matthew 19:29, and Hebrews 1:14 as examples.

<sup>4</sup> See 2 Timothy 2:12 as one example among many.

The verse says, “we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.” *[pauseeee]*

To ‘predestine’ is to determine beforehand, and so what this is saying is that God determined beforehand that we would receive an inheritance. *[pause]*

Before we were born, or did anything good or bad, God determined to graciously give us the inheritance.

Isn’t that amazing? He chose to shower us with so much! *[pauseee]*

This means that the inheritance *isn’t* a last-minute decision that God made, where He thought, “Oh yeah, they belong to me. You know what would be good now? Giving the inheritance.” *[pause]*

Nor did God reluctantly choose to give to us this inheritance.

No, it was in the heart of God to give us eternal life and Heaven, and so He chose to do so in grace.

And actually we are told that it was “according to his purpose.” *[pause]*

He purposed and planned to give us the inheritance! *[pause]*

Us receiving the inheritance is a part of God’s plan from before the beginning of time! *[pauseeee]*

Doesn’t that show us the gracious heart of God?!

He knew that we would sin against Him, and be rebels against Him, yet He purposed to not only forgive us, but to give us Heaven, too. *[pause]*

If that doesn’t astound you, I don’t know what will! *[pauseeee]*

Receiving the inheritance was predetermined in the plan of God, but how do we know that this plan will come to fruition? *[pause]*

If you think about it, we make plans and have purposes all the time that are good, but that fall through. *[pause]*

We plan to go somewhere on a certain day, but we get sick and can’t go.

We intend to get a task done at a certain time, but something else pops up that’s a higher priority. *[pause]*

Our intentions and plans don’t always come to be, but here’s the thing—God isn’t us. *[pauseeee]*

Notice what verse 11 says, “having been predestined according to the purpose of him *who works all things according to the counsel of his will.*” *[pauseeee]*

Our inheritance is the predetermined purpose of God, and how do we know that it will come to be?....

Because He “works all things according to the counsel of his will.” *[pauseeee]*

Just consider what that is telling us because it’s huge!

**It’s telling us that God always does what He intends to do.** *[pauseeee]*

The word ‘works’ here has the idea of implements, causes to function, or carries into effect.

**So God always works, executes, or accomplishes His purposes.** *[pauseee]*

We definitely couldn’t say that about ourselves and our purposes, but God can because He’s God! *[pauseeee]*

Isn’t that such an encouraging truth?

What God purposes, He for sure does. *[pause]*

**His plans are carried out 100% of the time, without fail.**

And this working of His plan involves “all things”—it’s comprehensive! *[pauseeee]*

**Nothing is outside of His control, for He works all things according to His purpose.**

He works, moves, directs, and governs everything in order that His will will be accomplished. *[pauseeee]*

Here in verse 11 we are told that it’s the counsel of His will that is directing His work. *[pause]*

We could put it this way...

**God has ultimate goals for the universe that He has decided and resolved to accomplish, and He effectually works all things, so that those purposes *are or will be* accomplished.** *[pauseeee]*

Isn’t that mind-blowing!

**As Isaiah 14:27 says, “For the Lord of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back?”** *[pauseee]*

What comfort, what joy, what relief!

We don’t have to be in control, for we can’t control things anyway, but we don’t have to even try to be in control, for God is! *[pauseee]*

Our God is sovereign, He’s in control, and He’s providentially working all things for His good purposes.

So don't fret, Christian. *[pause]*

No matter how bleak things look, no matter how dark, or hopeless things look—God is working His good will. *[pauseeee]*

God is not in Heaven, frantically trying to respond to unforeseen events, and sweating, trying to make sure everything works correctly. *[pause]*

He's not like some guy, rushing around trying to turn knobs and push buttons on time and struggling to keep up.

No, He's the One working all things for His plan, and one aspect of that plan is to give us an inheritance. *[pauseeee]*

What confidence that gives us that we will *surely* receive the inheritance...

For if the One who effectually works all things has determined that we would receive an inheritance—then we will *definitely* receive it! *[pauseeee]*

So God has determined that we would obtain an inheritance, but we also see that He has determined this so that we would praise His glory. *[pause]*

God has ordained and is working things so that we are brought to our proper end: the glory of God. *[pause]*

Look there at verse 12, He did this, “so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.” *[pause]*

The reason for God planning us to be heirs is not so that we would ignore Him, but so that we would be led to praise Him. *[pause]*

Being heirs of God's great, eternal inheritance should motivate us to continual praise! *[pauseeee]*

Way too often, we accept the blessings of God, but neglect to give Him praise for it all. *[pause]*

We act entitled, ungrateful, or unhappy after receiving so much. *[pause]*

Consider how often you grumble versus how often you are grateful. *[pause]*

Consider how little praise you give, compared to how much praise God deserves from you. *[pauseee]*

All of the blessings of God, even the inheritance we have, should lead our hearts to praise Him.

