

Ephesians 1 11-14 (Our Inheritance)

by Michael Durham

This sermon delves into the theme of 'Our Inheritance' based on Ephesians chapter 1, emphasizing the profound blessings and privileges bestowed upon believers through Jesus Christ. It highlights the importance of fully embracing and enjoying the inheritance given to us by God, which is found in Christ alone. The speaker urges listeners to recognize their need for complete dependence on Christ and the Holy Spirit to experience the fullness of their inheritance, leading to a life of faith, joy, and victory over trials.

Scripture: Ephesians 1:11, Psalms 16:5, Hebrews 1:4, Hebrews 12:1, Romans 6:4

Topics: "Inheritance in Christ", "Dependence on the Holy Spirit"

Description

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Transcript

The text I pray the Lord be pleased to speak to us from this morning is Paul's epistle to the Ephesians chapter 1. Ephesians chapter 1, we're going to be reading verses 11 through 14. I want to speak this morning on the theme, Our Inheritance, Our Inheritance. Ephesians chapter 1, we'll begin reading at verse 11.

Reading from the New King James Version. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also trusted after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession to the praise of His glory.

I come today constrained in my heart to give you what I pray is a fitting word. Not only must wrenches and spoons be fitting, but so must the message of the hour. As a gospel preacher, I'm not so much concerned if I'm being faithful to the text.

I have dedicated my life to be faithful to gospel exposition. I've often said half-jokingly that if I close my eyes, open my Bible, put my finger down, give me five minutes and I can come up with a three-point sermon. And I have no doubt that it would be faithful to the text.

But that's not what we need this morning. That is not the work of the gospel minister. No, it is to give a word fitly spoken.

For a word fitly spoken is a timely word, and it's like apples of gold fitted in silver frame. And that's what we want to hear today. And so constrained with what I believe is God's message for you and I this morning, I want to speak upon this theme of our inheritance.

I have an advantage point that maybe many of you do not have. I travel to many different kinds of churches, and invariably I find the same condition among so many. It seems that many in our churches today are living so far beneath the dignity and privileges of sons and daughters of God.

We do not seem to be enjoying the inheritance that has been bequeathed to us. The joy of the Lord is not our strength. We're trying to muster strength so that we can enjoy the Lord.

But this is not the way it's to be intended. God has given to you and I something that cannot be described, and the apostle Paul here is trying with superlative after superlative, adjective after adjective to describe what has been given to us. And I fear he was even under the power of the Holy Spirit not able to describe the fullness thereof.

A lot of treasure has been committed unto you and I in the person of Jesus Christ. And so I want to speak to you, you who are weary and heavy laden. I want to speak to my brothers and sisters whom I cherish deeply.

I want to talk to you. I want to speak and ask you, are you enjoying what Christ purchased and has given to you? Are you walking in the fullness of this inheritance that is given to all, not just to preachers, not to Bible scholars alone, no, but to the least among us? For even he or she who is weak in spirit ought to be full of the privileges that has been granted to the children of God. And so as we look at this, I ask you a question as we begin to examine the text.

Who is our inheritance? The question is not what is our inheritance, it is who is our inheritance. Notice the text in verse 11, in him also we have obtained an inheritance. The inheritance is in a person, and the person is Jesus Christ.

God has granted to us the Son, and with the Son comes the inheritance of the Son. This is no doubt foreshadowed in the Old Testament Psalm, Psalm 16 verse 5, David says, Oh Lord, you are the portion of my inheritance and my cup. You maintain my lot.

The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places. Yes, I have a good inheritance. David understood that the inheritance given to him by God is in the very person of God.

Have you been given Christ? Have you received him then my friend? You have become a joint heir with him. And all that the Father has given to him, willed to him, has been willed and given to you. Remember what God said to Abraham, I am thy shield and exceedingly great reward.

What can we aspire to more than God himself? What would you want more than the lovely Jesus Christ? Come now. Have you been given Christ? And you've been given everything, all the treasure of heaven, all the fullness of earth is ours. We have been given a great estate in the person of Jesus Christ.

And Paul reaffirms this. Now I know that there is some translation differences at this point. Some says that we have become the heritage or the inheritance of God.

But I think that's an unfortunate rendering of the text because it doesn't fit the context as well. Look at verse 14. Paul again speaks of our inheritance.

He says the Holy Spirit is the down payment of this inheritance. Verse 13, in him you also trust that it is in Christ. After you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee, the down payment, the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession to the praise of his glory.

