***Children of God, No.8  
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We are studying the subject of The Children of God, and this is segment number 8 in that series. As we have been examining the passage of Romans 8:14-17.

I remind you again that the eighth chapter of Romans has a spiritual person obeying God instead of being a slave to his old sin nature. It is the normal course of the life of a human being to be a slave to evil. Once you are a Christian, the controlling influence of the sin nature has been broken, and it is possible to live on a level and on a plain that is above that of a barnyard animal. Therefore, Romans 8 has now brought us to the point of explaining on the basis of our justification through Christ Jesus how we can parlay that into tremendous personal lifestyle of blessing and prosperity now and unbelievable rewards and crowns in heaven. So, this is a very important passage of the scripture.

And the Apostle Paul has in the earlier part of chapter 8 stressed this role of God the Holy Spirit in being able to very definitively guide an individual believer through, of course, his knowledge of the Word of God and thus to produce spiritual victory. Victory in the Christian life is a matter of victory over the world system of Satan.

When we say the "world," we mean the world as a system that Satan has organized. The world has a system of business. It has a system of culture. It has a system of education. It has a system of religion. It has all kinds of systems that Satan has devised that seem sophisticated and seem glamorous and seem acceptable but which have in them the contamination of Satan and our appeals basically to the sin nature.

And the thing Satan particularly manipulates is the emotional structure of the human being. That's the most dangerous element in your human structure. It is the element that is the most delightful, that is the most satisfying when it is under control of God the Holy Spirit, when it is lined up with the principles of doctrine. But when it is not, it is a terror, and it destroys more Christians than anything else. So, there is a rebellion naturally in our hearts when someone says something like that, because we think that our emotions should not be squelched. And yet, that is not what we're saying. That's not what the Word of God is calling for.

It is calling for you to squelch that which is an expression of evil - that enthusiasm, that zeal for doing the wrong thing. The Word of God says there is a better way. You can't do it on your own. Victory of the world system's appeal to your emotions in various ways is possible through the Spirit of God. That victory also must be victory over the devil who has his appeals with himself and his demons and of course over the sin nature itself. All of this through the doctrine stored in the human spirit, God the Holy Spirit leading us with that doctrine. Those members, Paul has said in this passage, of the human race who do receive guidance from God the Holy Spirit are thereby identified as the sons of God. If you are not a son of God, a daughter of God, you do not receive guidance from God. Therefore, it is a travesty when you associate yourself in an enterprise that appeals to God for some kind of guidance with those who are not in the family of God.

I don't know how it makes you feel, but any time I'm in a public forum of some kind, like maybe an athletic event, and somebody gets up and leads in prayer, I'm squeamish in my stomach, because I know I'm standing around with a bunch of foul-mouthed, foul-living, low-life characters who hate the Word of God and who hate the God who wrote it. And here we are, standing there together as fellow human beings praying to Him. God does not respond with any kind of leading in that kind of a context. It is a travesty, and it is a shameful practice, and it would be wise for people to discontinue it. But sometimes, you're going to get stuck in a situation like that, and you're going to have to just gut it out and grin and bear it. Unless you're a child of God, you are not led by God, and His ear is never attuned to you.

These who are sons of God furthermore do not, because they are sons, fear the Holy God, as do the lost people. They are not only the sons of God, but they are even legally adopted, Paul says, as God's sons, which gives them full privileges to everything that God possesses. And so, we treat Him in that way - the way your sons and daughters treat you. And no matter how old they get, you will discover that they still treat you as their dear father, and they will still feel freedoms with you. They will not hesitate if they need a car to drive off in your car. They will not hesitate when they need a place to roost to come on over to your house and roost. They will not hesitate to treat you indeed as their father. Why? Because they're family members, they have certain claims, and they have certain rights, and it is their privilege status, and they do not fear engaging in such familiarities.

