Sealed with the Spirit of Promise

Let us turn to our Bibles to Ephesians chapter 1. Ephesians chapter 1 verses 13 to 14. Ephesians chapter 1 verses 13 to 14. This is the end of a long doxology or a theology of praise of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirits that I've been preaching through.

Verses 3 to 14 is one long sentence, and Paul speaks of the Father electing and arranging salvation from eternity past, and then he pivots to the Son, verses 6 and following, who has accomplished our redemption in history 2,000 years ago, and here he pivots again after saying twice already to the praise of His glorious grace, and verses 13 to 14 to the Holy Spirit and His application of the work of Jesus, which was accomplished for us and arranged by the Father, and thus we see the blessed doxology of praise of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the glorious Trinity, and here we are finishing up on the work of the Spirit, particular in this text of the sealing work of the third member of the Trinity. Let us listen therefore attentively to the word of God. In Him you also trust that after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, on whom also having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who was the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession to the praise of His glory.

Let us pray. We are here, God, to praise and honor You, to acknowledge who You are, Lord, and to be strengthened by Your truth here in the preached word. And may this be the case.

May Your Spirit especially be here in double portion, Lord, for any here who are not Yours, or others who are doubting, and those who are struggling. Whatever the case may be, as You know all our hearts, God, may this sermon therefore be relevant to that extent. And in all these things, that Your name may be glorified, our God and Savior.

Amen. The passage, as I summarized last several sermons here, is part of the broader biblical teaching. In particular, this verses 13 and 14 is part of a broader teaching, not just the broader text of verses 3 to 14, but of the Bible, of growing in grace.

It speaks of hearing the gospel. It speaks of believing the truth. It speaks of being sealed by the Holy Spirit.

These are part and parcel of sanctification or becoming more like Jesus. And we use the phrase growing in grace, at least that's what I've heard over the years, often from a personal perspective, and there's nothing wrong with that. But the confession of our Bible and the confession here of Paul starts from the divine solution moving towards the application by the Spirit, from the Father in eternity past who arranged and elected His people in salvation for us, to the Son 2,000 years ago, to the here and now in which we believe, verse 13, or had believed, and therefore are sealed by the Spirit of promise.

They're continually to be sealed and blessed by Him. Paul writes about believing in the sealing here by the Holy Ghost. They're obviously here tied together in this text, but the sealing aspect is interesting here because of the sacraments of the New Testament.

So I'll be touching upon those as well. Baptism and communion or the Lord's Supper. A sacrament is what? A sign and a seal.

That's the same word here of the covenant of grace, and that by the Holy Spirit.

Sealed by Believing

The first point, the sealed by believing or sealing by believing. The word sealed was a mystery to me for a number of years when I was younger.

What exactly does this mean? A simple way of describing it is a confirmation of the truth. A confirmation of the truth upon our conscience in particular that God is ours and we are His. Like the king's seal upon a letter to authenticate his love to you or a certificate of authenticity that perhaps you're not settling your mind about how competent you are.

We have these things with respect to graduation, for example, or a marriage ring that's there to further confirm your commitment to one another as husband or wife. We have this, in other words, in everyday life. It is not something to come out of the blue that God says, I'm going to do this sealing thing that you never heard of before, so let me go ahead and explain it to you.

No, it's assumed that this audience knows what this sealing is about because it's part of everyday life that God took like covenants. We've had covenants from day one, agreements, treaties. God takes it, brings it to us, and says, I'm going to use it in a special way to help you grow as a believer as only He can.

So the sealing aspect here is a confirmation of the truth of the gospel upon your conscience. John Brown of Hetherington, who was a Scottish Presbyterian professor of the mid and late 1700s, followed the tradition of his forefathers and did a commentary on the Shorter Catechism, on the Westminster Shorter Catechism. And a catechism, as we recall, is a series of questions and answers to help teach the child, usually for the shorter, and the adults who are new to the Christian faith, key truths of the Bible in summary form.

And what they did is quite interesting. John Fisher before him and other Puritans of the time, they had a series of questions of those series of questions. So you would have question one, what is the chief end of man? Glorify God and join forever.

