

“Our Inheritance as Saints”  
Colossians 1:12  
(Preached at Trinity, January 7, 2017)

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. Having received word from Epaphras of the rich spiritual progress of the Colossian church Paul writes to express his continual prayer for them that they might increase more and more.
2. As I've pointed out, in the Greek **Verses 9-20** are a single sentence consisting of 218 words. It is the continuation of a prayer begun in **Verse 3**. Beginning in **Verse 9**, Paul prays that God would fill them with spiritual wisdom and understanding that they might be filled with a knowledge of His will.  
This wisdom comes from above; the Holy Spirit's transforming work upon our mind. It is His illuminating grace that continues progressively in the Christian's life.
3. This spiritual wisdom has the result of giving discernment to know the will of God, to walk in a manner well-pleasing to God..  
"so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God"
4. In addition, such wisdom supplies God's power to persevere with all steadfastness and patience.
5. At the end of **Verse 12** makes a wonderful statement of encouragement. He has prayed for the Colossians that they might be filled with knowledge and spiritual wisdom, that they would be able to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord. He has prayed that they might be strengthened with almighty power so that they would be enabled to persevere with joy and thanksgiving.  
Paul then makes this wonderful affirmation that these things belong to us as Christians.  
**Colossians 1:12 NAU** - "who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light."
6. Paul is saying that the Father has qualified us to share in a glorious inheritance shared by all the saints. This inheritance is infinitely superior to all earthly inheritance.
7. To receive an earthly inheritance is a great blessing.
  - A. Families build up an estate. It may be meager possessions representing the hard work of an entire lifetime, or it may be an enormous estate that represents generations of wealth.
  - B. As our government has increasingly embraced socialistic tendencies, some politicians see inheritance is a bad thing. They believe that it is good to redistribute wealth through taxation. Thankfully, there has been a measure of correction regarding the inheritance tax that used to cause a burden to families often demanding the liquidation of farmland that had been in the family for generations.

- C. The Bible describes inheritance as a good thing. It is a blessing to be able to pass an inheritance along to the next generation. In fact, the Bible implies that it is an evil thing to squander one's wealth without consideration of the next generation. The bumper sticker that reads, "I'm spending my children's inheritance" may sound cute, but it is actually a sign of fleshly self-indulgence.  
**Proverbs 13:22 NAU** - "A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children"
8. 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.
- A. It is a fool who trades his soul for earthly wealth  
**Mark 8:36-37 NAU** - "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? <sup>37</sup> "For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"
- B. And eventually, every earthly treasure will be consumed.  
**2 Peter 3:10 NAU** - "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up."
9. Christians share in an inheritance that is both now and forever. This morning I want us to consider this inheritance that is ours as Christians.
- I. It is a qualified inheritance
- A. It is an inheritance given to the "saints in Light"
1. Paul is describing a particular inheritance for a particular people. These are God's holy people
  2. Notice the contrast of darkness and light. We are the saints in light who have been rescued from the kingdom of darkness.
- B. This is an inheritance to those qualified - "who has qualified us"
1. How does one become qualified to be God's heir?  
 It is the same as in the natural world. One becomes qualified to be an heir either by birth or by adoption. The Christian has become a partaker of both a new birth and an adoption. Both of these are an act of God's grace.
  2. Our inheritance is strictly an act of grace. Christ has a right to His inheritance but we do not. We receive it only through our union with Him.
  3. Jesus has purchased our pardon and every blessing  
 We have received it by grace as we have been united to Him.  
 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."
  4. God chose us to become His heirs.

- C. In the Old Covenant God promised to Abraham and his posterity that He would be their God and they would be His people—that they would be heirs to His promise.
- Genesis 17:7-8 NAS** - "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. <sup>8</sup> "And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."
1. They were chosen above all the nations of the earth  
They enjoyed the presence of God as the people of God.
  2. They were given a land and it remained theirs as long as they remained a theocratic nation.
    - a. The Land of Canaan was never meant to be the ultimate fulfillment of God's promise. It was an Old Covenant shadow that looked forward to a New Covenant fulfillment.
    - b. The patriarchs never had full possession and always looked forward to the city of God.  
**Hebrews 11:9-10 NAU** - " By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign *land*, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; <sup>10</sup> for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God."
  3. Israel failed by thinking God's covenant blessings were theirs by right because they were the sons of Abraham. Under the Old Covenant this inheritance was provisional and required their obedience.
  4. They failed to see that God's promises were ultimately fulfilled in Christ. They would not receive Christ and refused to become the disciples of Christ and so were cut off from being God's people.  
**Matthew 21:42-43 NAS** - "Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures, 'The stone which the builders rejected, This became the chief corner *stone*; This came about from the Lord, And it is marvelous in our eyes ' ? <sup>43</sup> "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it."
- D. Under the New Covenant God displays His everlasting promise fulfilled through the Jesus Christ. The Kingdom has been given to us as heirs to the promise.
- Colossians 1:13-14 NAU** - "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."
1. The New Covenant is the glorious demonstration of God's covenant faithfulness. He has blessed His people with an eternal inheritance.