The Holy Spirit is a down payment, the first installment, if you please, of the complete fullness that we will yet to receive. He's another helper, advocate of the same kind, said Jesus on the night of his betrayal and arrest. He says, I'm not going to leave you as orphans.

I will come to you and I will come to you in the third person of the triune God, the Holy Spirit. In fact, indeed, he is called the Spirit of Christ, is he not? Paul says, now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not his. He's not a Christian.

She's not a believer if they do not have the Spirit of God in them, because he is the Spirit of Christ. And of course, as a down payment, the Holy Spirit must be of the same kind as the full and complete payment of the inheritance. For example, if you purchase something, like an automobile or a home, and you give the down payment or the earnest, you give it in financial muneration, some kind of currency.

You don't turn around and pay off the car or the mortgage with potatoes or some other kind of produce. They may have done that in days of bartering, but it won't work today. No, no.

What you must complete the purchase with is the same kind in which you began with the down payment. The Holy Spirit is the living God, and he inhabits us. We have been indwelt by him, and we should be filled with him.

He is the beginning of our inheritance. Christ himself. And our inheritance is not theoretical or merely theological.

Truly our Lord Jesus Christ is committed to us in a very real and experiential relationship. It says the hymn writer states, He speaks, and the sound of his voice is so sweet the birds hush their singing, And the melody that he gave to me, within my heart is ringing, and he walks with me, And he talks with me, and he tells me that I am his own, And the joy we share as we tarry there none other has ever known. This is reality, not theory.

It says the great hymn writer Fanny Crosby penned, Perfect submission, all is at rest, I am my Savior, and happy and blessed, Watching and waiting, looking above, filled with his goodness, lost in his love. That's experiential language. This is not theory.

This is not some dry lecture given in a hall. No, this is what Christ has committed himself to, and to you personally. That he would have a living, walking, breathing, talking relationship with us.

And it's the work of the Holy Spirit, the down payment of this inheritance, To make our Lord's presence real to us. So with every experience of our dear Savior, we know him better. It's this deep experiential knowledge of him that is the same as coming into your inheritance.

You say, this language bothers me. There's so much experiential, quote, Christianity that is abusive and excessive and dangerous and unbiblical. Yes, my dear friend, that's true.

But as I have reminded you before, you don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. No, we press into the biblical experiential relationship that we have with Christ. Because that is the essence of our Christianity and our faith.

And so Christ is your inheritance. Are you spending it? Are you enjoying it? Are you taking advantage of it this morning? Are you walking in the fullness of Jesus Christ? Can you say as the Apostle Paul said, I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth within me. Can you say that? On a consistent basis.

Not perfectly, but on a consistent basis. And so if Christ is our inheritance, I think the most logical question to ask or to take the time to examine is, what is his inheritance? What has he been given? Hebrews chapter 1 verse 4 says he has received an inheritance. Hebrews 1 verse 4. Having become so much better than the angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

He's not speaking about the deity of Christ here, but rather the man Christ. As deity, as God, the second person. Yes, he's always been better and had a more excellent name than the angels.

But this is the man. The man has been elevated. He's been exalted and he's received an inheritance.

Once again foreshadowed in the prophecies of the Old Testament. David Psalm 2, the Lord said to me, You are my son, today I have begotten you. Ask of me and I will give the nations for your inheritance and the ends of the earth for your possession.

Do you remember what Jesus said to the apostles before he ascended back to the Father? This is after his death, burial and resurrection. In Matthew 28, 18 he says, All authority is given to me in heaven and on earth. He is not speaking of that which he always possessed as a man.

This is something that had recently been granted to him. He had now come into his inheritance. He had both died and been resurrected.

Now, as a man, he has all authority in heaven and in earth. Jesus appears to John on the Isle of Patmos. And what does he say? I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore.

Amen. I have the keys of hell and death. There is his inheritance.

He owns it all. God the Father has bequeathed everything to his keeping and enjoyment. Do you mind if I belabor this point one more, a little bit longer? Ephesians 1, right here in our own text, a chapter of our text.

Ephesians 1, verse 20 through 22. Listen to how Paul extols and describes the inheritance that has been given to your Lord. He, God the Father, raised him, Jesus, from the dead, and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, brother Allen, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come.

And he put all things under his feet, and he gave him to be head over all things. Our Lord's inheritance includes all that is in the spiritual realm, all of heaven, and all that that means. But it doesn't just stop there.