And John Brown would have another question below that. What does it mean to glorify God? Or what does it mean to have a chief end? And it's actually helpful. So I commend it to you.

I've not actually read through all of it. Obviously, it's a lot more reading, but it could be helpful, I think, if you wanted to go through the Shorter Catechism with someone else explaining that to you a little more. And he has here, under the questions with respect to the sacraments, what is meant by the signs sealing Christ and His benefits? What is meant by this act of sealing the work of Christ and His benefits for us? It's confirming our interest in Christ and His blessings.

He uses that pivotal word, confirming. Now, he uses the two classical proof texts with respect to sealing. The word seal is used in two other texts with respect to our deliverance from sin.

And the first place is with respect to circumcision, Romans 4. Romans 4, right? A confirming interest in our salvation of Christ and His benefits for us. Romans 4.11, and he, that is Abraham, received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also. Paul's argument, Romans 4, he starts out with, arguing that you are not saved by your good works.

You have a lot of Jewish influence, obviously, in the New Testament era. The pharisaical is probably a better way of saying influence. That you work hard enough that your circumcision, in fact, is in some way commendable to you before God and is a work of righteousness.

And he argues through the Psalms, through David in the earlier part, and now through Abraham in the life, right through the book of Genesis, that from the very beginning, justification, one's right standing before God, it was never about your good works, how perfect you are, how holy, how much church attendance that you have, but rather by faith in Christ alone. It's a declarative act of the judge of the universe that you are perfect in Jesus Christ. His robe of righteousness wraps around you and therefore you're no longer imputed unto sin, but imputed righteousness, the righteousness of another that is Jesus Christ.

That's the argument of Romans 4. And in part of that argument, Paul comes along and brings up other truths, as he often does. He has this one major point, as we saw here in Ephesians 1, and all these other truths hanging off of it. You're like, wow, look at all this beautiful fruit.

Where did all this come from? It's just so obvious to him. In part, what was obvious to him was circumcision. The sign of circumcision was also a seal of the righteousness of the faith, the faith that Abraham had before he was circumcised.

He believed in the Messiah to come. He was saved without the circumcision, but rather it confirmed that belief. It made it more real and authentic in his conscience before God.

That's what the sealing aspect does of, in this case, the Old Testament sacrament. What's a sacrament? A sign and seal of the covenant of grace. There in the Old Testament form, circumcision, Passover, for example.

In the New Testament, we have baptism, which replaces circumcision. Colossians tells us this. And, of course, the Lord's Supper.

Next we have 1 Peter 3.21. So these are, again, the two classic texts that speak of sealing. There's not a lot of texts, in fact, in the New Testament that use this particular word sealing. I'm explaining to you what sealing is all about.

1 Peter 3.21 is an interesting passage, of course. There is also an anti-type which now saves us. Baptism, not the removal of the filth of the flesh, not that, but instead the answer of a good conscience towards God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

So this explains here in 1 Peter what the sealing aspect does of baptism. It is an answer of a good conscience towards God. It's not about washing away dirt and cleaning yourself.

It's not about ceremonial cleaning either because the good godly Jews recognized the baptism of the Old Testament and the washings and the various washings that they had was never about getting the dirt off your hands. But it was a ceremonial way of expressing holiness before God. It was always that case.

Anything else was secondary. They understood that. And here Peter's explaining, look, this baptism, and he's pointing, of course, to the Noahic flood and the ark and being preserved through the waters.

And he pivots from that and talks about this idea of baptism and the effect of it, which is as a sealing effect, the answer of a good conscience. It's about the conscience of the one who is baptized. And what does the conscience have to do with anything? It has to do with God always and one another secondary.

I cannot, should not, and will not bind your conscience, if I can avoid it. God can and always shall and would and should bind your conscience and redirect it. Tell you're right, tell you you are wrong by his word and spirit, I cannot.

And so when he speaks of conscience here and his conscience towards God, the text tells us, that's what the sealing aspect is about. Confirms our faith in Jesus towards God, that we are his and he is ours and that we are delivered and saved. And the act of sealing, therefore, the confirmation upon our conscience is while believing.

