

HEIRS OF LIFE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

- A. Introduction: In eternity past God conceived a plan to have a family with whom He can dwell forever. Sin took the plan off track but God devised a way to deal with the situation through redemption. Redemption is His plan to deliver His creation from the penalty, power, and corruption of sin through Jesus. Eph 1:4-7
1. Jesus went to the Cross to pay the price for sin so it can be removed and a process of transformation can occur which turns sinners into holy, righteous sons and daughters of God as per the plan.
 - a. The writers of the New Testament were inspired to use various word pictures to convey spiritual truths to help Christians better understand God and our relationship with Him. No one picture captures every aspect, but all of them together give us greater understanding. One of those pictures is that of heirs with an inheritance. Eph 1:11,18
 - b. When a man or a woman bows their knee to Jesus as Savior and Lord they become an heir of God with an inheritance. These terms picture possession or something we are and have through God's plan of redemption. They convey present tense realities.
 2. Jesus is not only our Redeemer, the One who made it possible for us to become sons of God (Gal 4:4-7), He is also the pattern for God's family. Jesus, in His humanity, shows us how sons of God live and the kind of relationship they have with God their Father. Rom 8:29
 - a. Jesus is God become man without ceasing to be God. While on earth He didn't live as God. He lived as a man in dependence on God His Father. John 5:26; Acts 10:38; John 14:9,10; etc.
 1. His death, burial, and resurrection made it possible for us to become sons like Him. Through the new birth (which makes us sons) we come into the same standing and relationship Jesus had with God the Father who is now our Father. John 14:12; John 14:20; Eph 1:6; Eph 3:12
 2. The Bible calls believers joint heirs with Jesus. This term expresses the idea that we are heirs or co-participators with Jesus in the provision, power, and authority of sons. Rom 8:16,17
 - b. I realize that lessons like these can seem impractical to people who are dealing with life's troubles because many listen to teaching looking for an immediate solution to their most pressing problem—the technique or formula that will make everything right. But, it doesn't work like that.
 1. God's help and provision are accessed through faith. Faith is a persuasion of unseen realities. For example, the Bible calls us heirs salvation (Heb 1:14). Salvation came to us by God's grace through our faith (Eph 2:8,9).
 2. But many sincere Christians struggle under guilt and condemnation over their failures and shortcoming and have no real confidence in God's love for them or His willingness to help them (they're not persuaded). So the search for the technique or formula (the right words to speak or the right prayer to pray) to get help.
 3. However if we saw God as He truly is (our Father has gone to great lengths to have us as sons) and ourselves as we truly are in relation to Him (sons like Jesus) our confidence before God in the face of life's hardships would soar and we'd experience more victories.
 - c. Therefore, we're going to continue to discuss what it means that we are heirs with an inheritance until we become convinced that we are sons and daughters of God with access to the same provision, power, and authority Jesus walked in while He was on this earth.
- B. God's plan for man from the beginning was relationship beyond Creator and created. His intention was that we become His sons by partaking of eternal life. Titus 1:2
1. Gen 2:9--There were two trees specifically mentioned in Eden before Adam and man in Adam sinned, the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were real trees (we don't know what kind), but they were also symbolic.
 - a. Eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a choice toward independence from God who is the source of life and resulted in death for mankind. Gen 2:17
 - b. Eating from the tree of life would have been an expression of submission to and dependence on

God, uniting man to eternal life (the life in God) making him an actual son born of Him.

