

“Sealed”

Sermon by Dan Harrison, Pastor, Church of the Covenant, Lynchburg, VA 8/8/2021

II Corinthians 1:21-22

The Apostle Paul said it best, that “God’s Spirit and our spirit are both witnesses to the fact that we are children of God” (Romans 8:16). This statement seems almost too easy to pass over. But it has revolutionary power within its meaning, and must be looked at more carefully. In that simple verse in Romans 8, we are being told that we are children of God because our spirits (our souls, our individual essence) connects to the Creator’s spirit, and together affirms that connection that we are all the children of the Creator.

This isn’t the first time we see this relationship affirmed, right? We know that in one of Jesus’ very first sermons (the Sermon on the Mount) that he said, “Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God” (Matthew 5:9). Here we see that the main characteristic for being titled “children of God” is making peace. Now let me take these pieces as parts of the foundation we find in our how relate to our Creator, and then turn to the Scripture we read today in II Corinthians. And here we learn that the Spirit of God has connected to ours as a sort of “deposit,” as a down payment of what is to come—as a preview of the life beyond this one. It is this connection that gives us immense hope, that gives us purpose. It is within this connection that we feel empowered to channel peace to all that we encounter in this life.

However, what I find most comforting in this passage, isn’t just the connection between our spirit and God’s, thought that is comforting. What really grabs my attention is the idea that God has “set upon us a seal of belonging.” The idea of a “seal” has a feeling of permanence to it, like it’s something that can’t be broken. In this case, the original Greek word *sphragizo* also has a connotation of “mark” or “stamp” with it. Meaning not just that there is a permanent connection but that the connection is marked with God’s stamp on it—

So, you are sealed in with God and you are marked as belonging to God. This is encouraging news! But what I find most encouraging about this special seal, is the single characteristic (or the main identifying marker) that proves this special seal: Peacemaking. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.”

Go and promote peace for this is the seal of God, the seal of Christ. Shalom.