

ESF, Lord's Day service message  
7/19/2015

**The Heirs According to the Promise**  
Galatians 3:26-29

<sup>26</sup> *So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, <sup>27</sup> for all you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*

<sup>28</sup> *There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup> If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

On January 29, 2003, Athina Roussel became the richest teenager on the planet. She inherited a fortune estimated at that time to be between \$800 million to \$1 billion, and it all came from her grandfather, Greek shipping tycoon Aristotle Onassis through her mother. In 1988, when Athina was 3, her mother, Christina Onassis died at age 37 of a heart attack. All of Christina's assets were left in trust to her only child, Athina, who turned 18 in 2003 and was legally able to receive her inheritance.

Some people can inherit many good things from others by being legitimate heirs. But the most blessed heir is the heir according to the promise of God. 1 John 3:1 says, "*How great is the love the Father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God.*"

Then how can we be the heirs of the promise and live with the abundant blessings as the heirs?

**Choose to be an heir**

In this world, a person can become an heir by a birthright or a legal right. Even if you want to be an heir of a rich and powerful person, you cannot if you don't have a blood relationship with that person, or if that person does not designate you to be an heir. In any case, you cannot choose to be an heir by your own will. The right to be an heir depends totally upon natural birth, or another person's will.

But there is a way you can be a blessed heir of God by your own choice. It comes through the promise of God. God promised that the woman's offspring will crush the head of Satan (Genesis 3:15). He promised that He would save Noah and his family from the Great flood through an ark (Genesis 6:18). He called an old man, Abraham and promised to give him a child and to make the child the source of blessing for all nations (Genesis 12:1-3). He promised that He would set the Israelites free from Egypt after they lived there as slaves for 400 years (Genesis 15:13-14).

All these promises of God have been accomplished through One Person, Jesus. The woman's offspring who would crush the head of Satan is Jesus. Noah's Ark that would save people from the punishment of the flood of sin is Jesus. Abraham's promised son who would be the source of blessings for all nations is Jesus. Freedom from slavery to the power of sin comes through Jesus.

In Jesus Christ, God accomplishes all of His promises. The accomplished promises are given to those who are heirs according to the promise. How can we be the heirs according to the promise?

We can become heirs by believing that Jesus is the Son of God, and that He died on the cross to make us children of God. "*You are all sons of God through Faith in Christ Jesus*" (3:26). John 1:12 says, "*Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God*".

Believing in Jesus Christ is the only way to be a child of God. If you believe that Jesus died on the cross to make you a child of God, you become an heir of the wonderful promise of God. In other words, you are the beneficiary of the inheritance in all God's promises. As His heir, you have the right to receive all things that belong to the Heavenly Father. God's almighty power is yours. All God possesses in the universe are yours.

Also, it is great news that no human condition is necessary to become a child of God. Verse 28 says *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus”*

Even if you are the poorest person in the world you can be a child of God in Christ Jesus. Even if you are the worst sinner, you can be a child of God in Christ Jesus. So if you are a believer in Jesus, never doubt the fact that you are a child of God. Even in your sin, your status as a child of God will never be changed. So always be confident of your status as an heir according to the promise.

### **Claim the privilege of heir**

There are unclaimed inheritances in the United States that are worth billions of dollars. People may die and leave their houses, savings, stocks, bonds and all kinds of assets to their loved ones. But if their loved ones know nothing about it or don't claim their right to inherit the assets, the assets will belong to the government treasury.

After the civil war there was a poor veteran. He was so poor that he lived by begging every day. Many years later, when he became too weak and old to live by begging, he went to a government office to ask for some help. Then he found that as a war veteran he was entitled to receive money every month from the government. Because he did not know the right and did not claim the right, he had lived as a poor beggar for all those years.

Like the poor veteran who didn't know or claim his right, some believers don't know their right of heirs as recorded in the Bible and do not claim the right of heirs. They still live with a depressed and defeated spirit.

