

July 12, 2015  
Sermon for the Sixth Sunday after Pentecost  
St Peter Lutheran Church  
Bowie, TX  
Larry Knobloch, Pastor  
Ephesians 1:3–14

*J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus*

Ephesians 1:3–14 (ESV)

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup> even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, <sup>8</sup> which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup> making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ <sup>10</sup> as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. <sup>11</sup> In him 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, <sup>12</sup> so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup> 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, <sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

A few months back, I saw a news story about a young man that was at a charity auction benefiting the families of fallen officers. (COPS)

His father was a Weld county Colorado sheriff's deputy who had been killed in the line of duty five years earlier and his former patrol car was in the auction.

The young man had plans to buy the car and to restore it as a tribute and memory of his father.

As the auction progressed, the young man ran out of money. He watched helplessly with tears in his eyes as the bidding went higher and higher. Finally the bidding was over. His father's car had been sold with the winning bid of \$60,000, it was way out of his reach; gone, just like his Dad.

As the keys were handed over to the winning bidder, a local rancher, the young man couldn't even watch ... until the winning bidder walked over and handed him the keys to his father's with the simple words of "Tanner, here's your car."

What a great act of love and charity. \$60,000 given to a fund for fallen officers and the car that was won, given to a child of a fallen officer.

What a great deal!

What if someone else had come up with a really good deal, then gave you the benefit of that deal.

"Well that would never happen to me," you say?

Well, that's exactly what has happened.

It happened about 2000 years ago, on a hill called Golgotha, outside of Jerusalem.

In today's Epistle reading, Paul explains the really good deal that has come to us through Christ's life, death, and resurrection. Let's look at that really good deal.

To begin with, we will talk about the two things that we receive in this deal: salvation and eternal life.

Salvation equals forgiveness of our sins.

That, in itself, is a big deal. Without forgiveness, we would be recipients of the wrath God has established for unrepentant, unforgiven sinners. Paul says it like this:

*"God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God (Ro 5:8-9 ESV).*

However, salvation is more than just being saved from God's wrath.

Our salvation also saves us from a life of sin. People who possess salvation don't have to live lives that are in bondage to sin. Listen to Paul speaking to the Roman Christians:

*"Thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness." (Ro 6:17-18 ESV).*

Once you have been saved, you can put your life of sin behind you.

It doesn't matter what your past sins are, you can push those sins out of your life by the power of the Holy Spirit through the blood of Christ.

That isn't just a big deal. That's a great deal!

With salvation comes eternal life.

But before we can talk about eternal life we must be clear about one thing.

Everyone will live forever.

All people, whether they believe in Jesus as their personal Savior or not, will live forever. The difference our faith makes is the difference between heaven and hell.

With that out of the way, you can see that when I say eternal life I mean more than just eternal existence. I'm talking about eternal existence in the presence of God. In his second letter, Peter writes this: *For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ* (2 Pe 1:11 ESV).

This eternal life isn't something we will receive some day. Eternal life is ours now. Possession of eternal life gives us three qualities the unsaved don't have. The first quality is peace. We have peace with God.

At this very moment, God's anger is being turned away from you and me. Scripture tells us: *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ* (Ro 5:1 ESV).

We have peace with the rest of humanity. Greed prompts many sins that are committed by one person upon another. Our salvation releases us from that greed, because the love of God means that our concern is for our neighbor's salvation not his possessions.

We have peace with our circumstances. We actually possess a peace which tells us that no matter what is going on in the world, everything is under God's control. What a comfort Paul gives us when he says: *"We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."* (Ro 8:28 ESV).

The second quality is holiness. We live in the realm of righteousness because we are the righteousness of Christ.

When Jesus took our sins upon Himself, He gave us His righteousness.

Now, we can live our lives in the pursuit of holiness. We are set apart as God's people. The third quality is eternity itself. How awful it must be to believe that this life is all there is; to live thinking that all of this pain and suffering is as good as it gets.

Because we have eternal life, we have a different viewpoint on life. We can say with the hymn writer, "I'm but a stranger here. Heaven is my home."

This is truly a good deal, but how did we come to receive salvation and forgiveness. In the book of Romans, we read: "*So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ*" (Ro 10:17 ESV).

When you heard the true Word of God, the Holy Spirit came to your heart with faith.

Exactly what Word of God did you hear?

Our reading says you heard: *the Gospel of your salvation* (Eph 1:13 ESV).

The word Gospel means "good news." What you heard was the truth that, because of Jesus, eternal life in God's presence can be yours.

When you heard the Gospel of your salvation, with the help of the Holy Spirit, you trusted in what you heard. The Bible contains three irrefutable facts that make your trust in God's Word perfectly reasonable.

First, we are all sinners. The Bible tells us we are born sinful and in need of forgiveness.

Sin isn't something we learn to do. Sin is a defect we are all born with.