And whom also you trusted. Verse 13, after you heard the word of truth, do you have to hear the truth, believe the truth, the gospel of your salvation, you were sealed. After you believed or during you were believed, you were sealed.

After you heard the word of truth, more precisely, the after is with respect to hearing the truth, not the sealing. You were sealed. It happened at the same time.

And as humans, the Lord our God uses our moral agency for his glory. Another way of describing this is, as much as Paul is magnifying the grace of God the Father, God the Son, and now God the Holy Spirit in these 12 verses, you still exist and you are still called to believe and to trust in Jesus the Messiah. God does not believe for you, is the other way of saying this.

You are not a robot. Calvin has never taught that. But teach that you are a moral agent and that you are nevertheless dependent upon God.

And we'll talk about that in the next bit here, about faith or believing, but it's still you who believes. And yes, faith is a gift of God, but still it is you who believes. Ephesians 2.8 reminds us that it is a gift of God.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God. And it makes sense, because otherwise you would have reason to boast. Look, I believe, and Paul argues that in Romans elsewhere, Romans 3. Not about my boasting, but about God's grace and his mercy for us.

Acts 13.48 we read, for by, excuse me, now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. They hear the gospel, they glorify the word of the Lord, the gospel, the good news, the preaching, and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believe. So already from that text you see, again, that faith itself comes after the fact that the Father arranged our redemption from eternity past.

It is a fruit of his work upon us. It comes from him. And because of God's power in saving us through faith, the word of the Lord is being spread throughout all the region, we read in the verse right after Acts 13.48. God uses our decisions, our growth, our salvation for his glory.

But what is it to believe? He says here, you also trust that after you heard the word of truth, the gospel, whom having believed, so he mentions it twice here, you were sealed. We have the answer to this in summary form, question 86 of the Shorter Catechism. What is faith in Jesus Christ? Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation as he has offered to us in the gospel, in the good news.

So it's a saving grace, that is, comes from him. I already went through those texts, Ephesians 2.8 and Acts 13.48, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone, or as summarized in the Confession of the Self, chapter 14, resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life. That it is what he has done, not what we have done.

We even acknowledge our faith is a gift that comes from him. We can't rest upon our faith. There are Christians who teach that you must rest upon your faith.

How much faith do you have? Do you believe enough? And of course the answer is no. I can't believe enough. I keep failing in my belief.

My faith is weak. Lord, I believe. Help thou my unbelief, is the cry of all Christians.

That's out of Mark, the gospel of Mark. It is a trust and reliance upon him that he will save us in spite of our sins, in spite of our weak and failing faith. And that's glorious good news.

That's wonderful news. Now people of course have faith in the general sense that you have to trust somebody. Children grow up having faith in their parents, they trust in their parents, and of course they get a little older and find out, oh my parents don't know everything.

But thankfully they're mature enough and their faith doesn't fall apart. They're just more mature about it. We don't have that problem with God.

This is a saving faith. This is trusting in God for our deliverance, and we're going to grow up and find out he saves us even more because we see more of our own sins. So it's not the change in him, it's a change in us as we become more mature as believers.

And we rejoice all the more that he delivered and saved us in spite of and contrary to our fallen nature. So that's what sealing is, and it's tied here in the text to believing or trusting in Jesus Christ. Confirmation upon our conscience.

Sealed by the Spirit

But as we'll see here, I think both are expressed here in the text, it's also by the Holy Spirit or through the Holy Spirit that we have this confirmation. Now the first thing I want to point out here is that the sealing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, I believe argues and implies that the Holy Spirit therefore is God. The text here only makes sense if the Holy Spirit himself is divine, because only God can give absolute assurance of salvation.

Only he can give you confirmation upon your conscience. Nobody else can and should. Even the pastors, and I know some of the Dutch traditions, they'll have a confirmation of faith on the pulpit, declaration of sins and confirmation, declaration of the gospel and forgiveness.

They're not saying the pastor says that therefore it's true, but rather he's expressing the truth of God's word that if you believe you are indeed saved, you can have confidence in that fact. So they're just a mouthpiece. It's not ever them per se, because only the divine can assuage your conscience, confirm the truth of the good news upon you.

