

“Divine Inheritance”
Ephesians 1:11, 18
(Preached at Trinity, December 8, 2013)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. People have always been wooed by treasure stories and treasure maps. There's the story of the lost treasure of the Incas. When Incas of Peru were invaded by the Spanish in the 16th century they retreated into the rainforests of southern Brazil taking their vast treasure of gold with them. The new Inca city has never been located and their gold has never been found but it is estimated at somewhere around \$10 billion. Such stories captivate the imaginations of men. Many treasure hunters have spent their entire lives searching for such storehouses of wealth. This is the condition of lost humanity. They are continually seeking the treasures of this world; treasures that will ultimately slip through their fingers and be lost forever.
2. These earthly treasures are mere rubbish compared with the treasures laid up for those who follow Christ. In these opening verses Paul refers to them as spiritual blessings in the heavenly places. They are the greatest of treasures.
3. In **Verse 7** Paul begins to enumerating these treasures of His grace.
 - A. He declares the redemption and forgiveness God has provided for us in Christ: "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses"
 - B. In **Verses 8-9** he says that God has blessed His chosen people with Divine illumination. Paul says God has made known to us the mystery of His will:
4. Now in **Verse 11** Paul continues to declare the fullness of our treasure.
Ephesians 1:11 NAU - "also we have obtained an inheritance"
5. To receive an inheritance is a great blessing.
 - A. A couple labors their entire life. They pay for a home and acquire things of value. It is a blessing to be able to pass these things along to their children when they die.
Proverbs 13:22 NAU - "A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children"
 - B. Sometimes a family acquires a great deal of wealth that remains with the family and it is passed on from generation to generation. This is why inheritance tax is so evil. It robs families of their wealth and children of their inheritance.
6. Even the largest of earthly inheritances, however, are limited to the finite amount of wealth upon the earth. And even if you were to inherit the vast amount of earthly riches you would only have use of them for the brief time you have upon the earth. When you die you will take no more earthly treasure with you than the poorest pauper.

7. In **Verse 11** Paul speaks of an inheritance of a different sort, one that is beyond all earthly description and that will never end. Jesus spoke of this treasure:
Matthew 6:19-20 NAU - "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal"
8. In **Verse 5** Paul speaks of our adoption. God has predestined us to adoption as sons. As the children of God we have become heirs of a great inheritance.
 While the concept of our inheritance is used often in the NT Paul uses a very unique word here. It is the only time it is found in the NT. It literally refers to an inheritance gained through the casting of lots pointing to God's sovereign choice of us.
 "also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will"
9. This inheritance is spoken of over and over in God's Word.
1 Peter 3:7 NAS - "You husbands likewise, live with *your wives* in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered."
James 2:5 NAS - "Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world *to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom* which He promised to those who love Him?"
Titus 3:7 NAS - "that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."
Galatians 3:29-1 NAS - "And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise."
10. This morning I want to set before you several wonderful truths about our inheritance. We saw some of these in Romans 8. Our inheritance is **Equal, Endowed, Excellent, Eternal**
- I. It's an Equal Inheritance
- A. Throughout the book of Ephesians Paul stresses the unity and oneness of Jews and Gentiles in Christ. We see this uniquely in these verses.
1. Throughout this section Paul has been using the 1st person plural pronoun – "We" – see **Verses 11-12**.
 But in **Verse 13** Paul changes to the 2nd person – "You"
 2. In the first instance Paul is referring to himself with his fellow Jews.
Ephesians 1:12 NAU - "we who were the first to hope in Christ"
 This was God's order:
Romans 1:16 NAS - "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."
 3. In **Verse 13** Paul is then addressing the Gentile people to whom this letter is addressed – "you too."
Ephesians 1:13 NAU - "you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise"

4. Paul is saying, the Jews believed first but now you also – all division has been removed.

Ephesians 2:14 NAS - "For He Himself is our peace, who made both *groups into* one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, ¹⁵ by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, *which is* the Law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, *thus* establishing peace"

5. Both Jews and Gentiles share the same inheritance.

Ephesians 3:6 NAS - "the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel,"

B. All of those who embrace Christ share in this inheritance

1. This is an equal inheritance – all are equal in Christ. There are no divisions in the Body of Christ.

Galatians 3:28-29 – “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

2. You may have been born into poverty. You may not have a lot of friends. You may not have keen mental abilities. You may not feel yourself worthy compared with many others – In Christ you are heir to all things.

3. Paul declared that all believers share in the same crown of righteousness that was his hope.

2 Timothy 4:7-8 – “I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: ⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

4. All of God's adopted children share as heirs with Christ.

Romans 8:17 – “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. . .”

II. It's an Endowed Inheritance

A. Christ has purchased our inheritance

1. Notice the expression at the end of **Verse 10** – “In Him”

This is the pattern of this entire chapter.

Verse 11 - "In Him ¹¹ also we have obtained an inheritance"

Christ is at the heart of God's redemptive work

Verse 4 - "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world"

Verse 7 - "In Him we have redemption through His blood"

Verse 9 - "according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him"

2. Upon the cross Christ purchased the right to all things.

Philippians 2:9 – “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:”

Colossians 1:16 NAU - "For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created through Him and for Him."

Colossians 1:19-20 NAU - "For it was the *Father's* good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, ²⁰ and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, *I say*, whether things on earth or things in heaven."

3. Jesus is heir of all things

Hebrews 1:1-2:

"God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things."

