

My Inheritance

1 Cor 6:9-11

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. Leona Helmsley, "The Queen of Mean," died last month.

1. And, I wish desperately that I had the life of her dog Trouble.
 - a. Helmsley left \$12 million in a trust fund for her dog.
 - b. She additionally ordered that her dog be buried beside of her in the family mausoleum.
2. Two of Helmsley's grandchildren got \$5 million each, provided they visit their father's grave once each calendar year.
3. Two other of Hemsley's grandchildren did not get a penny, for, she wrote, "reasons that are known to them."
4. How would you feel if you were those grandchildren?
 - a. Maybe you're one of the two grandchildren who got not a cent from your grandmother, while her dog got \$12 million.
 - b. Maybe you're one of the two grandchildren who got \$5 million from your grandmother, while her dog got more than twice what you got.
 - c. In either case, wouldn't you likely be thinking: that just isn't fair?

B. Inheritances can, in many families, be a quite touchy topic. How much money am I going to get? What's going to cause me to be cut out of the will and not get an inheritance?

C. With God, our inheritance does not need to be a touchy subject.

1. In the text before us this morning, Paul outlines precisely who is going to get an inheritance and precisely who is not going to get an inheritance and who is.
2. Let's examine Paul's words that we might understand precisely who is going to get God's inheritance.

II. WHO WILL NOT RECEIVE AN INHERITANCE, vv. 9-10.

A. Paul asks the Corinthians, "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God?" v. 9.

1. Paul's wording here makes clear that he expects the Corinthians to know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God.
2. The wicked are the ones who will not inherit God's kingdom.
 - a. Paul does something interesting in the first three paragraphs of these chapter in the Greek, and unfortunately, no English translation I've examined really captures it.
 - In v. 1, Paul asks, "If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints?"
 - In vv. 7-8, Paul says, "The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers."
 - In this verse, Paul says, "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God?"
 - In those four verses, Paul uses the same word four times, but in the NIV it's translated three different ways, in the NASB it's translated two different ways, and in the KJ it's translated three different ways.
 - The word is the word for "wrongdoer."

- In the first verse, Paul asks why the Corinthians are taking disputes before wrongdoers, in vv. 7-8 Paul says it's better to suffer at the hands of wrongdoers but the Corinthians were treating one another wrongly, and in v 9 he says that the wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God.
 - It seems to me that "wrongdoing" could almost stand as the title of the first half of this chapter: pagan judges are wrongdoers, the Corinthians were treating one another wrongly, and those who act wrongly will not inherit God's kingdom.
 - Quite frankly, that seems to be Paul's point: Don't go before judges who are ungodly and don't treat each other ungodly, for people like that aren't going to inherit God's kingdom.
- b. Wrongdoers will not inherit God's kingdom.
- Inherit, in biblical thought, has not so much to do with getting a bunch of money as in the case of Leona Helmsley, but has to do with God's graciously giving to his people.
 - The Greek word Paul uses in this text was used in Gn 15:7 of the LXX, the Bible of Jesus, Paul and the other apostles.
 - In Gn 15:7, God was promising to give Abraham the Land of Canaan as his possession.
 - God, out of his goodness and grace, gave Abraham Canaan.
 - Likewise, God, out of his goodness and grace, promises to give his people the Promised Land, his very own kingdom.
 - The inheritance we will get is not a trust fund of \$12 million, as it was for Leona Helmsley's dog, but the kingdom of God.
 - In Greek, emphasis is determined by the order of words in a sentence; the "of God" comes before kingdom, showing that the emphasis is on the kingdom's belonging to God. An apt translation would be: God's kingdom.
 - What is this kingdom God provides to his people as an inheritance?
 - As we have discussed before, "kingdom of God" simply refers to God's reign and context must determine what rule the writer is specifically mentioning.
 - The context here shows that the eternal kingdom of God, heaven, is pictured.
 - That is the obvious conclusion for Paul mentions a list of sinners who will not in the future have any part in that kingdom.
 - Heaven is referred to as God's kingdom throughout the NT: e.g., at the end of the world, "the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world'" (Mt 25:34).
- B. Paul tells the Corinthians not to be deceived, v. 9b.
1. The Greek of this passage indicates that the Corinthians have been deceived, for the Greek literally means, "Stop being deceived!"
 2. Don't humans have a tendency to be deceived when it comes to sin?
 - a. Take a look at the list of sins Paul mentions in vv 9 & 10. Four of the first five sins involve sexual immorality; don't people often say, "As long as both parties consent, it doesn't matter what you do sexually"? Don't people often say, "One or two beers aren't going to hurt that much as long as I don't drive"?
 - b. The Corinthians certainly seem to have thought that way, for they had two adulterers in their midst and they had done absolutely nothing about it.