1. Remember, eternal life is not “live forever” life. All human beings live forever, either with God in Heaven or separated from God in Hell.
 2. Eternal life is the uncreated life in God Himself. John 1:4; John 5:26; John 14:6; I John 5:11
2. The purpose of redemption is to carry out this original intention and give us eternal life. When we believe on Jesus as Savior and Lord God, by His life and Spirit, comes into our innermost being (our spirit) and regenerates it. We’re literally born again or from above (as it reads in the Greek) or born of God. John 3:3,5; I John 5:1
- a. Titus 3:4-7--But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior to man [as man] appeared, He saved us, not because of any work of righteousness that we had done, but because of His own pity and mercy, by [the] cleansing (bath) of the new birth (regeneration) and renewing of the Holy Spirit (Amp) which he has poured out upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that we might be made upright through his mercy and become possessors of eternal life in fulfillment of our hope (Goodspeed).
 - b. When it is said that we are heirs with an inheritance the first question that comes up is: What is our inheritance? It is first and foremost eternal life, the uncreated life of God come into us. Peter referred to believing men and women as joint heirs of the grace (gift) of life. I Pet 3:7
 1. John 3:16--Remember, to believe in Jesus has the idea of believe into. When we believe on Jesus as Savior and Lord the Holy Spirit unites our inward man to the life in God.
2. We were united to, we received, the same eternal life that was given to Jesus in His humanity. John 5:26; I John 5:11,12
- c. Our relationship with Jesus is organic or living. We have eternal life (God, by His life) in us. We pointed out in a previous lesson that Paul was commissioned to preach this revelation of union with Christ (Col 1:25-27). He wrote much about it.
3. I Cor 15:45-49--Paul was in the middle of a discussion of resurrection of the dead and making the point that our resurrected bodies will be like Jesus’ body. There’s much in this passage we aren’t going to deal with now. But we get an important detail relevant to our present topic. Jesus is called the last Adam and the second man. These are very significant titles.
- a. Jesus went to the Cross as the last Adam, as the representative of the entire human race and was punished for our sins. He rose as the second man, the first of a race of sons like Himself.
 1. There are some ways in which Jesus is the unique Son of God (capital S). He is the only God-man. He is the only man who preexisted before He was born into this world. He is the only one qualified to be an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. But He is also the first of a race of sons of God (small s). He is the pattern for God’s family.
 2. Rom 8:29--Those whom He has foreknown He also has predestinated to share the likeness of His Son, that He might be the Eldest in a vast family of brothers. (Weymouth)
 - b. Jesus is the pattern for God’s family. Through new birth we become sons like Him, men born of God, alive with eternal life. Jesus is the head of the new creation, a race of new creatures
 1. II Cor 5:17--So if anybody is in union with Christ, he is the work of a new creation; the old condition has passed away, a new condition has come. (Williams)
 2. “Passed away” is composed of two Greek words meaning to come or go. It has the idea of passing from one state or condition to another.
 - c. Adam, as head of the human race, and Jesus, as head of the new creation, were representative men. Through Adam an entire race was made sinners. Through Jesus an entire race (all who put faith in Him) is made righteous sons of God. Just as the actions of one man (Adam) affected those in him, so the actions of one man (Jesus) affects those in union with Him.
 1. Rom 5:19--For, as through the disobedience of the one man (20th Cent) the many were constituted sinners (ABUV) so, too, through the obedience of the one (20th Cent) will the many be constituted righteous (ABUV).

2. The Greek word translated “made” means to cause to be made, to become. Constitution (according to Webster’s Dictionary) means “the way in which a thing is composed or made up; makeup; composition.”

A. Adam’s actions resulted in a fallen nature in the human race. We are born with a nature contrary to God, cut off from the life in God, partakers of death. No one is righteous.

B. II Cor 5:21--At the Cross, the last man, Jesus, took our place and was made to be sin for us so that: we might be changed into the righteousness of God in Christ (Conybeare); we, through union with him might become the Righteousness of God (20th Cent); Be turned into the holiness of God (Knox); Be made good with the goodness of God (Phillips).

4. Righteousness is part of our inheritance. Paul spoke of men as becoming heirs of the righteousness which is by faith. Heb 11:7--became an heir and possessor of righteousness (Amp) that results from faith (Williams).

a. Righteousness is not a state of spiritual development attained through good behavior. It is a gift that comes to us when we believe on Jesus. Rom 5:17; Rom 10:9,10

1. It is both legal and organic. Because the price for sin has been paid, when we believe we are declared righteous (legal). Rom 5:1--Having therefore been declared righteous by faith (Rotherham).

2. But we are also made righteous through union with Christ (organic). We partake of His righteousness. I Cor 1:30--But you, by your union with Christ Jesus, are God’s offspring; and Christ, by God’s will, became not only our Wisdom, but also our righteousness. (20th Cent)

b. The entrance of eternal life (new birth, regeneration of your inward man) is the beginning of a process of transformation that will ultimately make you like Jesus (conform you to His image in every part of your being). Lots in that we aren’t going to discuss now. Here’s our present point.