It also includes the cosmos, the created order of this physical realm, which was usurped by the great usurper, Satan. The first parents, the beginning of the human race, Adam and Eve, had been made vice regents of all of God's physical order, the cosmos. But in their treachery of betrayal and sin, they forfeited what had been given to them, the physical realm and dominion.

And by deception, Satan took it. And the governmental authority of this world fell into the hands of the dragon. A man was vanquished by this one, this one outcast from heaven, the adversary.

Man was laid low and defeated by the devil. Surely God could have defeated this enemy with one word from his mouth. But he chose not to do it that way.

No, not at all. The Lord would have him cast down yet again, not by angelic forces out of heaven. No, he would be cast down by the heel of a man.

The great ironies of all ironies is that a man defeated the prince of darkness. He gained ascendancy by conquering a man, and by the seed of the same man, Satan was conquered. Who is this man who championed our cause and took back our rightful inheritance? It was Jesus of Nazareth.

Oh, but can anything good come out of Nazareth? Yes, yes, the great dragon slayer has come out of Nazareth. And out of his weakness and death, he has slain the devil. The weakness of a man lost paradise, but by the weakness of another man, paradise was regained.

And now as the Lord Jesus, he has taken his rightful place above all principalities, all powers. All of his enemies are being brought under his feet right now as a footstool. This is who he is, and this is our inheritance.

I know it seems almost sci-fi, doesn't it? Out of this world, well, it is out of this world. A plan hatched in the heart of the eternal and everlasting one. But it's real, it's real.

This is what the Son delights in sharing with you, his brother, his sister. This is what God the Father has given to all those who will love the Son and be found in Him. Are you in Him? Have you found your way out of the paths of darkness and sin into the light of His love? Are you in Christ today? If so, you have been bequeathed it all in the person of Jesus Christ.

Satan desires to convince you that he's still prince of this world, and that all who are under and in this earth are under his power. But that's a lie, my friend. The earth is no longer under the dominion of the deceiver.

It's in the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. Darkness does not sit on the throne. Light does.

The truth does. Not the power of the devil's lie. And that's the only thing he has.

The power of his lie. And then when you believe his lies, which is another way of saying your unbelief in God, for you see unbelief in God is faith in the devil. When you believe his lies, then you give him power over you.

Remember, this is our victory, even our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is our faith, and this is our victory. Now, Paul is using here Old Testament terminology when he uses this word inheritance.

It is a word that every Jewish Bible student would have known and known quite well. He knows about the inheritance promised to Abraham, and as a son of Abraham, he enjoys that inheritance. Paul makes a Old Testament parallel and parable of our inheritance with the people of Israel in the Old Testament.

In fact, God does so, and Paul simply sees it and conveys it to you and I. For example, in 1 Corinthians 10, you might want to turn and follow. I want to read a few verses here to you, 1 Corinthians 10, beginning with verse 1. Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea and were baptized into Moses in the cloud and the sea. He's talking about the children of Israel and the great exodus out of Egypt into the land of promise, their inheritance.

They all ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them. And that rock was Christ. But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

The writer of Hebrews picks up on that thought and tells us that the majority of that generation could not enter into the inheritance because of unbelief. And then notice verse 11 of the 10th chapter of 1 Corinthians. Paul summarizes as the retelling of their wilderness wanderings.

He says, now all of these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages have come. And so Paul here goes back and he picks up on the parable or the illustration of God in the Old Testament. The illustration is the people of Israel.

They foreshadowed in type what you and I are to be in reality, the people of God, that royal priesthood, that holy nation. And he says, whatever has happened to them in their exodus and in their wilderness wanderings is an example to you, dear friend, you the Christian sitting here today. Now there, like any parable, any illustration, there are similarities and then there are dissimilarities.

There are places in which the illustration makes perfect sense and other places it breaks down. Here the illustration is simple. The people of Israel represent the people of God moving out of the bondage of sin and into the liberties of God's inheritance.

So why then therefore the wilderness experience? Why? And why 40 years of it? You've all known, I'm sure you've heard the scholars tell us that from their exodus out of Egypt to Jericho, to the Jordan River, was about an 11 day journey. Why 40 years? Well we can understand that the first year was at Mount Sinai and there God was giving them his covenant, his laws, and he was teaching them how they were to live once they entered the inheritance. He was giving them the civil foundations of society as well as the moral code by which to live.