- c. That's so easy to see: people in the world deceived about sin and the Corinthians' being deceived about sin. Yet, it's hard to see ourselves as deceived about sin, isn't it?
- We might think, "It's just Sunday night service; it's really not going to hurt that much if I miss."
 - Perhaps we think, "I've had a hard week financially; surely God understands if I don't put that much in the collection plate this week."
 - Maybe we say, "I'm so busy and my life is so hectic that I just don't have time to sit down and study my Bible."
 - Is that not being deceived about sin?
 - Have you been deceived about sin?
 - Do you need help overcoming that deception to sin? Look, the elders and I would be more than happy to help you overcome such deception if you'd see one of us after worship.
- C. Paul outlines precisely those who will not inherit God's kingdom:
1. It was common in both Greek and Jewish moral codes to define precisely the morality one should or should not have; Paul does the same thing here in order that the Corinthians might not have any doubts about who would and who would not inherit God's kingdom.
 2. The sexually immoral shall be excluded from God's heavenly kingdom.
 - a. The Greek term refers to any kind of unlawful sexual intercourse.
 - b. I was once studying with the fiancé of an elder's granddaughter, and he asked me why Amy, citing Scripture, refused to have sex with him. The Greek term here is the reason; sexual immorality is any kind of sexual contact outside of marriage.
 3. Idolaters have no place in God's kingdom.
 - a. This obviously refers to those who would bow down to worship some God other than the one true and living God; Corinth had numerous pagan temples where such worship occurred.
 - b. I think we have a tendency to believe that since we don't worship some man-made image, we're gonna be ok.
 - Notice, however, how God worded the command concerning idolatry to Moses: "You shall have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3). The Hebrew could also be translated: "no other gods besides me."
 - Do we not tend to put the things of this life before the God who gives life?
 - If I determine I'm going to stay home from Wednesday night Bible study so that I can watch my favorite TV program or get caught up on homework or get caught up around the house, have I not become an idolater by putting things in front of God?
 - If I'm more concerned with what Mommy & Daddy say than what God says, haven't I become an idolater by putting them on a pedestal above God?
 - Let us make sure that God is at the forefront of our lives: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment" (Mt 22:37-38).
 4. Adulterers, those who have sexual relations with someone else's spouse or with someone other than their own spouse, have no part in the kingdom of heaven.
 5. Male prostitutes and homosexual offenders have no inheritance in heaven.
 - a. There has been a lot of discussion as to what these two terms mean, and I am quite cognizant that a) we have a mixed audience; and b) we have a lot of children in here, so I want to keep the explanation as far above the gutter as possible.
 - b. Yet, the two Greek terms do merit some explanation.