Can we prove that? Yes. Put several two-year-olds in a playpen. Then add one toy. The first word you hear will be, "Mine."

Our sinful nature shows even in the youngest of humans.

Second, on their own, no one will ever be good enough for Heaven.

There are simply no perfect people.

Try as hard as we will, no one (with the exception of Jesus) will ever lead a perfect life. Even the great apostle Paul confesses: *“I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate”*. (Ro 7:15 ESV)

Third, Jesus defeated death and, therefore, He holds the keys to eternal life in heaven.

But how can we be sure Jesus defeated death?

We have eyewitnesses like John, Mary Magdalene, and many more. Paul says: *“Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas (Peter), then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep (1 Co 15:3-6 ESV).*

That’s over 500 eyewitnesses to the fact that Jesus defeated death. The process is simple and logical. You heard God’s Word. The Holy Spirit brought faith to your heart. You used that faith to trust in Jesus as your person Savior. Receiving the salvation Jesus won for us, is as simple as believing. What an amazing deal.

Quite often a sermon like this brings this question from someone, *“All you’ve said sounds good, but how do I know I’m saved?”*

Many saved Christians have concerns about their salvation. These fears stem from our knowledge of just how sinful we are.

Satan uses our sinful nature to feed us questions and make us doubt our Savior. So, how can you be sure your future lies in heaven with our Lord?

To answer this question we must consider a business term. Quite often, when you want to buy something but you're not going to immediately pay the full price, you give the seller earnest money or a down payment.

When Christ died on the cross, He bought your salvation...He pain in full. However, you will not receive all the benefits of your salvation until you are united with Jesus in heaven.

Until then, we have been given the Holy Spirit as our earnest or down payment. The text tells us: "*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, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory*". (Eph 1:13-14 ESV)

The follow-up question is, "How do I know I have the Holy Spirit?" That's easy. When you read the Bible, does it tell you that God loves you and that Jesus is your Savior?

You can't feel God's love or know Jesus is your Savior without the presence of the Holy Spirit in your heart. In fact, you wouldn't even care enough to ask the question.

Through Paul we are assured that: "*No one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit*". (1 Co 12:3 ESV).

If you can confess Jesus is your Lord and Savior, you have the Holy Spirit. What a deal! Jesus died for your sins and rose again to guarantee your eternal life in heaven with Him.

It's all yours and all you need to do is believe.

Friends, a deal this good is too good to keep to yourself.

Jesus has handed you the keys to heaven. Just like Tanner received the keys to his father's car at no cost to him, Jesus has handed you the keys to your heavenly Father's kingdom. Jesus did all of the work, He's paid the full price.

This week, find someone who's looking for the eternal deal of a lifetime and explain to them the Gospel of their salvation. There will be numerous opportunities, especially this week with Vacation Bible School. You can help set up this afternoon. You can show up any time this week to help out or even just to watch and hear God's Word proclaimed. You'll be amazed at how the Lord might use you...maybe even in the last way that you thought possible.

Salvation is yours. And just like any get together, it's much more fulfilling when all of your friends are there, so tell a friend, they may be your future brother or sister in Christ. Share the blessings and watch them multiply.

Amen.

*S.D.G.—Soli Deo Gloria*

### **Sermon Outline**

Our Really Good Deal

Ephesians 1:3–14

1. Salvation & Eternal Life.
2. Possession of eternal life gives us three qualities the unsaved don't have.
3. Three facts that make your trust in God's Word perfectly reasonable.

<http://www.9news.com/story/news/local/2015/05/13/sam-brownlee-auction/27242595/>

GREELEY - A man who bought the former service car of a fallen Weld County Sheriff's deputy during an auction Wednesday gave the vehicle to the deputy's son, Tanner Brownlee.

Steve Wells bid \$60,000 for the 2010 Dodge Charger valued at \$12,500. The car was used by Sam Brownlee, who [was killed in 2010](#) in the line of duty.

<http://archive.9news.com/news/story.aspx?storyid=165480&catid=339>

After placing the winning bid, Wells walked over to Brownlee's son and handed the keys to him, saying "Tanner, here's your car."

"Realizing how much this car meant to him, I understand it now, and I want to keep that and hold onto it," Tanner told 9NEWS before the auction.

WEB EXTRA: Car auction. 9NEWS.com. 05/13/15.

Tanner was 15 when his father died, and says he and his younger brother don't have much to remember their father. He believes having his father's former service car will help strengthen their connection.

"He put time and work into it. He drove it every day, and so to have something like that will be bigger than a lot of things I could have gotten," Tanner said.

Wells, who declined an interview, is a rancher who owns thousands of acres of oil-rich land in Weld County.

The proceeds from the auction went to COPS, the [Concerns of Police Survivors](#). It's a national organization that offers emotional support services to the families of fallen officers, including Deputy Brownlee's family.

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