So we can understand the first year. It was a year of university, a year of instruction. But why the 39 years afterwards? Why not a sudden trek and dash to the Jordan River and then on into the promised land? Well there's a purpose for the wilderness, again written for our admonition, for our learning.

The souls of the exodus had been baptized into Moses, describing, symbolizing their deliverance from sin. The bondage of Pharaoh was a picture of sin and its bondage and slavery. But just like us who have been set free from sin through our great Deliverer, Jesus Christ our Lord, can we not all admit we still have corruption? Don't you still need some saving? I do.

I know it's true. I feel it much, my depravity. And just like them, we still feel the pull of the natural life.

There's a pull still there. The Apostle Paul calls that pull of the natural life the flesh, fallen human nature with all its propensities and desires. And as I'm looking upon you, you look wonderful, you look beautiful, I must tell you.

But I don't think you look glorified yet. Not yet. You're not radiant beauty, a persona of Christ and His glory and beauty.

No, not yet. We're still in these fallen bodies with fallen human nature, with its desires. The people of Israel were led into the wilderness to bring out and display before their very eyes their proclivity to this natural life, living life naturally.

Living by oneself with all the natural powers and abilities of fallen human nature, of self. It's in the wilderness they were to learn how utterly weak in reality they were and to live off the strength and might of God. That's what the wilderness was for, to learn that fact.

Beloved, are you listening? I hope you are. It's in the barren place of our own nature we come to discover in reality what we've been taught in theory. That apart from Christ we can do nothing.

The last time I checked, nothing means nothing, not a thing. When we finally come to the realization of this fact, when the theological thesis becomes more than a bullet point of dogma, now we can find Christ to be our everything and can cross over our Jordan and possess and enjoy the inheritance. That's the purpose of the wilderness.

It's been called wrongly the secret of the Christian life, but it's not a secret, it's been known since the Exodus, since the wilderness wanderings of the Hebrews, that man cannot live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. And the purpose of the wilderness is to come to the place where all things are in Christ and He is your everything. That's it.

That's why you have those days, weeks, or seasons in which you feel so spiritually miserable, a failure. That's why you trip up and you have to struggle with the besetting sin. I don't know why we read it that way, and I don't want to get too far afield from the text, but when you read Hebrews 12, it's not an excuse to keep besetting sins.

It's a command to get rid of it. But we read the text as if it's just going to hang around until I get to glory. Oh no, my friend.

There is a time of the wilderness where you come to know your besetting sins through one failure after another. That's its purpose. This is the instruction of our Lord.

This is not something new. This is what Jesus meant. He says, if anyone is to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

You cannot trust you and God. You must first abandon your self-trust that you may follow Him completely. That's the way it works.

That's the way faith works. And unless God does everything in us by His Spirit, there's no spiritual value in anything, anything you do. I don't care how much it's sanctioned and praised by the church.

We must come to an end of our own limitations in order to come into His fullness. We have to find the end of our own labor if we are to enter into His rest. You see, the inheritance is not the good things of God only.

And oh, Paul will enumerate many good things in the first three chapters of this epistle. But it's not just that. And it's certainly not our service to God.

It isn't heaven either by itself. No, the inheritance is Jesus Christ. He is our possession.

When will Christ become your only treasured possession? This is the question. That's what our Lord God wants you to believe. Believing that to be real and true is what coming into your inheritance means.

And Christ is not just one of many good things, but He is the only thing. Oh, preacher, we've heard language like this before. Yes, but you've not lived in it yet.

So you need to hear it again. May this time God give you grace to understand it and to believe it. There is no other way.

And it's not a secret, as I said a moment ago. The wilderness is the place where you're tested and tested and tested until you finally learn what is true about you as well as what's true about the Lord Jesus Christ. The crisis comes, and then another, and another.

And with the coming of each crisis is the question of our Lord to your heart. Am I your everything, or is there another? Do you really want me more than anything else, or do you want me for the things I give to you? That's what the wilderness does. It exposes that.

And for so many of us, the lesson of the wilderness is very long in learning. Very long. Some of you have been in it decades.

We're to follow our Joshua into the land of promise. By the way, do you know what the Hebrew pronunciation of Joshua is? You do? Yeshua. Yeshua.

It is the very name that Gabriel told Joseph in a dream, and you shall call his name Yeshua, for he shall save his people from their sins. It's Joshua. You see, the Old Testament is a picture book, portraying, illustrating the story of God's redeeming love for his people.

