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### What it Means to be Sealed by the Holy Spirit

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WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SEALED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS  
NUMBER 48  
EPHESIANS 4:30-32

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EPHESIANS 4:30-32 "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

A verse of scripture cannot be understood apart from its context. This is a very important principle of scripture interpretation. During this last month, we have studied in Ephesians 4 the results of the building of an edification complex in the soul. Quite often scripture verses are taken out of their context and have been made to say something they do not say. These last three verses of Ephesians four have often been used to promote the social gospel, but they have been lifted out of their setting and have been misunderstood by many people. In the last two verses of this chapter we have a description of the scar tissue crowd. They are warned to confess their sins and get back in fellowship with God. The edification complex crowd are described in verse 32 in contrast to the scar tissue crowd in verse 31. We will see this as this study unfolds.

A Brief Review

To be able to understand this passage, we need to have a little review of the truths we have already studied. Here in Ephesians 4 we have learned that we have lungs in the soul. It was called "the breathing of your mind" in Ephesians 4:23. We inhale Bible doctrine into the soul and then we exhale faith toward God.

When a believer goes negative toward Bible doctrine (and this may be caused by too much emphasis on the details of life, or by a negative attitude toward the Word of God, or by an unkind attitude toward the pastor-teacher) this always results in a deposit of scar tissue in the soul. Darkness then enters the soul and believers begin to think like unbelievers and act like unbelievers. This causes disorientation to God and the born again way of life. Scar tissue keeps the believer from confession and rebound and soon the life becomes saturated with all kinds of mental attitude sins and sins of the tongue.

In verse 30 of this chapter we are going to discover how we can get into this scar tissue situation. The believer who takes in doctrine every day builds up residual doctrine in the soul. This is not the doctrine you use every day as you live the Christian life, but it is the reserve the residual doctrine you have stored up on tap ready for the need when it comes. This becomes the stabilizing force in your life. This is the reserve out of which you can build your edification complex and gives inner happiness and a relaxed mental attitude and a solution to the problems of life.

EPHESIANS 4:30 "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." "Grieve not" is a present, active, imperative of "Lupeo" plus the negative. "Lupeo" means to cause sorrow or distress. This is a phrase that ascribes to the Holy Spirit a human characteristic or being in sorrow or distress. Now we know the Holy

Spirit cannot be anything but perfectly happy for this is the unchanging nature of God. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit have perfect happiness all the time. But this is an anthropopathism to let us know what is going on here. It is used to describe a condition of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. The grieved condition is something that actually falls on the believer and not into the mind of the Holy Spirit.

Once a person is born again the Holy Spirit comes in and comes in to stay and there will never be a moment in the life of the believer when the Holy Spirit is not within. But though this is true, the believer still has an old sin nature and through the activity of the old sin nature the Holy Spirit is said to be "lupeo," he is grieved and denied the control of the life. We are the ones who receive the result of the grief and denial because of our sinful activity. Grieved here in this verse means the believer is perpetually under the control of the old sin nature and therefore the soul is clogged with scar tissue. This means the believer is blocked off from confession and rebound and lives under the control of the old sin nature.

#### FIVE COMMANDS IN THE BIBLE WITH REGARD TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. A COMMAND GIVEN TO UNBELIEVERS IN THE AGE OF ISRAEL.  
In Matthew 12, verse 14, and following, we are told about blaspheming against the Holy Spirit. This is a sin that could only be committed during the three years of the public ministry of Christ. Christ lived, preached and performed miracles in the power of the Holy Spirit. But there were people who said he did these things in the power of the Devil, the power of Beelzebub and not in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is a term of derision and profanity. Beelzebub is the prince of dung. This was committed against the Son of God during his public ministry and in a very special way applied to that time. MATTHEW 12:31-32 "Therefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."
2. SECOND SIN AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT IS RESISTANCE OF HIM.  
This sin against the Holy Spirit is outlined in Acts 7:51. "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." This is actually the rejection of Christ as Saviour. If one has never trusted Jesus Christ as Saviour then he is guilty of resisting the Holy Spirit.
3. THE THIRD SIN IS GRIEVING THE HOLY SPIRIT.  
This is the sin listed here in Ephesians 4:30 and will be dealt with in detail a little bit later on in this paper.
4. THE FOURTH SIN IS QUENCHING THE HOLY SPIRIT.  
This sin is mentioned in 1 Thess. 5:19. "Quench not the Spirit." When a believer commits a sin, he grieves the Holy Spirit and when he commits human good, he quenches the Holy Spirit.

5. THE FIFTH SIN IS LYING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT.

This sin against the Holy Spirit is dealt with in Acts 5:3.