1. The condition of your spirit is the basis of your identity. I John 3:2--We are now sons of God. The Greek word for sons emphasizes the fact of birth. We’re born of God. He begat us.

2. We’re finished works in progress, fully God’s sons (finished) but not yet fully conformed to the image of Christ in every part of our being (a work in progress).

3. We struggle with this because we assess ourselves on the basis of what we do rather than what we are. That’s backwards. What we do doesn’t change what we are. What we are is and will change what we do. (Lessons for another day). Note two verses.

A. Eph 2:10--The truth is that we are the handiwork of God (20th Cent) for He has made us what we are, because He has created us through our union with Christ for doing good deeds which He before hand planned for us to do (Williams).

B. Eph 4:24--You must clothe yourselves in that new nature which was created to resemble God, with the righteousness and holiness springing from the Truth. (20th Cent)

c. God deals with you on the basis of your union with Christ, on the basis of your sonship, because He is confident in the process of transformation that is under way.

1. Phil 1:6--And I am convinced and sure of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will continue until the day of Jesus Christ — right up to the time of His return — developing [that good work] and perfecting and bringing it to full completion in you. (Amp)

2. Heb 2:11--For both he that maketh holy and they who are being made holy are all of one (Rotherham); have all one Father (Conybeare); are all of one family (Basic); are all of one stock (NEB); have all one origin (Moffatt); all spring from One (20th Cent) and for this reason He is not ashamed to speak of them as His brothers (Weymouth) does not shrink from calling them his brothers (NEB)

d. If you don’t know your inheritance, if you don’t know that you are (present tense) righteous legally and organically through union with Christ you won’t be able to come boldly (with confidence) to God your Father in your time of need to obtain help from Him. Heb 4:14

- C. Conclusion: In an earlier lesson we referred to some parables Jesus told in response to the Pharisees' criticisms that He ate with publicans (tax collectors) and sinners. Luke 15
1. Luke 15:4-10--In the first two parables He emphasized God's mission to seek and save the lost.
 - a. Jesus spoke of a lost sheep and lost coin stating that the owners searched diligently until the lost items were found and then rejoiced saying this is how Heaven responds when a sinner repents.
 1. His message was clear: Lost items don't lose their value when they are lost. The owner can't realize their value until the item is found. You seek until you find them. Luke 19:10
 2. God is working out a plan to recover what was lost when mankind went into sin and death.
 - b. Luke 15:11-32--In the third parable the emphasis changed to what happens when a lost son comes home. He is restored to his sonship position by a father motivated by love.
 1. The father was looking, watching for his son to return. He eagerly ran to welcome him home. The son wanted to talk about his sin but the father blew right over it. He knew his son was sorry and had repented (turned his heart back to his father).
 2. God's aim in redemption is to make us as though we never sinned. The clothing change symbolized removal of sin and restoration to sonship.
 - A. Jesus' audience would have been familiar with a vision had by the prophet Zechariah where a change of clothing meant removal of sin. Zech 3:4
 - B. Shoes were a symbol of freedom. When prisoners were captured their shoes were taken. But upon their release shoes were returned. Rings were given to men as a mark of dignity and honor. These details depict full restoration his place as a son.
 - c. Jesus' parables make it clear that God's aim in redemption is to restore all who come back to Father's house through faith in Christ to what He intended us to be, righteous sons and daughters.
 2. Through Jesus' sacrifice God has qualified us to be partakers of an inheritance that includes eternal life and righteousness. Consider one point as we close.
 - a. Col 1:12--Made us meet in the Greek language means to enable or qualify; to render fit, to make sufficient. Partakers means a portion or participation. Inheritance means possession or a person's share in anything. God has made us fit to be participators in all that redemption provides.
 - b. Col 1:12--Giving thanks to the Father, Who has qualified and made us fit to share the portion which is the inheritance of the saints (God's holy people) in the Light. (Amp)
 1. We focus so much on our shortcomings and failure and destroy our confidence before God. Instead, why not begin to thank Him for what He has done to you and for you through the Cross and the new birth.
 2. Remember, the word picture heirs with an inheritance pictures something we are and have (present tense possessions) through Jesus.
 - c. You may have been a surprise or a mistake to mom and dad, but not to God. He knew you before He formed the earth, chose you for His plan, and now that you've come back to Him through Christ He's restoring you to what He always intended. More next week.