Now, that is an astounding thing that with a God who can send you with a flip of His finger to the eternity of hell, that we who are led by the Spirit of God, thereby indicating that we are truly the children of God, have no fear about facing God. We're not all that crazy about dying, but if it comes to that, we're not going to go out screaming and kicking and clawing and fighting in the terror of what we are going to face once we've crossed over to the other side. And Paul says we do not have any more that spirit of fear which, in itself, is another indication that we are the children of God and He is our dear Father.

God the Holy Spirit, furthermore, Paul says, and the human spirit that we have - that living human spirit at salvation which is now filled with divine viewpoint doctrine - both testify to the reality of the believer's status as a child of God. We do not just psych ourselves into the fact that we are the children of God on the basis of what the Word of God tells us and on the basis of a communication that is not entirely explainable. God the Holy Spirit brings conviction and peace. Yes, you are God's child. The human spirit filled with God's doctrinal viewpoint confirms yes, you are God's child. This is objective evidence. It is not just subjective evidence as to how you feel, and there is a great difference between a child of God and not being a child of God, and this is the work of the Holy Spirit, and this is the work of doctrine to make clear to us.

**Joint Heirs with Christ**

And so, that has brought us to verse 17, which enters one of the most dramatic and marvelous statements in the scripture concerning those of us who are the children of God. Verse 17 begins, "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Verse 17 begins with the word "and." The word "and" in the Greek Bible looks like this; it's the word "kai." It's a conjunction of continuation. It is continuing upon the statement made at the end of verse 16: "that we are the children of God. And."

Therefore, he picks that up and says, "And if that's true," and we have the Greek word "ei" for the word "if," and as you know, this introduces one of the four types of conditions in the Greek language. This one is first class. That means that this is an "if" which is indicating something that is true, and therefore, it is properly translated by the word "since." "And since we are children."

And the word here is the Greek word "teknon." Now, we have been using this word "whios" which is the word for son. This is the word for child. There is a difference. A son is what we have received by adoption. We have been adopted as sons because that's a legal position, but "children" is a warmer and a closer family word. It actually means "one who is born into a family," and we can almost translate it as "a born one." This one is stressing our position in the family of God as the result of the new birth. This position entitles us, therefore, to certain claims on the family of God. And that's what Paul is leading into. He says in verse 16 that we are the children of God. This is confirmed to us by the Word of God through the Holy Spirit in our human spirit. Furthermore, he says, "and since is the case, since you are children of God," and see, it is better to use the word "children" here than "sons," because the subject is leading into inheritance. And inheritance is something that is uniquely the province of those who are children in a family. If you are not a child in a certain family, then you have no claims upon the wealth and the possessions in terms of inheritance from that family. And so, what we have here is the idea, "And since we are children." Since we are actually the children of God - those who are born again, it is a fact - "then . . ."

And it is the Greek word "kai" again, this time translated, "also," actually. It's the idea here of an additional fact: if since we are children of God, that means we're something else. That means we are the heirs of God. "Kleronomos." "Kleronomos" is the Greek word that refers to someone that's entitled to receive something from another person at some point in time, and it is indeed just something that simply what we mean by the English word "inheritance." A child is heir to his parents' possessions. He is an heir to what the family has.

Now, in the Greek Bible, there is another word that is not translated that indicates that it is setting up a comparison. It is this word "men," this Greek particle "men." It indicates one side of a proposition. If we were going to fill out the translation, we would translate this as "on the one hand." A little later, we're going to have this conjunction "de" that matches up to it that shows us that the other side of the proposition is this. They simply signal side one, side two of the proposition. "On the one hand," we could translate, then we could translate, "On the other hand, this is true." Actually, what we have here is, "And, since we are children, then heirs." Then he goes on saying, "On the one hand, heirs," using that same word again, "On the one hand, heirs of God." And it is the word for God referring to God the Father. "On the one hand, we are heirs of God." Christians as children in God's family are the heirs of God.