When Jesus died on the cross, He made all the blessed inheritance of God's promises available to those who believe. If you believe that Jesus died on the cross to make you a child of God, and claim your right as a child of God in Christ, all the blessed inheritance will be yours.

Ephesian 1:3 says “*God has blessed us ...with every spiritual blessing in Christ.*” The tense of the verb, “has blessed” tells us that it is already done in the past and continues working to the present. So, just claim the blessing, “I have God’s blessing in Christ today.” Then you will see God’s blessed inheritance filling your life.

We have to claim spiritual blessing first. The Bible does not ignore physical blessing such as prosperity and health (Deuteronomy 28:11; 2 Chronicles 7:14). But spiritual blessing is better and more important than physical blessing. If you are spiritually blessed, physical blessing will eventually follow. But physical blessing without spiritual blessing will disappear at any time. What is the “*every spiritual blessing*” which we believers can claim?

First, it is freedom from condemnation of our guilt. We are sinners. We are guilty. But when we become children of God in Christ, God gives us freedom from condemnation. Our enemy Satan is the accuser (Revelation 12:10). He accuses us of our sins day and night. But we have a claim against his condemnation, “I am a child of God in Christ. I have the right to be free from all condemnation. Even if you bring thousands of reasons to condemn me, In Christ God nullifies your condemnation and declares that I am not guilty” (Romans 5:1-11).

Secondly, it is the Holy Spirit. God gives all His children the Holy Spirit as the best of all gifts (Luke 11:13). The Holy Spirit anoints and empowers believers to be bold and strong. The Holy Spirit enables believers to bear fruits such as love, patience, peace, joy, gentleness, kindness, self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). A natural man who does not believe in Christ, and who is not a child of God can never receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. But, we believers can claim these gifts of the Holy Spirit

Third, it is the power in Jesus' name. Peter and John demonstrated it well when they healed a crippled man (Acts 3:1-8). They claimed the power in Jesus' name to heal the man: "*Silver or gold I don't have but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk*" And instantly the crippled man's ankle and feet became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. If you are a believer, you can also claim this power in Jesus' name which is more powerful than anything in the world.

Finally, it is eternal life (John 3:16). Everything will end with death but believers will inherit eternal life in Christ. When we claim the inheritance of eternal life, it drives out all fears from our lives. It gives us hope in all circumstances.

In Christ, these blessings are already yours. When you claim these blessings of God's promise, you may not receive these blessings immediately. But you should not give up. When you keep claiming the promise, the promise will surely be completed in you sooner or later.

### **Possess the full inheritance by action**

Some of the inheritances need our action in order to possess it fully.

In Matthew 11:12 Jesus says,

*From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence, and violent people have been raiding it.*

(New International Version)

*From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of Heaven has been taken by storm and eager men are forcing their way into it.* (Phillips version)

When God promised the Israelites that He would give them the land of Canaan as an inheritance, He commanded them to take action in order to fully possess the land: "*Wherever you set your foot, I will give it to you*

*as an inheritance --- Go and drive all other people out from the land first.*” God did not promise them that the land of their inheritance would be given automatically. God promised them that He would give them the land when they fought their enemies and drove them out.

As the Israelites did, so we must do. To possess God’s inheritance fully, we must take action.

In the lives of God’s children there are wars.

Frist, there is war against the world. The world which does not know Christ is controlled by Satan. This world constantly ignores, rejects, hates and attacks Christ and His followers. When we live for Christ and pursue His kingdom, we will be attacked by this world.

To win over this attack and inherit the blessings in God’s promise, we must fight. But we don’t fight physically. We fight spiritually. We fight with spiritual weapons. We fight with prayers. We fight with power of forgiveness and love. We fight with praising God. We fight with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Also there is war inside of us. Galatians 5:17 says, *“For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.”*

There are constant conflicts between the desire of the flesh and the desire of the Holy Spirit (Galatians chapters 4-5). We must fight not to surrender ourselves to the desire of the flesh and to follow the desire of the Holy Spirit.

If we choose to follow the desire of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit will help us defeat the desire of flesh. And we can fully possess the inheritances of the promise.