And we must follow our Joshua into the land of promise, which, by the way, is not heaven. That's a very unfortunate theological mistake. It's not heaven.

If it were heaven, I don't know if I'd want to go there, because they've got walled cities, and people like giants, and we're grasshoppers compared to them. No. When we get to heaven, there are no more wars with the enemy.

No, the wilderness is showing us the enjoyment of our inheritance. It's not the end of all struggle, or fighting, or conflict, or spiritual warfare. No, sir.

It's knowing how to do spiritual warfare, and the strength and the power of Christ the Lord. The lesson which must be learned is the infinite difference. This is the wilderness lesson.

Here's what it wants to show you in more detail. The infinite difference between you and your Lord Jesus. We are in Him.

He's in us. We are accepted in the Beloved. We are very much, in every way, in union with Jesus Christ, so that I can say to you today, with all assurance, no fear being contradicted, that what is true about Jesus in His redemptive role as a man, is true about you.

We've been crucified with Christ. We've been raised with Christ. And Paul elaborates in the book of Romans 6, 7, and 8, that beautiful story and truth of our union with Christ.

What's true about Him is true about you. He has become for us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. Everything I need is in Christ, and I am in union with Him.

However, that does not mean you and I are suited to live the Christian life. You are not Jesus. The Christian life is the life of Jesus lived out.

And you are not Jesus, nor am I. And while you're accepted in the Beloved, that acceptance does not mean you can do whatever you deem wise to do for Christ. It does not mean that you simply follow your feelings, doing anything and everything you feel would be right for Christ and for you. There are many who advocate that now we're saved.

We don't need the Lord's guidance. We can now simply live by principles of wisdom, biblical wisdom, as long as you're not violating Scripture, then you can do as you please. But oh dear friend, hear me.

I'll be willing to stay until the midnight strike, and talk with you on these lines, and answer and receive any challenge you might give me. But my dear friend, that is not what it means to walk by the Spirit. That's a grave mistake.

And a severe misunderstanding of what it means to live the Christian life. We must not live by natural impulses, as long as the impulses are not sinful. No sir, not at all.

That's not what the Bible calls you to live, or how to live. No, this is the very essence of what it means to live according to the natural self by the flesh. To live out of our inheritance is to live according to the impulses of the Holy Spirit, who will always lead us according to the Word of God.

Because it's by Him, says Paul in our text, we've been sealed. I remind you of what he will say later in the 5th chapter, in the 18th verse. Do not be drunk with wine, wear in his excess, but be filled with the Spirit.

The Greek grammar, keep being filled. Oh, what did he say to the Galatians? Walk in the Spirit, and you'll not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Oh, I wish I had time to unpack what it means to walk in the Spirit, to be filled with the Spirit.

And in sum, I'm going to give you a little nugget of it, and I hope it's enough for today. There is a supernatural power given to us by God as a part of our inheritance. Jesus said that He did not do the

works that men saw in His own power and strength.

No, no, it was the Father through Him that did those works. And how was the Father in Him? By the Holy Spirit that came and sealed Him at His baptism. He was given the Spirit without measure.

And how are you then going to live the Christian life without the power of the Spirit, if Christ must be filled with the Spirit as well? Do you see the question? Do you understand my point? Oh, how we justify, rationalize our lack of obedience to this very text. But it doesn't meet the criteria of Scripture, friends. We are to live by not our natural powers, not by our even sanctified imaginations.

Even the renewed mind must be submitted to the power of God Himself. And what I see occurring today is a kind of Christianity that's very different from living by the Spirit of the Christ within. It's a naturalized kind of Christianity.

Which is not what God intended. It looks very spiritual, appears very religious. By it you can become a biblical expert.

You can become theologically wise. You can become very astute in the Scriptures. This self-powered Christianity can achieve many theological achievements, successes.

It can appear very impressive. You seem to know even the deep things of God. But it's living in the wilderness, friends.

Still in the wilderness. It can be explained by your natural desire and interest in spiritual things. Of which every Christian here has.

Every child of God here has a proclivity, an instinct. An instinct to know more about the things of God. But the Apostle Paul said that you can preach.

I could stand here today and preach the Word of God by the power of human wisdom. And it will never accomplish what spiritual wisdom can do. But you would say, oh, what a message.

We heard the Word of God today. The faith of your hearers will be in men, not in the power of God. But when the Spirit of God is at work, He may be quiet.