And I must confess that it is very difficult to say that and to convey the enormity of that statement. The Bible keeps hitting that fact in a variety of ways, but we are almost reluctant to let our minds take hold of that and run wild and free with what it means to be the inheritor of all that God possesses. It is staggering to think that I, sitting here in this little auditorium, am the possessor of everything. I am the legitimate heir of everything that is possessed by Almighty God. And you're not going to get that this morning. It's going to take a little time for that to sink in. We're going to make a little in roads in suggesting some of the ways that that is true, and we're not going to scratch anything near like the surface.

Galatians 4 hits this same idea in verse 7 when it says, "Wherefore thou art no more a servant [speaking to believers], but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." We actually belong to the Creator God as His heir. God possesses things which one day will go to us who are in His family as church-age believers in His family through the person of Jesus Christ. The Christian's position as God's heir, furthermore, is the product of God's satisfied grace. You did not become an heir of God because of something you did, because of some way you acted, so that in any way there might be the suggestion that you have made yourself worthy of deserving this.

**Worthiness**

The cults love to use the word "worthy." And if you read the writings of Mormonism, if you read the writings of Jehovah Witnesses, if you read the writings of Christian Science, you will discover to your amazement how often that word is used. Worthy. That you have proven yourself worthy, then you will get this. Proven yourself worthy, then you will get this blessing. And everything is structured upon proving yourself worthy.

Well, the Word of God says, "No." You are an heir of God. You are going to have a great inheritance, but unlike the cults that say you must prove yourself worthy to receive that inheritance, God says, "It is because I have satisfied My own justice. As God, there is no way of satisfying my justice because of your sin except for Me to punish the sin. You cannot do anything but receive that punishment, and that punishment is the lake of fire. Now, the only way out of that is for somebody else to bear the penalty of punishment which is death and pay the price so that My justice is satisfied. Once my justice is satisfied, then I'm free to turn My love loose."

You may forget about the fact of looking upon God as a God of love until you understand that His justice has been satisfied. And this is what's taking millions of human beings into hell, because they think that God is a God of love, and therefore, He is going to act in a certain way that is detached from His justice.

The Jehovah Witnesses, for example, teach that nobody will be in hell, that there is no such burning place but that it is simply annihilation. You are rubbed out of existence. Your reality is simply erased, and that is the end of that. But that would not satisfy the justice of God. The justice of God says that those who are guilty - those who are morally guilty - must bear the penalty of that guilt unless someone else has paid for it in their place. And of course, that has been done by Jesus Christ. Its benefit, however, is dependent on your acceptance of that gift.

**Eternal Inheritance**

So, the Christian's position as an heir of God is because God's justice has been satisfied. And the reason I'm coming down so hard upon this is because that means that there is no way that you can lose your inheritance. If you're counting on getting an inheritance on the human level from somebody, someplace along the line you expect to inherit some material benefits, you may also count on the fact that somebody can outmaneuver you. Somebody can in some way do something to squander the inheritance before you ever get to it. Some way, it can be lost. You can be cut out. But in this case, when we are talking about the fact that you have an eternal inheritance in heaven from God, you can never lose it. No matter what you are, no matter what you do, it's yours for sure.

Hebrews 9:15 says, "And for this cause He is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they who are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." And you notice that the scripture calls it, "the promise of an eternal inheritance." I need not ask you to define for me how long "eternal" is. And that is a very important word. The Bible says it is eternal inheritance. That means it's eternal. It means it cannot be lost. That's why the life that we received through Jesus Christ is eternal life, and that's why it's a word that indicates that it cannot be lost. God did not say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt possible have six months of eternal life, six months of life." It's called "eternal life" because that's what it is.

**Joint Heirs with Christ**

"So, on the one hand," the Apostle Paul says, "we are heirs of God," based upon His justice so that that position cannot be reversed; we can never be disinherited. Then he brings in that word "de" to indicate, "On the other hand, we're something else." We're something even more astounding, and that is that we are joint heirs "sumkleronomos" using our word "kleronomos" for heir and using the Greek preposition "sum," which means "with," so that we are heirs with, we are joint heirs with. And the person that we are joint heirs with is Christ.

