



# Baptist hour messages



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## THE SEAL OF GOD

September 7, 1958

Scripture: Ephesians 4:24-32.

It is an inspiring thought that amidst all the change and shuffle in life there are a few things that do not change, a few things that are permanently nailed down. If some points were not fixed, all things would become piled together. While the map of the world is being redrawn almost hourly, while millions are losing their footing in this slippery time, we need to take a look at a few of these things that are fixed, things that do not change.

Can human life stand on any foundation that is solidly fixed? Or is it forever at the mercy of relatives? What can one guarantee that will be here tomorrow? Anything?

Knowing that these questions would be asked by his young preacher friend as well as by millions of other Christians, the Apostle Paul wrote, "We have this sure foundation." In effect he said that the underpinings, the pilings of life sink all the way down to solid rock. That sure foundation says in deep clarity, "The Lord knows them that are His." To Timothy those words were freighted with meaning: the engulfing, life-assuring inspiration that he was known of God.

### MEANING OF SEALS

Seals have played a prominent role in man's transactions for countless years. Whether they were metallic seals used after hot wax was poured on the contract,

or solid gold seals used by the hand of a king, they gave a note of authenticity, a stamp of genuineness to the document. Branding irons have burned their individual identity on the skin of millions of animals certifying to their ownership.

With something of these facts in mind,

### Baptist Hour Sermon Topics for October

Theme: Tragedy and Triumph  
Dr. Herschel H. Hobbs

- Oct. 5—Rejection of a Revelation (John 1:10)
- Oct. 12—Hesitation in the Fact of Opportunity (John 1:46)
- Oct. 19—Aladdin's Lamp or God's Light (John 2:11)
- Oct. 26—Human Heredity or Divine Heritage (John 3:6)

Hear them on

**THE BAPTIST HOUR**

Read them in  
**THE BEAM**

Paul says that God has His own appropriate seal . . . the stamp of identity by which He knows His own. He doesn't misbrand and in the counting He doesn't make errors of identity.

But there is much more than identity here. God's knowing means that He sees the intentional and the permissive, the motive behind the act, the good that one would do if circumstances permitted. Such is part of His omniscience. He knows in advance what we will and will not do though His foreknowing does not mean His foreactivity.

When it comes to praying, God knows in advance what I am going to say or ask. I don't have to tell Him anything since He knows everything. The real value in praying is to get penitence in the prayer, adoration toward God, to show that the ego can be focused on others in intercession as well as on itself, and to clear the sewers of the soul by practicing the presence of Almighty God.

#### VALUE OF THE SEAL

Oh, the value of the seal on one's life! To know that one's life is known of God and that God cares for his life is to remove the scourge of insignificance. In a day of mass millions who feel no sense of belonging, it is a wonderful thing to be told that God knows you and cares for you, that though the superstructure may crumble, the foundations will remain unmoved.

Such was the case when a college senior threatened to take his life one night after a long session with his roommate. Said he, "What is the use of trying to buck this useless tide of life? You have two strikes against you before you start. So, I am going to have enough courage to get out of it without having to go through it. Who am I anyway?"

His roommate being a Christian answered with a stern, yet loving truth, "You are one for whom Christ died." Such a statement should arrest more of us and sober us to the right kind of living. We all are those for whom Christ died. He died for us because God knew us in a knowledge of loving action.

This text implies also that God knows

those who are not His. His perfect knowledge would not exclude knowing this group. Despite all the would-be charity on the part of millions of religionists who would make of the human race one big redeemed group—all of whom were on their way to heaven—the Bible makes it clear that God not only knows His own but knows those who are not His.

Jesus spoke of the sheep and goats without remotely meaning that He was discussing animal husbandry. God knows that some folks are counterfeits. They are phonies. When it comes to the real test of demonstrating the right fruit of the spirit, they instantly flunk that test.

#### HIS OWN KNOW HIM

Then quite naturally it follows that if God knows the people who belong to Him, then the ones who belong to Him know God. The Father knowing His sons automatically means that the sons would not be strangers to their Father. This fact removes the guessing game about salvation. We are not to await the judgment day to know the verdict of whether one is saved or lost. That fact is now a present part of our knowledge . . . the "yes" of salvation begins in time and on earth.

To know Him is to love Him. It is impossible to know God without loving Him. From the first act of creation right on through the act of redemption His loving heart has beaten in interest of mankind. What person could remain so unmoved by that admission?

In the Temple of Omar in Jerusalem the incense is so thick that one who worships there can smell the incense on his clothing for four hours after leaving the Temple. Folks can usually tell where the person has been. In much the same way one's association with God has a way of telling. There is a certain fragrance of character, a cleanness of soul that is its own mark of identity.

#### LOVE AND DISOBEDIENCE

To love God is to obey Him. Love demands this type of expression. Beware the zealot, even in the name of God, who avows his love for religion and the God

who made religion possible, but at the same time lives in open disobedience to God. Such is a contradiction. "If you love me, you will keep my commandments," still are the remaining words of the Son of God.

Herein our day stands indicted. One finds no difficulty in hearing millions who profess their love for God, but the business of obeying what He says is something else altogether. God's uniform response to such disobedience is a searching question, "Why call ye me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not the things which I say?"

Too many of us are like the man about whom the preacher said while preaching his funeral, "Brother Carlton served his Lord off and on for forty years." A person in the back of the chapel was overheard to say, "But he died in one of those 'off' spells. Off and on for forty years.

Oh, the millions who are off and on Christians . . . mostly off when it comes to a strict obedience to the demands of God and the exhortations of His Christ. We are supposed to be like evergreen trees . . . green the year round. While seasonal trees are shedding their leaves, the evergreen remains colorful. A child of God does not change his color and allegiance with the changing season. He doesn't go into eclipse with nature but his light is to shine constantly throughout his life.

#### SEAL UNCHANGED BY DEATH

Moreover, this seal of God, this unchanging foundation of inspiration means

that death does not find such a one a stranger to God. If God knows those who are His and those who are His know God, then it is safe to conclude that when a person comes to the end of the way he will not find God as a stranger.

When one's whole world comes to a sudden, unannounced standstill called death, what happens? Does vision blur out while all the fixed points of certainty fade away like wishful dreams? What happens? Does the presence of pain become such an overriding monster that the inner security which God has provided weakens away? What is a Christian to do at that last moment before walking out into eternity?

Perhaps this illustration will help answer that difficult question. A German lady had dreaded the thought of going through a long, dark tunnel and showed her fears by constantly asking the train attendant when they would reach it. But soon she fell asleep.

After awakening once again she queried the attendant, "When will we go through the long, dark tunnel?"

"Lady," he answered, "we passed through that tunnel while you were asleep."

To many death will be like that. They will be through it before they knew they were dying—such is the anesthesia provided by Christian faith . . . God's own provision for those who are sealed by redemption.

## "THE WORD OF GOD IS NOT BOUND"

September 4, 1958

Scripture: II Timothy 2:7-13

In the midst of a Roman prison the Apostle Paul wrote the reassuring words to a young man named Timothy, "The Word of God is not bound." Despite man's efforts to imprison its truth, there are no bars that can hold nor chains shackle the truth of God's Word.

The Bible is the work of about forty authors, contained in sixty-six books, with

nearly twelve hundred chapters, written over a period of nearly fifteen hundred years. What group of doctors writing on the same medical subject over a period of fifteen hundred years would have come up with the same general thesis? Or what group of engineers or artists or musicians? This in itself is one of faith's girders: that time has not changed but confirmed its essential message. That is because it is the Word of God.