

# Established in Christ (II. Cor. I. 21, 22)

by Seth Rees

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of being 'in Christ', being anointed with the Holy Spirit, and being sealed by God to live a life of holiness and sanctification.*

**Topics:** "Union With Christ", "Holy Spirit Anointing"

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## Description

Seth Rees preaches about the profound privilege of being 'in Christ,' emphasizing the vital union believers have with Jesus, far beyond a superficial relationship. He highlights the importance of being 'planted' in God's house to truly flourish and the necessity of returning to the Bible for genuine spiritual experiences. Rees stresses the significance of being 'established' by God, eradicating uncertainties and standing firm against life's challenges. He also discusses the sealing and anointing by God, urging believers to seek fresh anointings of the Holy Spirit for effective ministry. Rees concludes by emphasizing the 'earnest of the Spirit' as a pledge of the fullness of resurrection life and eternal joy to come.

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## Transcript

"Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath so sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts " (II. Cor. I. 21, 22).

We readily recognize several very prominent thoughts suggested in the text. First, "in grace"; second, "established"; third, "sealed"; fourth, "anointed"; fifth, "the earnest of the Spirit," and sixth, "fellowship."

To be "in Christ" is a profound privilege. Salvation in its initial stages is a magnificent thing. It is the largest blessing that has ever been launched into this world for the benefit of the race, and the hour when men become Christians is an hour they will celebrate forever. If one should have been converted so early in life that one does not remember the time, it will be remembered in the resurrection. Each of us will have a day and an hour to celebrate forever and ever.

To be "in Christ" means very much more than is often supposed. It is not merely to be in Christ as we are in a house with the privilege of going out and coming in, or in a cave where we can run in and out at will. To be "in Christ" is to have an experience like the finger is in the hand; a vital union like that of the branch in the vine, vitally connected with Christ. There are a great many people who suppose that Christianity is something that you can put on for a day or an hour and throw it off, and pick it up and put it on and throw it off again, and that it is sort of like a loose garment to be worn when convenient; but, while it is possible for people to backslide and be finally lost, it means so much more to be in Christ than the average thinker

supposes that I want to emphasize the fact tonight that to get into Christ is to be "planted" in the house of our God, and" they that are planted in the house of our Lord flourish in the courts of our God."

There is a great deal of difference, however, between being "planted" and "stuck in." Most of folks seem to have been stuck in. The fewest number seem to have roots. It is a rare thing that men are so planted by the hand of God Himself that they really flourish in the courts of the Lord's house.

We are coming back more and more to the Book, and we are praying God that the people may come back to the Book. We have not made anything by drifting from it. We have gained nothing by our "creeds" and our "catechisms" and our man made "declarations of faith" and" statements of doctrine." We have gained nothing by drifting from the Book to something manufactured by brains, and we will never "flourish" until we get back to our grandfather's Bible and get our great grandmother's religion and have old-fashioned Bible experiences like they had when they used to be "planted in the house of the Lord." May God give us some good clear cases of regeneration in these meetings. I have sometimes felt that I would like to be identified with some movement that would especially emphasize regeneration. We have preached holiness, and some of us have practiced holiness, and we have testified to holiness for years and years, but the doctrine of Bible regeneration is sadly neglected, and there are thousands of people who do not know the magnitude of this tremendous grace of regeneration, the new birth and justification.

God has let some of us see in these last days that our only hope for the successful spread of true holiness is the emphasis of the truth in its initial stages. People must start well. People must be rooted and grounded and settled in Jesus Christ. Brother, if you have regeneration, you have something which hooks you up to the enginery of heaven and cables you to the Eternal until, if you should ever backslide, you will know you have lost something and will miss it. A good many people could "backslide" and never miss anything.

The next thought in our text is "stablished." The word "stablish" means the same as sanctify, namely, to eradicate or extract from the human heart everything movable, everything vacillating, everything uncertain, everything that wabbles, and leave only that which will stand the shocks of hell's artillery here and the awful tests of the Judgment hereafter. We want something to settle us -- to stablish us -- to fix us. It is in the text, and He will give it to us. When we get sanctified wholly we will lose all this wriggle and wobble and shiver and leaning and propping, and will get a framework in our souls capable of resisting all the combined forces of earth and hell pitted against us. We need this in these awful times, in these uncertain times, in these windy times; in these times when wicked men are waxing worse and worse and strong positive characters, filled with error, are planting themselves exactly across our track; we need something that the devil himself is not able to vanquish.