This word "sumkleronomos" is used in a couple of places in the Bible that will illustrate its meaning. In Hebrews 11:9, it's used to indicate that Isaac and Jacob are coinheritors of God's promise to Abraham. "By faith he sojourned [that is, Abraham] in the land of promise, as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the [fellow] heirs [the co-heirs] with him of the same promise." And here's the idea that Abraham received a promise from God. Along came Isaac and Jacob, and they became fellow heirs of that same promise.

This is used relative to husbands and wives in 1 Peter 3:7 where Christian husbands and wives are listed as co-inheritors of eternal life. "In like manner, ye husbands, dwell with them [that is, with their wives] according to knowledge [according to Bible doctrine and understanding], giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being [co-heirs] heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered."

Christians, then are joint heirs of God the Father along with someone else. An heir is different form a joint heir. When you say that you're an heir, that simply means that you have a portion of something that the parent possesses.

You may have a farm. You may be four brothers, and your parents may leave the farm to you as heirs. If they leave the farm to you as heirs, they divide the farm into four pieces and each of you gets a fourth of the farm. That's what you inherit. But when you are a joint heir, then all four of you own the whole farm. Then all four of you as joint heirs have access to everything on the farm to all the streams to all the trees to all the buildings to all of the livestock to all of the facilities. Everything that's there, you all have a claim to the whole thing.

So, the big difference between being an heir and a joint heir in the Bible is very explicit. You're not just an heir of God. It says, "On the one hand, you're an heir of God," but expanding that more, you're a joint heir with Jesus Christ whom we shall see in a moment is the heir of everything that God the Father possesses. So, we are joint heirs with Christ, and that's the word for Jesus Christ, "christos." As God's unique son, the Lord Jesus, is declared to be the heir of everything that God possesses.

Hebrews 1:2 puts in this way, "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds." The Lord Jesus Christ who is true God, He is equal deity. He is deity. He is equal with the Father. He is equal with the Holy Spirit. He has a different position of authority in the office line in the godhead, but he has been made the heir of all that God the Father possesses.

Now, the Christian has a distinct relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is spelled out for us in 1 Corinthians 12:13 where we are told that at the point of salvation, by one Spirit, were we all baptized into one body. We were all baptized into one body by one Holy Spirit, and that is the body of Christ. So that the Bible presents this picture that Jesus Christ, the Godman, is the head of the Church, we Christians are the body, and that we have been united to Him in a permanent way by being baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ so that when we are in Christ, that is what gives us our claim to absolute righteousness.

Because we are in Him, we possess what He has. And one of the things he possesses is absolute righteousness. And when we have absolute righteousness, God says you're justified. And when you're justified, that means you can go to heaven. It's just as simple as that. So, to receive Christ, then, is to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, to receive everything that He is, and therefore to become with Him a fellow heir of all that He possesses. And He possesses everything that the Almighty Father possesses. The Holy Spirit indwells the Christian, as a matter of fact, as the pledge of this heavenly inheritance which is to come.

Ephesians 1:14 says that the Holy Spirit who is (and by the way, the Holy Spirit is a person - you understand that) "which is the earnest [who is the pledge, who is the down payment] of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." God says, "You have not inherited what you're going to get, but in the meantime, here's the down payment."

So, someone comes up to you and says, "Listen, when I die, I'm going to leave a million dollars to you. Go ahead and start planning what you're going to do with it and how you're going to spend it, and in the meantime, just to show you I'm not kidding, I'm true to my word, I'm going to get you a hundred thousand dollars to start with so you can get in the habit of spending money and knowing how to live according to this style that you will have to become accustomed to." That hundred thousand is your pledge - is your down payment - that the rest is going to come.