So praise Him now in your heart! Thank Him! *[pause]*

Rejoice in what He has done, lift up His name, and show off His glory to those you interact with. *[pauseeee]*

In Christ, we have obtained an inheritance—that’s what we see in verses 11–12, but what do we see as we go further into verses 13–14? *[pause]*

*We see that...*

## **II. In Christ, we have received the Spirit! (13–14)**

Verse 13 says, “In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.” *[pause]*

Here is still another blessing of being ‘in Christ’, and it’s receiving the Spirit. *[pause]*

The amount of blessings we have received is so much!

Election, adoption, forgiveness, inheritance, and now the Spirit. *[pause]*

All of these things come to us, not by merit, but by grace. *[pauseeee]*

Notice how it is that we have the privilege and blessing of having the Holy Spirit within us...

He says, “when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him,” — that’s when we were sealed with the Holy Spirit. *[pause]*

Hearing and believing—that’s not hard work.

We didn’t have to climb some super spiritual ladder of good works before we received the Spirit.

We didn’t need to go through massive amounts of red tape, attain some super godly spirituality, or pay for it with a certain amount of tithing.

No, we receive the Spirit when we simply hear and believe the gospel! *[pauseeee]*

What grace of God—He gives the Spirit to all who believe in Christ!

And so this shows us something important—you *must* believe in order to receive the Spirit. *[pause]*

Everyone doesn’t just instantly and naturally have the Spirit of God within them, but they must hear and believe the good news of what Jesus Christ did for them on the Cross first. *[pause]*

There is no other way. *[pause]*

There’s no alternate way to have the Spirit within you, skirting around Christ.

No, faith in Jesus is the way to be sealed with the Spirit. *[pauseeee]*

We must not only *hear* what Jesus has done for us, but we must also *believe* in Him. *[pauseeee]*

There are some maybe even in this room who have heard what Jesus has done many, many times in your life.

But my question for you is, have you actually personally trusted in Him and what He did for you? *[pause]*

Hearing is not enough, but you must trust! *[pauseeee]*

You see, we don't *only* receive forgiveness and eternal life when we believe the gospel, but we also receive the promised Spirit. *[pause]*

He was promised by Christ in numerous places, and He came most evidently in Acts 2...

The Spirit is God, and the third person of the Trinity. *[pause]*

It's the Spirit who gives us life—He empowers us for service and gives us spiritual gifts. *[pause]*

The Spirit works in us to be more holy and to produce the fruits of the Spirit.

He leads and guides us in life, and illuminates the truth of Scripture, so that we understand it better. *[pause]*

The Holy Spirit is the presence of God in our lives, and gives us assurance that we are His.

And He is the Comforter and Helper, as we live our Christian lives. *[pauseeeee]*

It's this Spirit that we receive when we trust in Christ, so that means that every believer receives the Spirit!

There is no such thing as a true Christian, who does not have the Holy Spirit. *[pauseeee]*

And so Paul is making something clear here—when we placed our faith in Jesus Christ, we have been “sealed” by the Spirit. *[pause]*

Seals were used back in antiquity to mark something out as authentic, and also to guard against tampering.

So a king would seal an edict not only to prove that it was his edict, but also to prevent it from being tampered with before it reached its proper destination. *[pause]*

So likewise, as believers we have been “sealed” with the Spirit!

By having the Spirit, we show that we belong to God, but also, the Spirit guards our eternal life, so that we will for sure receive our inheritance. *[pause]*

That's why right after this, Paul says of the Spirit that He “is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.” *[pauseeee]*

You know how sometimes a product will have a stamp on it that says, “Guaranteed Authentic” or “Guaranteed Fresh”? *[pause]*

Well the Spirit is like a seal or stamp on our lives saying, “Guaranteed an Inheritance”! *[pause]*

It’s having the Spirit that guarantees and thus reassures our hearts that we will truly experience Heaven and all of its eternal blessings!

In fact, the Spirit is actually more than just a stamp of guarantee, for the word used here actually refers to something like a down payment or first installment. *[pause]*

The Spirit being given to us is like God making a deposit, pledging to give us the rest in the future.