He may be gentle. But He's always confrontational. This is how you can know it's Jesus.

This is how you can know it's the Holy Spirit or not. Because when He confronts you, He always confronts you with the reality of Christ. Always.

Always. When the devil brings condemnation, he brings guilt. Does he not? Sure.

And when the Holy Spirit comes and brings conviction, does He not bring guilt also? Of course, you're made to feel guilty of what you have done. You've sinned. But the difference with the Holy Spirit is He never focuses the guilt just on you.

But only upon you long enough that you can see your need of Christ. And He always, always, always confronts you with the goodness and the love of Christ at Calvary's cross. The devil will never do that.

You'll never hear uttered from his lips anything about Calvary except scorn and despise. For years, I've watched men and women come under the conviction of the word preached. For over 30 years now.

Well, I've actually been preaching over 40, but almost 50. But you've got to remember, the first 11 years of that, I wasn't even a Christian. And I've watched this over and over, and I've observed, and I've questioned God.

And I've gone to the Scriptures trying to understand. I've watched men and women come under the conviction of the word of God. And they truly seemed broken, and they seemed contrite.

And they humbled themselves, and they committed to following the Lord with a new devotion. And I could not doubt their sincerity. Couldn't.

They meant every word of their prayers. They meant every plea of repentance. And yet, sooner or later, they fell into the same routine and rut.

And they were destined to another cycle in the wilderness. What was their problem? What was going on? It was that they couldn't see just really how different Jesus Christ is to themselves. Now you see, you say, I don't understand.

I know He's different from me. He's God, I'm not. Oh, I know you know that.

But you haven't seen the depth of His altogether differentness. There's nothing natural about us that's like Jesus. Nothing that's natural to you is like Jesus.

Therefore, there is nothing natural that can please Him. Christ is radically different even from our consecrated self. You say, but yes.

But the Bible says, are we not all for our bodies as living sacrifice? But what is the altar for, sir? Death. The end of the sacrifice. God doesn't want your natural abilities consecrated.

He wants you to believe that apart from Him, you can do nothing. Nothing. You can't even read your Bible without Him.

Oh, I curse every morning I've opened my Bible without Christ's help. Because all I've done is just gone through the routine. I've spent another lap in the wilderness.

You've got to see your difference. The problem is in our thinking. The mind has to be renewed to see the vast difference between ourselves and our Christ.

And when you begin to see this fact, you realize you're incapable of serving Him in supernatural power. If He doesn't come through for you, you are sunk. You fail.

I think that's one of the reasons God called me to be a preacher. Because I needed the ministry to be reminded of this every time I stand behind a pulpit like this. I've preached long enough to know that mere oratory, while at the moment may impress, it doesn't have any eternal value.

And so, I stand before you one today who is absolutely weak, and I acknowledge my weakness gladly. I cannot confess enough of my poverty. If there's more to confess, I'll gladly do it.

Because I know that out of my weakness, His strength is perfected. Instead of trying to be better, instead of trying to improve, instead of trying to become more mature, I embrace what I am. I don't run from it.

It's the great lesson of the wilderness. I embrace it. That's my reality.

That's the fact. I'm a sinner saved by grace, and I need grace. Not just to be saved from my sins, but I need grace to live in supernatural power.

Most of us are unlike the majority of those who perished in the wilderness, thank God. Because if you perish in the wilderness, you were never, never His. But we are like that halfway crowd, Reuben, Manasseh, and Gad.

The halfway folks. We know there's an inheritance. We want to enjoy the inheritance.

And we receive an inheritance, but not the full inheritance God promised. And today there are some of you who are content with something less than God intended for you. You're willing to settle for some of the inheritance, but you lack the desire for the fullness that you could be enjoying starting right now.

You've got part of the inheritance, but it's not the complete package that God intends for us to enjoy here now. And so you say, you have described me, I am that person. I've settled for green pastures, but they're not the intended green pastures that God has bequeathed to me.

What can I do to inherit what God wants for me? And my friend, the very question betrays you that you still don't understand. It's not that you will receive the inheritance if you do something. It's you have already received it.

That's what he says in the text. He says we have obtained an inheritance. You've already received your inheritance.

The question ought to be how can I enjoy what has been given to me? How can I enjoy the goodness of God in me? Would you notice the words we have obtained? And I don't want to bore you with Greek grammar, but I believe it's important for you to know this, otherwise I would not do it. We have obtained is really one word in the Greek, and it's in an aorist indicative passive. Now let me explain.