Now, this is what God the Holy Spirit is who gives us enormous spiritual blessings, enormous powers, enormous capacities, actually transforms us into the very image of Christ in every respect where we are capable and willing and ready to go in our growth right now. Now, that we have, at this point. Can you imagine what we're going to have where the whole inheritance comes available for us when we ourselves are in God's presence?

Christians, of course, I must stress again, do not become heirs of God on their own. They become heirs of God through Jesus Christ. To reject Jesus Christ who died to release the inheritance, and remember, when you have a testator, one who has made a testament of an inheritance that he's going to leave you, that testament is no good until the testator dies. When he dies, that's when the inheritance is released. And the death of Christ is what released the inheritance of God to those of us who are believers in Jesus Christ.

And for this reason, Hebrews 9:16-17 says, "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator [the one who made the will]. For a testament [a will] is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator lives." Then verses 24 says, "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figure of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. [Jesus Christ didn't come just to an earthly temple to the real thing that the earthly temple symbolized and reflected: the heavenly temple.] Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entering into the holy place every year with blood of others [the high priest had to offer every year atonement for the people]; [verse 26] For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the ages hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

So that Jesus Christ has solved and put away the problem of sin once for all. And in the process of having done that, He has paid the price for death which now has released to us the inheritance. So, what a fantastic association this is for Christians: God the Father's heir, and the co-inheritor with Jesus Christ. That's something that just almost just slides by your mind, and I can assure you it takes a lot of thinking. It takes a lot of meditating upon that to begin to grasp in the significance of what we are, the kind of people we are, and what we are destined someday to be.

Most Christians are going to come to heaven and they're going to be terribly shocked by who they are, where they find themselves. It's going to be unbelievable to them. And then, they are going to have the regret. And remember, we're not talking about rewards here. An inheritance in heaven is all that is associated with eternal life, all that is associated with sharing in God's glory, all that is associated with being with Jesus Christ in His rule upon the earth, and so on.

But our rewards - that's something else. And that is what's going to amaze Christians that when they get to heaven and they find how great of an inheritance they have, how much they have denied themselves of expanding the joy of that position with the rewards that could have been theirs. So, this position of being a fellow heir of Jesus Christ is entirely the product of God's grace. God has satisfied His justice, and therefore, He has made this possible.

**Why God Chooses Certain People**

The whole human race, you must remember, lies helplessly in sin, no way out, and as a matter of fact, most people who are lost aren't even concerned about it. The Bible tells us they don't really care that that is their position until God alerts them that this is a serious matter, they don't even care. But when God the Holy Spirit comes in and brings conviction, they go into a funky misery. Then they become concerned. Then they come to agony. Then they begin thinking about what's going to happen when they face a holy God.

But God looks at this mass of lost humanity, and once in a while, periodically, He stoops down, and He picks one out. Out of this mass, picks this one, picks this one. And He says, "This one is going to be one of my heirs." And if you are here this morning as a child of God, that's what's happened. God has simply plucked you out of that sewage mass of lost humanity that was completely revolting to every holy quality of Almighty God. He reached down, and He plucked you up, and He says, "I want you to be my heir."

In Titus 3:7, we read, "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." We should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Those who have hope of eternal life. And don't forget, you should know by now, because we have studied the doctrine of hope, that when the Bible uses the word "hope," it's not like in English where there is a quality of uncertainty. The word "hope" in the Greek Bible is a certain expectation. This is a hope that we are expecting to have fulfilled. We have the expectation of eternal life. We have, by His grace, been made heirs. He just reached down and plucked us up out of that mass of humanity. Ephesians 1:11 tells you why He picked you, because I know you'll want to know why He selected you. A lot of us wonder about that as well. But, Ephesians 1:11 says, "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance [that is, in Jesus Christ], being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

Doggonit. You thought it was going to be because your genetic structure merited being saved and selected for heaven instead of the lake of fire. You thought that because you're one of those nice, responsive kind of people, you're one of those people here that we can expect great things from, God says, "We've got to save you. We're going to salvage you."