And if that's the case, then the Holy Spirit doing this must be divine. Now of course the Spirit is a necessary power here of the sealing of our conscience that we are saved, that Christ is ours in all his benefits. And the gift of faith itself of course is from God.

The Spirit here therefore is sealing us. And he's sealing us upon our conscience and drawing us unto greater truth by his might and his power. Our text here ties the confirmation of our soul, the sealing aspect, to believing and the Holy Ghost.

Remind us again, whom also having believed you were sealed. They are tied together here. But we know that the sealing aspect as well, as we read in Romans 4, was in the sacraments.

And if it's true for the Old Testament sacrament of circumcision, how much more for the New Testament with greater glory and greater grace in the sacraments given to us. If they're given the benefit of a sealing upon their conscience in circumcision, why would God remove that for us in the New Testament? That's why you can use that proof text there from the New Testament sacraments in explaining that baptism and Lord's Supper also seal as well. And in fact they seal, if we could say even more, because we have more revelation.

More revelation is a condition for more grace. There's more grace in the New Testament. They were saved, yes, the same, but we were given more gifts, more maturations, perhaps another way of saying it.

When people say more grace, it can be kind of unclear and equivocal. I mean by that, we are more mature collectively and individually compared to the Old Testament saints. I know you don't always feel like it, but go through some of what was going on in the Old Testament, you ask yourself, what were they doing? What were they thinking sometimes? Of course, we go to heaven, we're going to say the same thing about ourselves.

And so here, let me go, therefore give a broader take on the means of grace it's called and sealing. So this is sealing tied to the act of believing and it's that by the Holy Spirit of promise and gift upon us. But it's also sealing happens with the sacraments and therefore the Spirit, as we see here, is tied to the sacraments to the extent that there is belief and faith and trust in Jesus Christ in the act of the sacraments.

But more broadly, means of grace are tools by the Holy Spirit to help us become more like Him, to grow as believers. And so we have question 88 of the Shorter Catechism, which is a broad overview of the benefits of Christ Jesus for His people. What are the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption? So you have the inward means here, the Holy Spirit upon our conscience and upon our soul and dwelling in us, in fact, and strengthening us and bringing conviction, bringing regeneration as well as confirmation or sealing upon us.

And the outward means, see the contrast here, that's why the language is careful. What are the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates or brings forth and gives to us the benefits of redemption, of our salvation, of becoming more like Jesus Christ? The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption are His ordinances, especially the Word, sacraments, and prayer, all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation. And that's a mouthful, to be sure.

That's the answer of question 88 of the Shorter Catechism that God has granted us outward and ordinary means, excuse me, larger catechism, outward and ordinary means to grow. And three are highlighted, especially Word and what? Sacraments, baptism in the Lord's Supper, and prayer. God has given this to the church.

These are what? Outward acts. The Word, both read, yeah, you can read quietly to yourself, but often we read out loud to one another, and certainly we read it out loud here, and especially preaching of the Word, which is certainly verbal and outward upon your ears. The sacrament is clearly outward acts, and prayer itself is often an outward act as well, as you speak out loud in your prayer life, although you can keep it quiet as well.

These are outward means. Don't lose sight of this. It's not the inward means.

What are the inward means? You've never thought of this, I suppose. Faith and repentance. You can't see faith.

It's an inward act. You can't see repentance, although there are outward signs of it, although they differ amongst us to varying degrees and different cultures, in fact. I don't expect you to throw sackcloth and ashes upon you on the ground.

So those outward acts can change and vary. What's significant about the inward is it's constant. That is, we all know what that is, to repent of your heart, to say, this is wrong, I was wrong, forgive me, God.

And faith, to trust in Jesus and not yourself or anything else. Those are the inward acts and works, and those are a gift of the Holy Spirit. These are the outward and ordinary means by which Christ communicates or grants and gives the benefits of redemption.

Now, many, many, many Christians in America think that Christianity is just about me and Jesus. Perhaps heard that before. What I mean by that is a personal relationship that starts and ends but never leaves the heart.

Supposedly a relationship. Church attendance, therefore, preaching, reading the Bible, the sacraments, these are outward means and are not taken to heart. When you ask them to attend church, they are reluctant.