The largest ships that float roll and tumble and quake and rock on the tempestuous sea, but right out there is an iceberg which is seen to resist every billow that dashes against it, unmoved and unshaken. Why? eight-ninths of an iceberg is under water. If an iceberg stands one hundred feet above the water it goes down eight hundred feet below the surface, and the great body of the iceberg is in the still, undisturbed, restful, quiet waters below where the storm never stirs things, and the surface agitation accomplishes nothing. If God's people could be eight-ninths root instead of eight-ninths top, it would take more than the storms of hell to shake them.

The best gunboats that go to sea are principally under water. Those that are nearest to being entirely below the surface are the most efficient. What we want is not to get away up where the devil can have all

power over us and at us, but to get down where we can load and fire, and be protected, be settled, be grounded, be fixed, so the breakers will simply break upon us and rollback into the sea perfectly powerless.

God can settle us down. There are a great many people in these days who are so active in what they suppose to be the service of God that they do not seem to have time to "settle." They do not seem to have the time to take root and bury themselves below the surface, out of sight. The grandest saints that ever lived have always taken time to settle. I remember one saint who always prayed two hours a day, and if he had an extra heavy day's work he prayed four hours instead of two, but nowadays if we have an extra heavy day's work we sometimes forget to pray at all. We are so active and so busy, and there is so much to do, and so much fuss and hum that we have hardly time to get on our knees and wait for something to happen; but it would be good for us to stop and get on our knees and stay until something comes.

I sometimes go to holiness meetings and hear them go through all the rounds, and I look around to see if anything takes place, but frequently nothing happens. Such as that is a fraud. As a matter of fact you can not get twenty people together who are sanctified wholly without something occurring. What we need today is not so much profession as it is possession, not so much "going on" (there are plenty of things "going on") as an experience that will settle us down to where something is obliged to occur, so that when we touch a button and turn on the power results are inevitably forthcoming.

The next thing I notice in our text is that God seals us. That word seal means "to authenticate" or "to ratify" or "to testify to." For example, the government has a seal which it puts upon weights and measures, provided they are up to the standard. The government seals and stamps a great deal of its property so that it may be known as government property. Wherever you see the "U. S." you know that the thing bearing the initials belongs to Uncle Sam. The text says we are to be sealed. We are to have the government stamp of the skies put on us. God means to seal us so they will know in three worlds to whom we belong.

Now, how can God put His seal on you when you do not know yourself to whom you belong? How could God authenticate or ratify a thing that is not true? How can God put His seal upon us until we are given to Him in such a way that we know we are absolutely and peculiarly and exclusively His property? He never can. You will go around without the government stamp on you until Jesus comes, unless you get to the place where you know absolutely that you belong to God.

Again, God never seals people until they are tested. Every person must be tested just as a bridge when built is tested before it is opened to the public. God tests His saints before He puts His stamp on them. Do you suppose He is going to put His seal on me until He knows that I am of merchantable quality? That is what it means. God's stamp means that we are of sound and solid quality, and that we can be turned loose on the public and proven to be just what we profess.

Many of our severest tests come to us after we are consecrated. The greatest trials I have ever known came after I gave all to God. They often come very soon after we surrender all, and they come to prove that we are all right. As soon as it is proven absolutely that we are all right, God says: "You are all right, I am going to stamp you." May the Lord get some one ready to be stamped tonight. He has the stamping machine here, and He has been stamping some people here at this altar. I notice they have had some difficulty in getting ready to be stamped, and God is very careful about whom He stamps. I often see some people who profess as much as anyone else, and yet there is not that about their general bearing; there is

not that somewhat which makes you think they have really been stamped. There is a difference after all. There are "holiness people" and then there are holy people, but the sad part of it is that people may be "holiness folks" without being holy folks. It takes folks who have the genuine thing to have the stamp of God put on them, and when they have the stamp it somehow or other becomes visible. It will tell in a man's testimony; it will tell in his everyday life. There is a sort of atmosphere that surrounds a man who is genuinely sanctified and stamped by God that every sinner sort of feels. God has fire to give us that will put people under conviction, and it will be perceived in our testimonies and in our songs and in our lives. People are not ready to do anything for God until they are tried and proven and stamped. You will not pass for much in the kingdom of grace until you are stamped.

God is very careful not to stamp you until you are all right. The church will stamp you, pastors will stamp you. They will put buttons all over you; they will put a Christian Endeavor or Epworth League pin on you; they will put white ribbons on you and the W. C. T. U. outfit and all that sort of thing, when God has not stamped you at all. There is a great difference between the human stamp and the Divine. Preachers are glad to get you into the church especially if you have a little money; but God puts His stamp only on folks that He knows to be solid gold, 24 carats fine. When God stamps a man the devil knows it, hell finds it out. There are a good many people who do not have enough religion to interest the devil. There are lots of people to whom he never pays much attention. But let a man get filled with the Holy Ghost and receive the stamp, and the devil will be after him hoofs and horns.