No. We don't know why when He reaches down and He plucks some of those out of that mass of lost humanity that He chose us, because it says He did it according to the purpose, a purpose which He has, but a purpose of the One that we know works things after the counsel of His own will, and One whom we know will act only in terms of his own absolute justice. He will not counter His own justice. He will not undermine His own integrity. So, somehow, there was a basis that served God's purpose that he who does things after the counsel of His own will, nobody's advising Him, nobody's forcing Him, He decided to choose you. God's justice selects, of course, only some of the lost. God's justice does not select all of the lost.

In John 1:12-13, this is stressed. John 1:12 says, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He authority to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name." As many as received Him. And you might say, "Well, those who have been brought up out of that mass, those who are plucked out are those who have received Him." But verse 13, you see, counters that, "Who were born, not of blood, [who were born] nor of the will of the flesh [it was a not a human decision that plucked you out of that large mass], nor of the will of man [it was not a human action], but was of God."

And so, while indeed, the certain ones that receive Him by believing Christ as Savior, they become His children, that receiving is something that you do not do on your own. That receiving is something that God enabled you to do; He gives you the capacity. It is true. He looks at that mass of human beings and He plucks certain ones of us out of that group that is headed down the road of destruction. And he does this on a way that His justice can condone it.

Since God alone has made us born-again, regenerated children, the point of all this is that if He has done it, and He alone has done it, here again, you see, your position as an heir is secure; it cannot be revoked. God is the one who took the action to make you his heir, and you were not involved in it.

**The Nature of Our Inheritance**

A little bit about the nature of our inheritance. And I must confess, this is hard to try to approach, to try to even get some picture of what it means to be God's here and what we're going to inherit. Maybe we can touch on it.

1 Peter 1:4-5 say, "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." There are certain things about our inheritance that are comforting to know. Number 1, Peter says our inheritance in heaven is incorruptible. That means it can never perish; it is indestructible. That is, in contrast to earthly inheritance, which can slither away in one way or another; it can be frittered away. This one cannot be.

Secondly, it is undefiled, which means that is an inheritance which can in no way be contaminated by evil and sin. Furthermore, it fadeth not away. It cannot be squandered away so that it is no longer there. And furthermore, it is reserved in heaven for you; it is on deposit for you awaiting your arrival as God's legitimate heir. The inheritance of the believer in Christ is all that constitutes ultimate sanctification. What is it that we're going to inherit? To sum it up, perhaps we can say it is everything that ultimate sanctification brings us - that ultimate perfection can be translated, for example, into the absolute sinless perfection of Jesus Christ.

1 John 3:2 says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see him as He is." So, one of the things we are going to have is our inheritance. In having something that we share with Christ is that fact that we will be sinlessly perfect. And that, for all of us, will be a great relief. Never again to have to think, "Is this right? Is this wrong? Should I do this? Should I not do this? Should I say this? I'm sorry I said this. I'm sorry I did this." Never again. Everything comes out absolutely perfect every time. And why? Because we inherit everything that Christ is. He is absolute perfection.

Furthermore, we will be inheriting a body that is like his: an absolutely perfect body that is immortal, never subject to disease or death. Romans 6:5 says, "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." Verse 9 of Romans 6 says, "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him." And if death has no more dominion over Him, death has no more dominion over us.

Now, from time to time, God selects certain Christians to be honored with the death of martyrdom. As we shall see later in verse 17, there is a connection between going into glory and enjoying maximum reflection of God's glory in our personal suffering. And some Christians are particularly honored with suffering in an extreme degree, an extreme degree to the point of martyrdom.

A lot of Christians who suffer death are simply disoriented people who in one way or another have brought upon themselves the judgement of God or have stumbled into their own deaths. And while we'd like to make a great deal over them, they are really nothing, have no glory of which they can be proud of. But there are some Christians that are going to find themselves suffering for Jesus Christ. And it is a great and a glorious thing to know that some of them who suffered the death of their bodies are going to share as part of their heavenly inheritance a heavenly body that is no longer subject to all of the human frailties and to the suffering that led to their own death.