4. Jesus purchased our salvation taking our place and delivering us from the wrath of God and upon faith and repentance we are joined to Him. Since Christ is heir of all things and we are joint heirs with Him, we too are heirs of all things.

- B. Our inheritance is strictly an act of grace. Christ has a right to His inheritance but we do not. We receive it only through Him.

1. Jesus has purchased our pardon and every blessing

We have received it by grace as we have been united to Him.

Ephesians 1:6 NAU - "which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved."

Ephesians 1:7 NAU - "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace"

2. All that we have is in Christ Jesus – all by grace

2 Corinthians 8:9 NAU - "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich."

- C. Christ is the source of every blessing of grace

1. Jesus prayed, **John 17:5 NAU** - "glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was." (John 17:5).

2. We will be partakers of that same glory. We won't be equal to Christ in terms of deity, but we will be equal to Him in the sense of sharing in His inheritance

- a. Jesus also prayed, "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them" (John 17:22).

- b. It is easy to be distracted by earthly things. Instead we should dwell on heavenly things (Col. 3:2).

III. It's an Excellent Inheritance

- A. It is immeasurable

1. Paul has described it as blessings in the heavenly realm – **Verse 3**

- a. He described being adopted into the household of God – **V.5**

- b. **Ephesians 1:7-8 NAU** - "according to the riches of His grace ⁸ which He lavished on us. "

-- abundant, overflowing, exceeding

2. We share all that pertains to Christ
Romans 8:16-17 NAU - "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ"
 3. If Christ is the heir of all things then we are also have become heirs of all things
- B. What does it mean that we are "fellow-heirs"
1. It means that in Christ we shall share all that pertains to Him
 2. Heaven and earth are ours
 - a. The Psalmist wrote of our Lord's inheritance
Psalms 2:8 KJV – "Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession."
 - b. Peter quoting from Isaiah spoke of a New Heavens and a New Earth
2 Peter 3:13 NAU - "But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells."
 - c. Creation lies in corruption now but this will not be forever
God is about to make all things new – and it is ours!
 - d. This is the essence of the Beatitudes
Matthew 5:5 KJV – "Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."
 3. Does Christ possess a Kingdom – it too is ours
James 2:5 NAU - "Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?"
 4. Does Christ not sit on a throne – In a mystery that we will never fully understand, we will sit on His throne with Him.
Revelation 3:21 NAU - "He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."
 5. Does Christ not dwell in a glorious body pure and undefiled?
 1. We too have the hope of the resurrection
 2. We too will be raised incorruptible
1 Corinthians 15:20 NAU - "But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep."
 6. We share all that pertains to Christ. Our mind immediately turns to all things glorious. But there is another aspect.
We shall share in His sufferings – Jesus was heir to the cross, to mocking and scourging.
Romans 8:16-18 NAU - "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*. ¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

- a. To come after Christ is to receive all that pertains to Him
Luke 9:23 NAU - "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."
- b. Paul spoke of it as having communion with Christ in His suffering
Philippians 3:10-11 – "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; ¹¹ If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."
- c. The persecution Christians receive goes to many extremes. Some Christians receive light affliction while others are martyred. But we have all been ostracized or looked down upon for our faith in Jesus Christ. Those who suffer for Christ are the heirs of God

Not only is it an Equal, Endowed, and Excellent inheritance

IV. It's an Eternal Inheritance

- A. It was wrought in eternity past and is assured into eternity future
 1. Paul says our inheritance was foreordained
Ephesians 1:11 NAU - "also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will"
 - a. The word for "predestined" is προορίζω – it means to predetermine.
 - b. Our inheritance was predetermined before the world began. Paul describes it in **Verse 4**
Ephesians 1:4 NAU - "just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world"
 2. But it is assured into the everlasting realm. In **Verses 13-14** Paul says the Holy Spirit has been given as the pledge or down-payment or earnest of our inheritance. Our inheritance is assured.
- B. Our inheritance has been purchased with the blood of Christ – it is sure
1 Peter 1:3-5 NAU - "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
 1. Everything on earth is growing old and will soon pass into nothingness
 2. Our focus should be on that which is eternal – that which is permanent – our eternal inheritance
Matthew 6:19-20 – "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: ²⁰ But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:"

3. People sadly spend their whole lives seeking an earthly treasure that they cannot keep. How much more glorious it is to labor for that which will never pass away.
Jim Elliot who was killed as he sought to bring the Gospel to the Aucas:
“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose”
- B. Our treasure cannot be lost because it is being kept in Christ
 1. He is preserving us
Philippians 1:6 – “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ.”
2 Timothy 1:12 – “for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”
 2. Nothing shall rob us of our inheritance
1 Peter 1:4-5 says we have been promised "an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
 3. Everything on earth grows old, becomes defiled, or fades away. But the believer's inheritance is incorruptible and eternal. We who are saved don't need to work at staying saved; we are kept by God's power. We will receive the inheritance promised us them before the world

Conclusion:

1. In James 2:5 we are spoken of as being *heirs of the kingdom*.
James 2:5 NAU - "Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?"
2. Christ has a kingdom that shall never be moved. We share in His ownership of that Kingdom. And He has sent us His Spirit who continually bears witness within us of our Divine inheritance.
3. And what is our response to such things? We praise Him.
Ephesians 1:6 NAU - "to the praise of the glory of His grace"
Ephesians 1:12 NAU - "to the praise of His glory."
Ephesians 1:14 NAU - "to the praise of His glory."