May God give us enough religion to stir things. I would rather make folks mad than to have them go to sleep. It is an awful thing to think of people going to hell as they are, and I put the matter to myself sometimes, and say: "Seth Rees, do you believe there is a hell? Do you believe people are going there? Do you preach and act as if you did?" Most of us do not half believe that the people we come in contact with day after day are going to hell. I frequently preach to men who stand on the border lines of eternity, who hear me preach the last time they ever hear any man preach.

Only a week ago last Sunday morning I preached to an audience in the State of Pennsylvania, and a man who had had chance after chance to give himself to God and would not do it, sat just in front of me. While I was preaching, for some reason or other, he rose up and walked out the door. At the close of the service the pastor of the church was so impressed with the fact that the man would be dead before night, that he said to me: "I feel so surely that that man will be dead before night, that I would not be surprised when I go back to class meeting at 2:15 to hear that Geo. Pierce is dead." And when he went back that was just exactly what he did hear. That man walked out of that house and into eternal night, and I said to myself: "Do you know that you preached to a man the last time he ever heard anyone preach, and was there enough gospel in that sermon to save him?"

I am feeling more and more in these days that I must not preach a single sermon out of which a perishing soul can not get enough truth to save him. If you were testifying, and it was the last time some man would ever hear a testimony, could he gather from what you say that he could have this salvation by repenting and believing? Supposing he hears you sing Sunday morning in the church, can he get enough out of the singing to tell him how to get saved? In some of our churches I fear he could not even understand what the soloist was singing. God help us as preachers and singers and workers! Hell is not more than two hundred yards away to many a soul, and many a time we can smell the brimstone.

I say to you that it is time that holiness people were awake. The Spirit has impressed me that we are not aroused and stirred up as we ought to be about the fact that there is an eternal hell and that men are going

to it in great companies. How long is it since you had a wakeful night because people were going to hell? Tell me, how long is it since you have wept over the fact that people are going to be damned? You profess to be "sanctified"; very good, but God in heaven help us, if we have not enough salvation to stir every fiber of our beings for the salvation of souls.

The next thing that I notice in the text is that we are "anointed." The priests and kings and prophets of Old Testament times were anointed with oil. Oil is the divinely selected symbol of the Holy Ghost. Just as the priests and prophets entered on their office work by the anointing with oil, God means that every one of His children shall be anointed with the oil of the Holy Spirit; that not one shall enter upon the work of prophet, priest, or king, (all of which we are after we are fully sanctified), until he receives this anointing. One mistake of these times is that folks are going to work without anything to work with. They are going to war without any gun. They are starting out to perform the Lord's work without having tarried in the upper chamber in Jerusalem until they were anointed. Those who have been anointed succeed and they accomplish what God wants them to. I notice that this is an anointing not only with the Holy Ghost and with fire provided by Jesus Christ, but it is an anointing with the Bible; God melts His truth and anoints us with the liquid.

In a certain and very important sense this anointing is to be repeated. Not in the sense of repentance, not in the sense of baptism, but fresh anointings with the oil of the Spirit are needed again and again all through our spiritual experience. The trouble with people is that they lack oil. Oil is necessary in order that the machinery may run smoothly, without friction and without excess of wear and tear. God's people have to be frequently anointed with oil to keep them running smoothly. Lots of people get rusty and snappy; they get to screeching, and, soon, if they do not take care, there is a "hot box."

Oh, that God may anoint us tonight afresh; anoint our eyes and enable us to see the King in His beauty; anoint our ears that we may hear the words of Almighty God; anoint our fingers that they may know how to perform the work of God; anoint our feet that we may run swiftly on the errands of God. We need to be in a hurry, for God is in a hurry to save men. If we want to keep up we will have to be nimble and oiled, running smoothly. God give us the oil.

Brother, I am afraid you are nearly dry. It does not do to run machinery dry. It will pay you to stop and oil up, even if you seem to get behind schedule time. Many a preacher would save time if he would stop and oil up. How easily this oil makes folks run. You can take a sword and cut a man's head off and have him smile while you do it. You can skin him alive and he will feel good about it. Many a man can not preach the truth without making men mad, and takes to himself great credit because of the fact, but when you get the real ointment you can cut a man to pieces and apply the healing oil and cure him perfectly.

If we had this oil we would not be peevish and hard to please. Such tempers do not correctly represent holiness anyhow. God save us from misrepresenting the Christ of God who suffered and died for us. May God give us an experience that is so oiled that we can run with perfect ease and without friction and without worry. More people die of worry than of work.

Beloved, you will get this on your knees looking at none but God. Just try it. Let things go on without you a while. They will go on just the same when you are dead. Remain seeking until you feel the oil all through you.