- The first term is translated “male prostitutes” in the NIV, “effeminate” in the KJV and NASB.
 - I fear that the translation “effeminate” gives the impression that what Paul references here are men who aren’t “manly” enough—maybe some guy who has his nails done or who is a designer or who talks with a little higher pitch than we think he ought. Those are our definitions of what it means to be effeminate.
 - The word literally means “soft” and is used by Jesus in Lk 7:25 to refer to soft or fine clothing.
 - In a sexual context, the word was often used in Greek to refer young boys involved in a sexual relationship with older men; male homosexuality was prevalent in the Roman Empire, and the most common form was for older men to take advantage of younger boys.
 - Obviously, Paul does not envision young boys who are molested when they were too young to realize that what they were doing was wrong or molested when they had no choice. That would be blaming the victim, and that’s not at all what this passage speaks of.
 - The idea seems to be here boys old enough to know better and willingly going along with homosexual conduct. In fact, Paul probably has a much broader view in mind, viz., the willing partner of any age in a homosexual relationship.
 - The other term refers to a male who engages in homosexual behavior.
 - Because the word translated “male prostitutes” or “effeminate” refers most naturally to boys willingly being used by older men, some have said that’s the only type of homosexual behavior condemned in Scripture. That view totally ignores Rom 1:26-27.
- c. There is also that pesky issue of whether people are born homosexual or they choose that lifestyle.
- Some researchers claim to have found data showing people are born that way, while other researcher claim to have found data showing the opposite.
 - Bear with me a moment, for I’ll be honest. I don’t think it matters to a hill of beans.
 - I don’t think I can deny that some folks are born with a predisposition to be homosexual. People are born, it seems to me, with a predisposition to be alcoholics or gamblers or have abusive tempers.
 - I don’t know that anyone chooses to be attracted to members of the same sex, but the Bible does have things to say about behavior based on such attraction.
 - Lust, according to Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, has no place in our lives, and that would apply regardless of the gender of the person I’m lusting after.
 - Second, homosexual contact of any kind is expressly forbidden in Scripture, the same as heterosexual contact outside of marriage.
 - The only way the people of God can dwell on sexual thoughts or engage in sexual activity is with his or her spouse of the opposite gender: period!
6. Neither thieves nor the greedy will have any part in the heavenly kingdom. Greed often leads to stealing, and what’s so interesting about the pairing of these terms here is that Paul has just discussed how the Corinthians were attempting to swindle one another at court and here he says that people who do such things will not inherit heaven.
7. Drunkards, those who repeatedly become intoxicated, will not have a share in heaven.
8. Neither will those who slander people’s good names have anything for them in heaven.
9. Those who swindle money from others will not have any lot in heaven.
10. Brethren, let us take a hard, hard look at our own lives to make sure there aren’t sins in our lives which will keep us out of heaven!

III. THOSE WHO WILL RECEIVE AN INHERITANCE, v. 11.

- A. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.
- B. What an amazing statement!
1. Some of the Corinthians used to be homosexuals, adulterers, greedy, drunkards, and the like.
 2. Do notice the past tense: Paul says, "Here's what you were in the past, but you aren't that way anymore!"
- C. They are not that way any longer, for they have been washed, sanctified, and justified.
1. All three of these verbs are in the past tense, and, interestingly, they are all in the Greek tense which can refer to a one-time event in the past. Instantaneously, these Corinthians had been washed, sanctified, and justified.
 2. Notice also that all three verbs are in the passive tense—the Corinthians had been washed, had been sanctified, and had been justified—indicating this is something they could not do for themselves. Someone else (viz., God) had to wash them, sanctify them, and justify them.
 3. These Christians had been cleansed of sin.
 - a. The Greek term indicates, not just a washing, but a complete cleansing of sin.
 - b. These Christians had been polluted by the guilt and stain of sin, but they had been completely cleansed in the blood of Jesus.
 4. They had been sanctified, i.e., set apart for the service of God: no longer were they to be interested in gratifying the desires of their flesh, but they were to seek how they could best honor God.
 5. They had been justified, i.e., declared righteous before the throne of God.
 6. Their washing, their sanctifying, and their justification had taken place in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of God.
 - a. "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" indicates that it is by the authority of Jesus that these Christians had been made clean. His offering his blood at Calvary gives the Lord Jesus the authority to take away all sin, to declare us as belonging to God, and to give us his righteousness.
 - b. The Spirit of our God also had his part in our salvation. It is through him that we are cleansed, sanctified, and justified.
- D. What about you this morning? Have you been cleansed, sanctified, and justified? Do you need to come and be baptized this morning that you might be cleansed, sanctified, and justified?