So the Spirit is God’s promise to us, “The inheritance *will be* given to you, just look at how I gave you Spirit!” *[pause]*

There’s a news story about two brothers who were so poor they lived in a cave and got by selling scavenged junk. *[pause]*

Well here, they found out that they were in line to receive a \$6.6 billion inheritance from a long-lost grandmother. *[pause]*

Apparently, the only way that lawyers found and notified these brothers was by doing genealogical research into the deceased grandmother’s family line. *[pause]*

But what’s interesting is that the news article ends with saying this...

“The brothers...are trying to track down their mother’s death certificate to prove relation to their grandmother before traveling to Germany to claim the fortune.”<sup>5</sup> *[pause]*

The whole inheritance that the two brothers were to receive hinged on finding that death certificate, and so they didn’t have a guarantee of the inheritance until then. *[pause]*

Thankfully, we aren’t in that predicament—we *have* our guarantee!

Every reminder that you have the Spirit is a reassurance or guarantee that you not only belong to God, but that Heaven and all of its eternal blessings are yours someday. *[pause]*

You don’t have to doubt or be a skeptic, but you can be confident that if you have the Spirit, you will have the inheritance! *[pause]*

The Lord always goes over and above to comfort and reassure us of what He has given to us!

God always goes over and above in grace! *[pause]*

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna34264774>.

Once again, we see that God does this “to the praise of his glory.” *[pause]*

We have been sealed by the Spirit for our inheritance so that He would get the glory.

Where else could all of this eternal, amazing, spectacular, gracious blessings lead to other than to the praise of His glory? *[pause]*

He did it all through Christ! *[pause]*

We didn’t accomplish these things or merit them, but received them by grace — may God get the glory! *[pauseeee]*

*As we consider what we learned this morning, we see that...*

**In Christ, we have a Spirit-guaranteed inheritance, so praise the Lord!**

What a great, gracious, and glorious God that we have!

He has given us so much, and it’s all in and through and because of Jesus. *[pause]*

We have simply heard and believed the gospel message, trusting in Christ, and look at how much we have been given.

What else could we do, but live for the praise of God’s glory? *[pauseeee]*

As we conclude this morning, I want us to think about how being heirs of God impacts our daily lives. *[pause]*

First, being an heir of God means that you belong to God as one of His beloved children and heirs. *[pause]*

No matter what people say of you, no matter what you go through in this life, you can remember that you are loved by God and belong to Him.

What a difference that makes! *[pause]*

When you are treated horribly by others, you can remember that you are loved by God as a child and heir! *[pause]*

They may say and think some of meanest things, but you are greatly loved by the Lord of the Universe. *[pauseeee]*

Secondly, being an heir of God means that I have been given so much, and will receive even more someday! *[pauseeee]*

A formerly estranged son told the story of how he was reunited with his father...

He said, “For a year I begged on the streets for a living. *[pause]*

One day I touched a man on the shoulder and said, ‘Hey, mister, can you give me a dime?’  
*[pause]*

As soon as I saw his face I was shocked to see that it was my own father, [and] I said, ‘Father, Father, do you know me?’ *[pause]*

Throwing his arms around me and with tears in his eyes, he said, ‘Oh my son, at last I’ve found you! I’ve found you! You want a dime? Why, EVERYTHING I have is yours!’” *[pause]*

So the formerly estranged son says this about that story...

“Just think of it. I was a vagrant. I stood begging my own father for ten cents, when for 18 years he had been looking for me to give me ALL that he had.”<sup>6</sup> *[pauseeee]*

No matter how materially poor you are in this life, you are actually immeasurably rich! *[pause]*

We don’t have to beg for 10 cents, when we are heirs of God.

So we don’t have to live for the here-and-now material possessions because we have an inheritance to come that far outweighs it all! *[pause]*

We are freed to serve Him with our lives, and give our all for His cause.

I have something better, more sure, and more certain to come, and it’s guaranteed and promised—the pledge and down payment have been given. *[pauseeee]*

And lastly, being an heir of God means that we are assured eternal life, as well as Heaven and all of its glories. *[pause]*

So although you are weak, frail, or even on death’s doorstep, you can have confidence that your physical death is not truly the end. *[pause]*

If you have trusted in Jesus Christ to be saved...

The challenges of this life, and even “the valley of the shadow of death”<sup>7</sup> are not ultimate threats to you, but you have an assured future and what an amazing, glorious future it is! *[pauseeee]*

What a privilege, what an honor, and what grace to be called children of God.

As Romans says, “The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> [https://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon5/unclaimed\\_inheritance.htm](https://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon5/unclaimed_inheritance.htm).

<sup>7</sup> Psalm 23:4.

<sup>8</sup> Romans 8:16–17a.