2. Greg Nichols writes: “Jehovah Jesus instituted the new covenant with this believing remnant of Israel. He thus established his disciples, his spiritual children, as God’s people. Then He blessed Christian Israel with the Holy Spirit, gave them the Lord’s Day, and grafted Gentile believers into this theocratic society of the new covenant. In this way God took the theocracy away from Hebrew Israel and made Messiah’s posterity the people of God.”<sup>1</sup>
  3. The New Covenant isn’t the replacement of Israel. It is the full revelation of Israel, the full revelation of God’s people. We are God’s people and enjoy the riches of our inheritance.
- E. We are “qualified” to be the heirs of God through Jesus Christ
1. God chose us to be His heirs
  2. There is no greater blessings. He is our Father and we are His children. We share in the inheritance of Christ.
- II. It is an equal inheritance - "who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints"
- A. All of the saints of God share in this inheritance
1. All are equal in Christ. There are no divisions in the Body of Christ. This doesn’t mean uniformity of function or giftedness.  
**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. <sup>29</sup> And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”
  2. It’s interesting, Paul is writing to a Gentile church. The Gentiles were aliens to and strangers to God’s promise. They were outcasts. Now, through Christ they have been grafted in. Gentiles share in God’s covenant promise – we are heirs with Christ in His glorious inheritance.  
**Ephesians 2:19 NAU** - "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,"
  3. 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.
  4. We all possess that which belongs to Christ  
**Romans 8:17 NAU** - "and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ"
- B. While there is equality in possession there may not be equality in appreciation
1. While every Christian shares in the same possession today not every Christian has a fullness of appreciation
  2. Do you fully appreciate your possession? Do you see excellence of Christ? Is He everything in your life? Do you sometimes look to earthly things to bring you happiness?

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<sup>1</sup> Nichols, Greg. (2011). *Covenant Theology, a Reformed and Baptist Perspective on God’s Covenants*. Birmingham: Solid Ground Christian Books, page 178.

3. Will there be equality of appreciation in eternity?  
Jonathan Edwards believed this will be the degrees of reward in eternity—our ability to fully appreciate the glories of heaven. He spoke of it by way of our “capacity” in heaven.  
“There is no more reason why it should be a damp to the happiness of some in heaven that others are happier, than that their happiness should be damped by a bare possibility of greater happiness, supposing them to be an equal; for if they were all equal and all full of happiness, yet everyone would know that greater happiness is possible, absolutely, and possible for them if God had but enlarged their capacity.”<sup>2</sup>  
Edwards also believed that your capacity to enjoy Christ in heaven will be in direct relation to your enjoyment of Him now.

III. We have this blessing now but await its fullness

- A. We enjoy the abiding presence of Jesus Christ now  
**Matthew 28:20** - "I am with you always, even to the end of the age."  
1 We enjoy His presence now, and yet, sin hinders our communion with Christ. We presently look forward to His return when we shall see Him face to face.  
**1 John 3:2-3 NAU** - "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.  
<sup>3</sup> And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."  
2. As we await His return He has given us His Holy Spirit as the down payment or earnest of our inheritance.  
**Ephesians 1:13-14 NAU** - "In Him, 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,<sup>14</sup> who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory."
- B. We look forward to the ultimate fulfillment of God's promise  
1. We await entrance into our heavenly abode – the new heavens and new earth, our promised inheritance.  
**Matthew 5:5 KJV** - "Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the 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."  
2. The greatest aspect of our inheritance is Christ – to see Him face to face, to know Him more and more.  
3. Paul was praying that the Colossians would increase more and more in their knowledge of God.  
**Colossians 1:10 NAU** - "bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God"

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<sup>2</sup> Edwards, Jonathan. (1986). *Works of Edwards, Vol. 2*. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, page 617.

4. We look forward to the time when our knowledge of God will increase moment by moment to our great enjoyment of Him.  
Jonathan Edwards: "As they increase in the knowledge of God, and of the works of God, the more they will see of His excellency, and the more they see of His excellency, the more will they love Him, and the more they love Him, the more delight and happiness they will have in Him."<sup>3</sup>

#### Conclusion:

1. Through Christ we have been joined to a new kingdom  
**Colossians 1:13 NAU** - "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,"
  - a. We share in this kingdom as joint-heirs with Christ.
  - b. 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, of our adoption as heirs and joint heirs with Christ
3. This blessed inheritance should cause us to look upon this world with different eyes. If this world is not our reward shall we not expend our energies on that which is ours for all eternity. It gives greater meaning to our Lord's words, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness"

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<sup>3</sup> Edwards, Jonathan. (1986). *Works of Edwards, Vol. 2*. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, page 619.