Aorist indicative simply means that the action is not continuous. God doesn't keep giving you an inheritance. It's already happened at some point in the past.

And the passive tense denotes that we who receive the inheritance are not active in securing the inheritance. Someone else has given us the inheritance. That's all that grammar means.

You have already obtained the inheritance. The Holy Spirit has already been given to us who is the down payment of that inheritance. So how then do we enjoy what has been given to us? And here again I will disappoint you as I often do when I preach, and that is it's by trusting what God has said.

We think we're a people of faith, and yes we are, but it's often weak faith. We're more like the disciples before the day of Pentecost than we are the day after. First, listen carefully, we believe and act that in spite of our love that really wants to serve Him in obedience with all of our hearts, we realize that we are bankrupt of the ability to do so in ourselves.

You've got to truly believe that it's not in you to walk in loving obedience to Christ. It took me years to come to believe that fact. And again I recycle what I've said before.

It's here where our problem is. We don't know what we know. We know it theologically, but we don't know it in reality.

It took me years to come to believe that I could not serve God. Second, you must believe that in Christ by the person of the Holy Spirit, we've already received everything we need to please the Lord and to live as He pleases. And I have to continually preach that to myself.

Let me give you an example, a point in case. Last night after a couple of hours of spending some time with my wife, we've had company all week long, we had a couple of hours, but I left her about 8 o'clock to go back to the study. Because I just, I just, I knew, I knew, I knew my heart was not yet full.

Because I only want to preach out of a full heart. And so I went in my study knowing that I'm incapable of really talking to the Spirit. I can communicate through your brain, but I can't get down here.

Only He can do that, and so I began to plead. And the impossibility of the task once again arose before me, and seemed undaunting, seemed too big, impossible, as well it should. Then the battle was, would He be there for me? Will you sustain me in the hour, Lord, that I preach? Or will you hang me out to dry? Will you embarrass me before my own peers, my own church, my own kin? And will you leave me there, struggling in my own power? And then my eyes fell upon the text once again, and my eyes looked up, I don't think by accident.

For there I gazed upon verse 3, and the answer came. Look at it. Paul is simply in verse 11 through 14, rehearsing what he's already said in verses 1 through 10.

He's giving you more information, he's adding superlative upon a superlative. I said earlier, but it's the same thing. What does verse 3 say? Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all, every spiritual blessing in heavenly places, in Christ.

And when my eyes saw that, the eyes of faith saw it too. And the power of the Lord came upon me, and I broke there and wept before Him, because I knew He is my inheritance, my portion and my cup. The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places.

You see the point? You've got to see this. And when you do that, you already have everything in Christ, the inheritance. At that very moment you do, you come into the rest of God.

You come and you lay hold of what God has given you now. You see, friends, the Promised Land does not illustrate life without difficulties. That's not what I'm teaching you today.

No, no, no. I'm showing you how you endure the difficulties, the suffering. No, the Promised Land illustrates entering into the rest of faith, where faith truly depends upon God for everything.

For we who believe do enter that rest, said the writer of Hebrews. Jesus said, come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I'll give you rest. But He didn't mean idleness.

He didn't mean life without suffering or trial. When we enter the kingdom, we do so through much tribulation. However, part of the inheritance that's been given to us, that we can endure the suffering with joy.

Not just endure it, but endure it with joy. That's the inheritance. As we heard in the first hour, you can endure a lot of things by stoicism, a stiff upper lip, and grit and determination.

But my dear friend, that's not the inheritance. No, sir, you can go through suffering, even through great weeping, and yet do so with faith and confidence and joy in the Holy Ghost. So what is the source of that

joy? It's steadfast and enduring faith in Christ, your inheritance.

Faith says, this is not what I would have chosen for me. And if I could, I would choose to escape the suffering and the trial immediately. But I do know my Savior.

He is my inheritance. He is my portion. His presence is my good.

And I know that all He does for me is good. Therefore, even though I must go through the fiery furnace of trial, I know that I shall come forth as pure gold. That's the inheritance.

Beloved, that was the spirit of Joshua and Caleb that wanted to enter into the promised land 39 years earlier. Satan is powerless to overcome you when you are in full assurance of faith, resting in the Lord. However, when you begin to have doubts and questions and anxieties, oh, then you are subject to his whims and wishes.