They tell you, I believe in Jesus, why do I need the church? I'm sure you've run across at least one person like that. This is part and parcel of their thinking. It's all about me, my heart, and Jesus, and the outward part of it is not really significant or important.

It's not always a conscious thing in their minds, but it is an unspoken assumption about the Christian life that it does not need anything outward, but it's merely an internal, what, act of the will or of the emotions. That's what I was taught. Christianity is reducible and merely only an act of the will, I decided for Jesus, right, the Bill of Graham Crusades, or an emotional reaction that they confuse with the will.

Both cases are wrong. You need the entirety of the mind, will, and emotion to be involved in your faith. Thus, too many Christians in America do not attend church, or if they do, it is not for the outward means of grace.

Then I hear to hear the preaching of the word, to participate in the sacraments, to be part of public prayer and praise and fellowship with the saints, which is also a means of grace, more broadly conceived, that is a tool that God uses for our growth. Rather, it's just a club to meet other people. But the Lord gave us the Bible.

That's a tangible, outward thing. You don't eat it. You don't put it in your soul.

It's here. You gotta read it. You gotta pay attention to it.

He gave us preaching, which is, again, bouncing upon your ears as an outward act, and baptism in the Lord's Supper. These are instruments used by the Holy Spirit to grow, to help us grow and become more like Jesus. We know about baptism with the Great Commission, of course, in Matthew 28.

But there was also Acts 2, 41 and 42. And then those who gladly received his word were baptized, and in that day about 3,000 souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

And so those are other means of grace. You'll see fellowship there. The breaking of bread in this context is fellowship and being house to house.

You read the next verse, in fact. Now, naturally, the Spirit is free to work around or against the means, the outward means he has given us. But inwardly, it's always regeneration, faith, and repentance.

Those don't change, right? That's how you're saved. Although outwardly, God may use other ways to call you into that state of change and transformation. But the sealing is by the Spirit, but he also uses the means of grace to give sealing.

So these Christians who downplay the outward ordinances of God, of church, of the preaching of the word, of the sacraments and the like, are not going to get much of a sealing upon their conscience. They'll have no confirmation if they go through their whole life. And I've met people like that who are like, I haven't had the Lord's Supper in a long, long time, but I read my Bible and I love Jesus.

That's not a good thing. Where's the sealing? There's no sealing going on. There's no confirmation.

You just confirm yourself. You think that's good enough? You confirm it yourself? You can deceive yourself. God, by his grace and strength, has given us his word, given us preaching, given us the church, given us the sacrament.

And part of that is to help you grow as a believer, the sealing aspect. That's my emphasis. And the sealing aspect is tied to the outward act.

But not always. It could be before, during, or after. Like I said, the spirit can move independent of it, as it were.

But ours is not to read the mind of God, but to do what he says in his word. That's the revealed will, and that's sufficient for us. Deuteronomy 29, 29.

The secret things belong to the Lord our God. He can do what he wills with the spirit. But the revealed things belong to us and our children, and that's the word of sacraments.

That is part of Christian growth. And that's how we get to sealing here. Next, the third point, sealed by the spirit of promise, by faith, by the spirit.

They are coordinated, of course, because the spirit gives us the gift of faith itself. And through the sacraments, as I went here through a relevant topic here in a little bit here, now the third point, sealed by the spirit. What kind of spirit? The spirit of promise.

Sealed by the Spirit of Promise

This is tied to him. We are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance, verse 14, until the redemption of the purchased possession, until we get it

all, and we're in heaven, and we have a new body, and our soul is absolutely purified. We long for that day.

We are sealed for tomorrow, sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. The spirit not only seals upon our mind the truth of Jesus, confirms it to our soul, he also is, what is the word here? The earnest, another word for earnest, down payments. Younger kids don't know what that is here.

The idea of a down payment is when you, for example, today buy a house, nobody has $400,000 typically in the bank to go buy a house full out. What you do, kids, is you come up to the owner who was selling the house, and you say, hey, I'll give you a 10%, usually you want to get a 20% down, so you take one-tenth of the whole price, and you plump it down as a lump sum, as a down payment saying, I am earnest, I am sincere, I am serious about buying this house, trust me, sell it to me, and I'll buy it off over time, the rest of the difference. That's the metaphor.