"But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?" This is lying to the Holy Spirit like Ananias and Sapphir did when they wanted it to appear that they had been just as generous as Barnabas had been with his possessions. They said they gave all when they gave only part and the Lord took their lives for this sin.

A Great Principle

Out of the truths outlined above a great principle emerges. You cannot grieve or hurt someone else until you have grieved the Holy Spirit. This is why "Lupeo" is used here. You have to hurt the Holy Spirit before you hurt other people. Your sin hurts the Holy Spirit before it hurts people. You have to break through a corridor of grace when you fail the Lord. There is only one way to get back into that circle of grace and that way is confession and rebound. In this process you cannot take one ounce of credit for it, because all the credit for your restoration belongs to the Lord. That's what grace means. Now you may have a great guilt reaction and you may cry a lot and just have a bushe of sorrow for your sins and tell God over and over again that you will never do that sin again and all of that is just so much junk in the sight of God. Our penance and feeling sorry for sin doesn't make any points with God. Now you are doing something, but the something you are doing is grieving the Holy Spirit. The only way out of sin is to throw it all on Christ and confess it and leave it there. Immediately God restores you, you are back in fellowship again and are ready to serve. Now that's grace. One thing you cannot take credit for is for the forgiveness of your sins.

In verse 31 we will study a partial list of those sins we must confess in order to get back in fellowship with God. (Technically you ask God to forgive you of your sins by confessing them. He doesn't forgive you because you beg him and are sincere and say you are sorry and will never do it again. Confession is the way to be forgiven.)

Each believer has free will and you can try to add your works to salvation if you want to, but it doesn't change the facts one iota. If you want to add to salvation by faith in Christ such things as going to church, and baptism, and being sorry for sins, then you can do it, but it doesn't change the facts one bit. IT IS FAITH PLUS NOTHING AND THAT'S GRACE. That second verse of Rock of Ages was written with this thought in mind--

"Could my tears forever flow, could my zeal no languor know,  
These for sin could not atone, Thou must save and Thou alone:  
In my hand no price I bring, simply to thy cross I cling."

The reason you can't do anything to be saved by grace or to stay in the bottom circle is because God does it all. It is grace all the way and it is never works or legalism or self-righteousness. Our greatest sin as Christians is that we want to help God with his plan and we want to horn in on God's plan of grace and want to mount our sanctimonious high horse and do many of the things that only God can do.

The next phrase in verse 30 is "By which ye are sealed" and the word is "Sphragizo." This word was used at least five ways in the ancient world. They all can help clarify the meaning of this word.

#### FIVE ANCIENT USES FOR THE WORD "SEALED"

##### 1st--A Business Transaction

When they made a business transaction, they would take the document on which was written the agreement and put melted wax on the bottom of it and then they would take their stamps or seals or signet rings and press the impression into the soft wax. It meant the stamp of approval on that agreement. That is one of the meanings of the word "seal."

##### 2nd--A Signature

The Holy Spirit signs the checks and his account is unlimited. We are not saved by our own resources but by the signature of the Holy Spirit. His sealing is more powerful than your sinning. If sinning could be more powerful than sealing, then I know some people on whom God would have to renege, and to name a few I would list Paul and Peter and David. But their sins were not greater than the power of the Holy Spirit's seal.

##### 3rd--A Chariot

In the ancient world each chariot owner had a sign or stamp on the side of the chariot that told the world to whom that chariot belonged. That's why the Scriptures say that "when Jacob saw the wagons, he believed." They were the wagons Pharaoh had sent from Egypt to transport Jacob and his family down into Egypt and those wagons had on their side the seal of the Pharaoh. (It might have been the face of the Sphinx or a picture of the Pyramids or something like that.) Now when you were saved, God the Holy Spirit branded his mark of ownership on you and the Devil can't rub it off. The Holy Spirit constantly indwells us to remind us that all the resources of God are available to us all the time.

##### 4th--The Protection Of Something Valuable.

They put the official seal of the king on their public buildings and on the things of great value. If you want to protect canned food, you have to seal it and keep out the impurity. That's what God the Holy Spirit does for us. We are of great value to God and he stamps us with the stamp of his protection.

##### 5th--The Assurance That God Won't Turn Against You

There is no way for a believer to do anything that will make God turn on him and hate him. You are important to God and he seals you when you believe. You are sealed until the day of redemption and that means the day you get a resurrection body. His bank account is yours and his resources are inexhaustible.

This word "seal" is in the aorist tense and that means that at the point of time when you believed you were sealed and it will last forever. There never will be a time when you will not have his stamp on you. The passive voice means that you receive this sealing as a gift from God. The indicative mood means the reality of this experience for all eternity.