There is something so refreshing about people who get well oiled. How I love to hear a man preach who spends a good deal of time on his knees. I like good preaching. I am a splendid listener. Oh, how soul

refreshing it is to hear a man preach who is fresh from his closet, who hurries from his private devotions to his public ministry with something to pour out on his people. Why, the people never seem to get enough of such preaching, and you can preach to them an hour and twenty minutes, and they will shout, "O, go on, go on; don't stop now!" There is something about the genuine thing that is so soul inspiring and invigorating that you do not seem to get tired of it. You can hear a man preach the same thing over and over again, and every time you hear it, you say, "Bless God, it is better than before." It is like turkey, the more you warm it over the better it is.

But I must call your attention to something else in this text. It says that we are "stablished with Him." That means fellowship, human and Divine. I am so glad the Lord did not set us all off to ourselves, "one in a hill." I am so glad the Lord fixed us up so we mutually help each other and are "stablished together." There are a great many people who have the mistaken idea that we are to be "fixed off to ourselves"; they will not fellowship with folks unless they see eye to eye with them. If I could not fellowship people unless they saw eye to eye with me I would have it "one in a hill" sure enough! You may differ from me about many things, but, sir, if you are filled with the Holy Ghost and I am filled with the Holy Ghost we are "stablished together," and we lose sight of these minor things and run together like drops of water and are one.

I never saw some of you until within the last few days, and yet I feel as if I had known you for a long time and I shall love you forever. I may never meet you again, probably never will, but we are "stablished together." I want to impress this point: Christians are essential to each other. Not in the sense of leaning upon each other, but in a very important sense we are essential to each other's piety and progress. I need your prayers, I need your sympathy and I need your help, and you need mine. We need the prayers and help of all the saints and we must not get to a place where we "do not need anything," for we are to be "stablished together."

This fellowship makes a beautiful setting to things. Take the high church Episcopalian, and the blue stocking Presbyterian and the "broad brimmed" Quaker and the reformed Lutheran and fit them all in together; they make a beautiful mosaic. That is the reason I like union services. I like to have folks all mixed up until "you can not tell one from the other."

When we get this blessing we are in inner, spiritual fellowship with God and the great bloodwashed throng, whether dead or alive. We are of kin to Abraham. When I meet him on the streets of the New Jerusalem I believe I will know him without an introduction. I believe we will know the prophets intuitively, and the men about whom we have read. They are our kin folks. They were "no good" for this world, because "the world was not worthy" of them, and so they jumped over the battlements of heaven and ran up the shining way, and we are running after them, and we are going to meet them again. I belong to this holy brigade. It contains a few queer folks, but I am not going back on my people because there are a few cranks among them. They are my folks -- they are the bloodwashed. Some of them have only a thimbleful of brains, but they have sense enough to keep under the blood, and I have sense enough to stay with them.

How many of us have been "planted," and "stablished," and "sealed," and "anointed," and are in fellowship with each other? If we have those five points, then we have the other. It is an "earnest of the Spirit." What is an "earnest"? This is an expression taken from an old custom of giving a sample of the things sold from the seller to the purchaser. For instance, if real estate was sold, a basin of earth was given by the one selling the property to the buyer.

The basin of earth was a testimony that the whole farm was the buyer's. When we get the "earnest of the Spirit" and are baptized with the Holy Ghost, we get only a basin full of what is to come, and if we get so happy over a basin full, what will we do when we have the whole thing? If we can scarcely stay in our boots with "the earnest," what are we going to do when all the delights and glory of the coming kingdom burst on our vision. The earnest of earth was a pledge that the whole farm was to follow. In the "earnest of the Spirit" God pledges that everything that He has is to follow. Certainly then there is nothing in the future to take the "dumps" about. We know that all that awaits us is something off of the same piece of cloth; and to be filled with the Spirit here, which is only an earnest of what is to come, is to be filled with the assurance from God Himself that we shall have everything He has in store, and that He will never stop until He sees that we have it. Glory to God!

The earnest of the Spirit should quicken me because it is an evidence that I am to have the fullness of resurrection life. The "earnest of the Spirit" should comfort me now as a token that I am to have the fullness of joy and eternal consolation. The earnest of the Spirit should illuminate my heart because it is a promise that eternal day is going to break upon me and a time when the sun will never set.

I want to testify to you in conclusion that I have received the earnest of the Spirit, and am receiving all that I can hold. The Lord sometimes blesses me almost to death, and I do not know but what He means to take me to heaven in that way sometime. I am as willing to go in that way as any. God does sometimes bless people until the vessel breaks and they fly away. Some people are afraid of getting blessed. Do not be afraid, you will not be hurt. Open your heart just now, and let Him come in. Let Him bless you now. Glory to His name! How many of us have received the baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire since we were converted?

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