Of course, the Holy Spirit is not a mere down payment. It's not just a lump of money. It's a picture to show us that it's guaranteed, because if the Holy Spirit is divine, and indeed He is, when He is a down payment, that's the best down payment you could ever have.

It will come to pass. We can make the best plans today, we put down a lot of money, you can put down 20%, and in five years the market tanks, you lose your job, the house burns down, you can't pay off the house, you can't own anymore. Now what? The down payment meant nothing.

Not here. That's why He continues. It's a promise.

It's the spirit of promise. When I give you the spirit of God, Jesus is saying, you will be saved to the uttermost, although you don't feel like it right now. It's a guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.

We have Him until it is all bought back, that is, we have the fullness of our salvation, deliverance, and the new heavens, new earth when Christ Jesus returns, and we'll have that in full possession. The spirit right now, being born again right now, having, in fact, by extension, the sealing of the sacraments and the preaching of the word, which itself has also helped seal the truth of the sacraments in particular, is but a foretaste. So you can flip the imagery a little bit.

The down payment is like a foretaste of having the full possession of heaven right here and now. It will remind us, having the Holy Spirit as the down payment, as the earnest, as the guarantee that we will have the fullness of our redemption, of our salvation, of our deliverance, is because the Spirit dwells in His people. Romans 8, 9, but you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.

If so, be that the Spirit of God dwells in you, dwells in you in a saving manner, dwells in you as such that it seals upon your conscience and strengthens you and grants you more grace, more faith. Of course, He illuminates and opens our eyes to the Word of God, the Bible. Unbelievers read the Bible.

There are professors who read the Bible and understand it sometimes better than Christians do. They simply do not believe. They do not have the Holy Spirit within them.

And so they will not receive the truth therein, but reject it wholeheartedly. And so part of the work of the Spirit within us is this illumination and granting us, of course, the various fruits of the Spirit and of grace and of mercy and the like in our lives. And the sealing here of the Spirit is not just for here and now, the time we believed, but forever until Christ returns thereafter, earnest of our inheritance until it is all accomplished, as I mentioned before.

Matthew Henry summarizes here in his commentary of verse 14. It may be called here the possession because this earnest makes it as sure to the heirs as though they were already possessed of it and is purchased for them by the blood of Christ. And that is good enough for us.

The future inheritance, brothers and sisters, is the fullness of the deliverance from sin itself. In justification, we have already a complete and declarative act that does not change. You cannot add to nor take away from one's justification, one's public declaration that is God's declaration that you are just in Christ, perfect in Him.

Our sanctification, of course, is not complete, but it's just started, and it feels like forever until the Lord Jesus returns. And that's when it will be complete, perfect, and pure in all ways. No more sinning, no more temptation, and joy forevermore, brothers and sisters.

We are confirmed. We are sealed in our salvation by faith alone, in Christ alone, by the power of the Spirit alone, to the glory of God alone. And this is not just a one-time event, but whenever we have the sacraments, whenever we hear the Word and believe anew, which can happen even outside of preaching.

The text shows us that it happened and it happens and continues to happen, and that we should trust and believe in Him, in Jesus our Lord and Savior, knowing that the Spirit is with you, guiding and protecting you, and securing your redemption even here and now. Let us pray. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, it is a glory to go through these verses here, chapter one of the work of the Holy Trinity of you, what you continue to do for us, and here lastly, the sealing, the confirmation upon us, granting us the Holy Spirit and granting us outward means to further seal, to further strengthen, and further, Lord, confirm upon our conscience that you love us with an everlasting love.

May this be the case for all of us, I pray, God, if this is not true, that you bring conversion to those who need such, and indeed for all of us to always trust in you, not trust in the acts themselves, the outward acts, for surely there are times we can't make it to church, surely there are times we are sick, or times which we can't even get access to a church, we can still have the Word hidden in our hearts and sealed by the Spirit. In your name alone, we pray these things, Jesus Christ, be with us. Amen.