

Inheritance and Sonship - Part 1

Key Verse

Galatians 4:6-7 - And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. (ESV)

Opening Question:

Did you ever receive an inheritance?

Exploring the Bible

I. What's the Difference

In order to properly understand inheritance we need to see it in comparison to several other concepts. Those concepts are receiving a gift, sowing and reaping, and earning a wage.

A. Gifts

Ephesians 2:8 – 9 - For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (ESV)

Question: Salvation from God is what?

Answer:

Romans 6:23 - For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (ESV)

Question: What is eternal life?

Answer:

Gifts are something we receive without doing anything to deserve it or to earn it. We receive gifts all the time at Christmas, on our birthday, and at other times.

We don't do anything to receive these gifts. The greatest gift we can receive is the gift of eternal life. We can do nothing to earn this gift. It is a gift from God.

B. Harvest

Galatians 6:7 – 8 - Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. (ESV)

Question: What do you reap?

Answer:

The principle of sowing and reaping is something with which everyone is familiar. We plant seeds in the garden. When we do we expect to reap a harvest at a later time. A harvest is the result or the reward for something we did at an earlier time. That makes it completely different from a gift which is something for which we cannot do any work or make any kind of investment in order to receive. There are several truths related to the principle of sowing and reaping:

- You always reap what you sow
- You always reap after you sow
- You always reap more than you sow
- You always reap in proportion to what you sow

C. Wages

Romans 4:4 - Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. (ESV)

Question: When someone works how are his wages credited?

Answer:

When you work at a job, you earn wages. These wages are an obligation of the company for which you work to be paid to you. Wages come as the result of work that you have done for someone else and for which you expect payment. We saw earlier in Romans 6:23 that the wages of sin is death. Before we were saved we did the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19 – 21), and for these works we

were going to receive the wages of death. But through Jesus Christ we have received the gift of eternal life.

D. Inheritance

Galatians 4:6 – 7 - And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. (ESV)

Question: What does the Holy Spirit cry out in our heart?

Answer:

Question: If we are sons then what else are we?

Answer:

In order to be an heir you have to be related. Inheritance comes purely because of a relationship to someone who has wealth. When you are related, it doesn't matter if you deserve an inheritance or if you don't deserve it. You can't sow something in order to reap a harvest of inheritance. You receive an inheritance solely on the basis of relationship. This is the key truth to understanding our inheritance as sons. As someone who was unsaved we carried out the works of the flesh which produced wages of death. But through Jesus Christ we received the gift of eternal life. Because of that gift of eternal life we are brought into relationship with God the father as sons and therefore receive an inheritance. As we sow into the spirit on a day by day basis, we reap the ongoing harvest of an abundant life.

II. How Did We Get an Inheritance?

A. Predestined

Ephesians 1:5 - he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, (ESV)

Question: What were we predestined for?

Answer:

Predestination can be one of those words that make us feel uneasy. But it is one of the great truths of sonship. Predestination has nothing to do with salvation or determining who would be saved. It has everything to do with sonship. This verse is saying that God predetermined that whoever believed in Jesus Christ would be adopted as His son. That has wonderful consequences.

Ephesians 1:11 - In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will (ESV)

Question: What did we obtain in Christ?

Answer:

Question: How did we obtain this?

Answer:

Because we were predestined by God to be adopted as sons once we believed and were saved, we were immediately adopted as God's son. Once we were adopted as a son, we received an inheritance. This is something that has already happened. We have already obtained it. It is not something that we are going to obtain in the future. In the culture of the New Testament only sons could receive an inheritance, so God doesn't distinguish between men and women. All are adopted as "sons" so that both men and women can receive an inheritance.

B. Qualified

Colossians 1:11-12 - May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

Question: What are you qualified to share?

Answer:

Question: Who qualified us?

You are qualified to share in God's inheritance. But, you didn't do anything nor can you do anything to qualify yourself. God is the one that qualifies you through Jesus Christ.

C. Related

Romans 8:16 – 17 - The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. (ESV)

Question: What does the Holy Spirit testify with our spirit?

Answer:

Question: What is being an heir based on?

Answer:

Inheritance comes by relationship. You can't earn it or try to sow something in order to "harvest" an inheritance nor can you receive an inheritance as a free gift. Just like in the physical realm where you had nothing to do with coming into this relationship, in the spiritual realm God decided beforehand that when you trusted Christ you would be His son. Then when you believed He qualified you to be His son and once you were His son you became an heir of God the Father. Servants or stewards don't receive an inheritance, only sons. We are also joint heirs with Jesus Christ. That means we inherit what He inherited. So, we need to see what Christ inherited so that we can see what we inherit.