The Holy Spirit has been given to you to work in you that you might comprehend Jesus by faith. That's what happened to me last night. As I looked upon the text, the Spirit came, opened my eyes to the text, and I saw it's already been given to me.

My success today has already been granted to me, whatever that is. And I don't care what it is, except this, that I've pleased Him. That I've pleased Him.

And that was given to me last night at about 8.30 this last evening so I can come to the pulpit in confidence, not in me, not in my skills, no, in Jesus Christ. That's the work of the Spirit of God. He's always presenting Christ and bringing not just the idea of Jesus, but the reality of Christ to you.

Finally, Jacob had to go through his years of wilderness wanderings too, didn't he not? Before he could dwell at Bethel, Bethel means the house of God, the dwelling place of God. Before he could go back and live there, the place where he saw God in a dream, and the ladder and angels ascending and descending, God led him to the river Jabbok, to His piniel, where he wrestled with God. Before he could rest in the land of promise, he had to receive the crippling blow of God.

Don't underestimate this. This too is written for our admonition. God stroked Jacob's thigh, and he was a cripple the rest of his life.

He walked with a limp, and to the end of his days he could not run. He hobbled in weakness. It was forever, forever a reminder to him that self-strength has been withered.

It's insufficient self-strength in our walk with God. Self must be denied. The flesh has no business in the house of God.

God will never commit Himself to your flesh, your naturalness, your self-confidence. He's committed to work in your absolute bankruptness and poverty in response to faith to His dear Son. So what do I suggest you do? This is it.

Go to the Spirit of the living God and plead with Him as Jacob wrestled with God. Show me once and for all who I am and how I'm so unlike Jesus. I could never imitate Him.

I could never pull this off. I've been trying. Lord, I've been trying to live the Christian life for You because I want to please You.

But oh, dear friend, ask Him to show you the utter impossibility and sheer folly of such a venture. And ask Him, plead with Him, beg Him, wrestle. Wrestle with Him and do not turn Him loose until the reality of Jesus Christ, your inheritance, comes upon you in joy and in great peace.

That's how you begin to enjoy your inheritance and the great privileges and possessions that have been given to you. Will you this morning? Will you determine that you will have Christ and nothing but Christ? That you want Him to be not just Lord of all, but you want Him to be everything. Everything.

Your inheritance. Amen. And amen.

Let's pray. Blessed Father, You who have blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Your dear Son, we bless You now. With the eyes of faith, I pray, we will, like Moses, who forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible.

Would You give us the eyes of faith to see our blessed Lord, our inheritance? Would You now quicken our ears, the ears of faith, to hear Your Word and its power? Oh Lord, they've heard a man. I pray they hear the Spirit now. As you continue to pray, continue to pray.

There's one person I have not addressed here this morning, and that is the person who's not a Christian at all. You're still in your sin. Still lost and undone.

You're still a slave. You've tried to reform. You've tried to change.

You've tried and tried to do what you see mom and dad do. You live the Christian life that you know today that it's not in you, that it isn't, no more than it's in me. But the difference between you and me is this.

He has purchased me, and He's given me the Holy Spirit as a seal, a down payment of that purchase. Would you be free today? Would you come out of your bondage? Would you be delivered? Do you want to become a Christian today? Something has happened. You wouldn't want to be a Christian if God didn't speak to you.

If God the Spirit is not opening your heart to Him. And maybe this has been going on for weeks before this day. It didn't just happen this morning.

It's been going on. He's been wrestling with you. But you've been refusing to concede.

Oh, would you concede? Would you give up? Would you resign? Would you receive Christ even now? You don't need me. You don't need any preacher. You've got Jesus who will become your advocate at the Father's throne.

And He will plead your case. And He will declare you righteous by you simply trusting Christ that He paid it all. He did it all.

And He will be your all in all from this moment on. If so, I'm going to pray for you right now. And you just seek God as we pray.

Father, we pray for he or her that is now being dealt with by Your Spirit that You will bring them in. They cannot birth themselves. They need You to make them new, to create within them this holy thing, this seed, the Word of God that's living, breathing, alive and real.

Oh, I pray You birth it in them now, Father. We ask those of us who have been saved, we lift our voices even now. Please, save our children.

Save our grandchildren. Save our husbands. Save our wives.

Save our mom and dad. Save our brother, our sister. Save, Lord.

Show the power of Your might now in the miracle of the new birth. Even as we beseech You, may heaven be unleashed on this soul and convert them, transform them. I pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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