This freedom from sorrow is beautifully put in Revelation 21:4-5, where we read that in heaven - and when you begin Revelation 21 all the way through Revelation 22:5, you have a picture of heaven. You have a picture of eternity. This is the picture of eternity in which we're reading this. Verse 4 in Revelation 21, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.' And He said unto me, 'Write: for these words are true and faithful.'"

So, here is the great and marvelous truth, and notice verse 3 (Revelation 21:3), "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.'" And then, the consequence of no death, no sorrow, no pain - all of that removed. That is part of our inheritance. And when we are in an earthly sphere where we're suffering that death and sorrow and pain, it is great to know that it is a trivial passing thing. And those who have been prepared by doctrine will find that they move out in dying grace with ease into that inheritance that is going to solve all that physical problem because it's part of their inheritance.

Then, there's the joy of realizing that what we're heading for is the environment of heaven itself. Revelation 21:3 once more indicates that we will be there where "God will be our God, and we will be His people." And then, Revelation 22:1-5 tells us, "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bore twelve kinds of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: And they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no lamp, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

And in that closing little word, "They shall reign forever and ever," who do you think he's talking about? This is part of the dramatic inheritance that we are in the environment of the glory and the joy of heaven. That's part of your inheritance and that are a reigning monarch. Now that is hard to believe. It is hard to imagine ourselves in the role of that kind of reigning authority, that kind of supreme authority.

And that's not just empty words. That is what you're actually going to do. You are actually going to find yourselves as royalty functioning as royalty, reigning as royalty, being treated as royalty. They might even call you "Your Majesty," "Your Highness," "Your Most Elevated One." Whatever. They're going to show you respect. Those who have got no respect so far in this life should remember this verse, because you're going to get respect there, I can assure you. You will be a reigning monarch, and that means that your word is going to carry weight. When you make a decision, that perfect creature that you will be, reflecting the pattern of Jesus Christ, your decisions will be God's decisions, and they will be imposed. They will be authoritative. Staggering, isn't it, as you begin to think about, and even frightening? It makes goose bumps begin to break out on you as you realize what it means to be a joint heir with Jesus Christ.

And to whom is this? It's to those of you who are born again. And the book of the Revelation, it refers to born again people by the word "overcomer." In Revelation 21:7, we read, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be His God, and he shall be my son."

"Inherit all things." What a statement. What does "all things" mean? And again, we can just barely begin to touch upon the possible significance. We've done a little bit this morning of what it means to be an inheritor of all things. And that becomes more staggering as you stop and think about the fact that what is Jesus Christ going to be? Well, He's going to be the King of Kings of all the earth in the millennium. And I'm His bride, and I'm going to be a ruling consort with Him. I will be in that position of regal authority with Him. He is going to be the judge of the universe.

There are going to be these awesome moments in world history - the judgment of the great white throne - where all the nations, the people of the world are brought before God to be judged for their eternal destiny. Who's going to make that judgment? You are! Christ is seated on that throne. You are His joint heir. You will be sitting there, and you will be administering these decisions with Him during the millennial kingdom reign. Who's going to run things? You are! Those of you who have a particular yen for running thing are going to have your heart's content. You're going to run it all you like. You're going to be the administrators.

And of course, some of you are saying, "I don't think I can do that." That's because you don't appreciate what a different person you're going to be. How all of your skills are now going to be refined, perfected, and how they're going to be focused in on that particular place God has for you to serve - the way we wish it always were in life now - that we weren't squandering ourselves but that we were focusing in on that limited area where we can make an impact, where we can turn our efforts together in order to turn something great in this evil society to bear an impact rather than frittering it away in a lot of dissipating it in a lot of smaller ways. God's going to make us so organized and so oriented that our skills are going to be refined and they're going to be maximized.

So, there are quite a few things that indeed are involved in this inheritance, and we shall begin to look upon those in some detail next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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