

“We Were Made an Inheritance”

June 25 2017

Texts: Ephesians 1:11, 14

The verse translated **in him we have obtained an inheritance** is rendered in the Revised Version **in whom also we were made an inheritance.** (v.11) There is a substantial difference between something we obtain, and something we have become. The more curious translation is saying that we are God’s inheritance and that what made us God’s inheritance is the work and ministry of the Son—through which, or by which we were purchased, bought or obtained. It harkens back to the Old Testament (Deut. 4:20; Pss 33:12, 135:4) as well as harkening ahead to I Peter 1:3-4: **3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you** (ESV) where our living hope and our status as an inheritance, a status preserved and held for all the saints! I speaks of a precious relationship between the believing soul and God, regardless of any asymmetry between us and God. We possess God because God possesses us. Our faith finds precedent in His faithfulness and our truth in His veracity—**he does not lie.** My obedience is paired with His authority, my weakness is rectified by His strength—for truly, God is the One who fills my emptiness. We are, like the two hemispheres of the world which, when conjoined form a whole globe! *And the Holy Spirit is the earnest of our “inheritance” until we come into full realization of all that it means to belong to God now while being entirely his forever!*

We have a mutual possession here. And that mutual possession bespeaks a mutual love. The only way that a human spirit can possess another spirit is through such love as this. God, it would appear, sets little store by the possession that comes by way of divinity and creation—although that should be sufficient to awaken in us both gratitude and a sense of duty. **You shall be unto Me a people for a possession above all nations, for all the earth is Mine.** But all other nations God has placed in second place to Israel, exercising his prerogatives to do so—I **will show mercy to whom I will show mercy, saith the Lord!** We note this because God desires something more personal, more real, more vital (*as in love!*) to define His ownership of us. So it is a great Divine Love that encompasses us, “possesses” us when he loves us and we love him. This love of which I speak has its origination in Him, in His own heart of hearts.

We might use the figure of an immense candelabrum in the center of a great hall, with enormous mirrors hung on the surrounding walls to reflect back its light; they repeat and repeat and the original light is quite obscured in the mix and exchange! There is but one source, and all other light is derived; one is primary and the other is secondary. His love of us is that source. The reflected light is our love of Him. That which unites us to Him is the same as that which unites Him to us—it is all love. This illustration shows that His self-communication is likewise based on His love—it is not love is one party receives only and the other party communicates only. And further the love must be freely extended and freely entertained. Two parties and both of their wills are involved; this is not some form of sick co-dependence!

We should dwell briefly on this matter of will, or rather the surrender of our wills—in a forced option (loving because we have to, or are supposed to implies some emotional bondage, slavery even) we cannot claim love. No, when we freely¹ yield our wills to love for another we have something sacrificial, and that sacrifice sanctifies that love. That is how we are to hear Jesus, **But not my will, but Thy will be done** as a declaration of love of the Father made to the Father—in addition to submission and to obedience. In dealing with the return of Onesimus in Philemon Paul writes **though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required . . . I preferred to do nothing with your consent in order that you goodness not be by compulsion but of your own accord.** (vv.8 &14) God freely loves us and chooses not to compel us to love Him in return—He invites our free consent! “The giving of our selves away (to God) is the finding of God and ourselves.” (Maclaren, Expositions, 1978, Vol. 13, p.39) However, to mutual love and mutual surrender we should probably add mutual indwelling. **He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him.** (1 John 4:16) This same truth is expressed by the Lord in Jesus’ saying, **I am the vine and you are the branches . . . he that abideth in me bringeth forth much fruit.** (John 15:5) We dwell in God by possessing Him and likewise He by possessing us dwells in us.

Maclaren seized upon this wonderful example when he writes “And He moves in the heart that loves, as the Master walking through His house, as the dignity is present in the temple, and as the soul permeates the body, and is sight in the eye and color in the cheek, and force in the arm, and deftness in the finger, and swiftness in the foot. So the indwelling God breathes through all the capacities, and all the desires, and all the needs of the soul which He inhabits, and makes them all blessed.” (Maclaren, p.39) Just so we may describe the life of the divine within our lives as believers!

To be so indwelt, or possessed of God, is come under obligation of consecration. **Having been bought with a price, we are not our own.** (1 Cor. 6:20)

¹ THE NORTH WIND AND THE SUN from Aesop’s Fable

A dispute arose between the North Wind and the Sun, each claiming that he was stronger than the other. At last they agreed to try their powers upon a traveller, to see which could soonest strip him of his cloak. The North Wind had the first try; and, gathering up all his force for the attack, he came whirling furiously down upon the man, and caught up his cloak as though he would wrest it from him by one single effort: but the harder he blew, the more closely the man wrapped it round himself. Then came the turn of the Sun. At first he beamed gently upon the traveller, who soon unclasped his cloak and walked on with it hanging loosely about his shoulders: then he shone forth in his full strength, and the man, before he had gone many steps, was glad to throw his cloak right off and complete his journey more lightly clad.

Moral: Persuasion is better than force.

Source: Joseph Jacobs, *The Fables of Æsop* (London and New York: Macmillan and Company, 1894), no. 60, pp. 142-43. Fables of type 298.

We know that to live for self is now death, and that to die to self is to live! Our whole nature is to be ruled by Him in consequence of this possession. It truly is a great bargain to give ourselves and to gain God in the process! And, in so doing we also obtain a measure of safety unknown outside of this relationship with God! **No man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.** (John 10:29) God is able to preserve what He has obtained—all that has been committed to Him is secure *as long as we remain in our consecration.* If we remember whose we are practically, we truly remain safe.

Possessing God we are rich. No true treasure either remains outside us, or can be separated from us. There is a Spanish proverb: "Shrouds have no pockets." That compares with our "No one goes to heaven with a U-Haul." Psalm 49:17 soberly notes: **His glory shall not descend after him.** But, we have reassurance that if God possesses us, He will not let His treasure be lost in the grave! There must certainly be a resurrection of the dead! And my true wealth I shall carry to heaven with me, as capital to start life in that new condition of things—the state that comes to be when graves are rendered redundant, or better obsolete! *Mutual possession is a real pledge of life immortal life!* A soul that has risen to have God for its very own, and has bowed itself to accept God's ownership of it **must not, indeed cannot be affected by such a transient and physical incident as what we presently know as "death."** We are God's inheritance, and God is our inheritance. We shall live while He lives, because He lives and we shall appropriate to ourselves all majesty, purity, wisdom, truth and power (1 John 3:2) **We shall be like Him at His appearing.**

The **in Him** which began this sermon's text, thrusts upon us the death of Jesus Christ as the means. His death broke the bondage that the whole world was under—He destroyed the slavery of self and sin at the same instant. **If the Son has made you free, you are free indeed.** (John 8:36) Therefore, we proclaim that the power when defeated sin and death is the same power that moves the heart to both love and surrender, to our state of mutual possession. For we indeed have become an inheritance. God has come to His rights in relationship to each one of us. And, in the same instance, we have become **heirs with with God, and joint heirs with Christ.** Let us unite ourselves to the Lord by faith, and through Him and faith in Him, we shall receive: **the remission of sins and inheritance among all them that are sanctified.** (Acts 26:18)

Amen.