

The Body and It's Inheritance

“Begotten again unto a living hope [expectation] . . . unto an inheritance incorruptible and unspotted and unfading, kept [treasured], for you who are kept [guarded] by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed at the last time” (I Peter 1:3-5).

It is germane to the human race to expect to be compensated for performance. In the world of business it goes under the label of bonuses and incentives—of themselves quite legitimate (until they fall into the category of bribery). It is tempting for the Church to follow suit, attempting to accomplish in the flesh what can only be accomplished in the spirit. It must be assumed that the eye drifts toward a kind of success that can only be measured in the flesh. Numbers and size and increase are “flesh-words,” and go on the assumption that success and size are synonymous.

The inheritance spoken of by Peter has nothing to do with the flesh, but with a rebirth of the spirit. The Spirit of God which had been inbreathed into the original creation, having been lost in “the Fall,” is restored in Christ, who not only paid the penalty for our sin, but restored to us the original life of the Spirit of God. We are thus “partakers of the Divine nature.” None of this could be accomplished by any kind of fleshly action. By the same token, the flesh cannot accomplish anything that has to do with the spirit. But what then is the purpose of the brain? The brain, like a computer, merely reacts to the directions of the Spirit. That is why incentives and motivational techniques, which may be productive in the flesh, have no place in the life and service of Christ in the believer.

There are no legitimate “because” in the service of Christ. We do not serve Him because we love Him; or because we love people; or because of the need. Nor do we serve Him because of dedication; or obligation; or because of rewards in heaven. Paul’s compelling to service came not because of love **for** Christ, but because of the love **of** Christ—a vastly different thing. It was Christ’s love in the spirit of Paul that reached out to the world around him. If our services are dependent on our love **for** Christ, we are dependent upon a highly unreliable human factor. Nor can we use obligation as a motivation. To say that we ought to serve Christ because we owe Him, is to ignore the fact that what Christ did for us was a gift. The gift of salvation is everywhere in the Scripture regarded as “free.” We would not normally include a payment book with our gifts to others. In putting this obligation upon believers, we rob them of the opportunity of giving a gift to Christ. If we think of giving to Christ on the basis of the value of our life, nothing we ever gave would be more than an obligation. If we see rewards in heaven as the motivation, we are merely “mercenaries.” And as far as the need is concerned, it would break us, if viewed in terms of fleshly emotion.

And so, there is no “because” in our service to Christ. We respond at the bidding of the Spirit of Christ within us and not at the bidding of human leadership. The emotions are easily misled, as is rampantly true in causes of all kinds throughout the world. The only adequate and true basis of salvation, as well as service to Christ, is the touch of the Holy Spirit upon us. If we are open to Christ, He will persuade us to do what it is that He wants us to do, when the time comes. If we get ahead of Him, we can get ourselves involved in projects

and programs that are merely devised by human leadership. When Christ gives us something to do, it will be in keeping with our capacities and our conviction that this is something that Christ indeed wants us to do. When Christ gives us something to do, we will not be troubled with “burn out.” Weariness is common, but if one finds one’s service burdensome, perhaps it is because it has been humanly motivated.

Our inheritance is Spirit-oriented. It is ours through the rebirth of the Spirit. There may be fallout in terms of the earthly sojourn, but the great examples in the Bible did not often participate in earthly benefits. Paul’s life on the earth, for example, was such that he declared that if there were no resurrection from the dead he was “of all men most miserable.” If with Christ we are heir of all things in God’s ultimate intention, it is quite clear in I Corinthians 15 and Hebrews 2 that the ultimate intention has not as yet been realized.

An inheritance uncorruptable and unspotted and unfading . . . Out of reach of human failure and folly, safely ensconced in the Spirit realm, which will be our ultimate fulfillment, the inheritance remains totally unaffected by the forces which have corrupted the earth and its inhabitants. There is very little on earth that does not in one way or another suffer from deterioration, distortion, or disillusionment. James says that our life “*is a vapor that appeareth for a time and vanisheth away*” (4:14). And Peter quotes the prophet Isaiah—“*All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever*” (I Peter 1:24,25).

The intention of God, as far as the earth is concerned has not been, since the Fall, to restore the Edenic nature of earth, but to shift the focus of His creatures to the realm of the Spirit, where they will never again be subject to the forces of corruption. Thus, the constant cry of humans—“Where is God; why does He allow such things on the earth?”—is answered by the fact that it is God’s intention to encourage His creatures to focus on the spirit rather than on the flesh. The Psalmist cries out—“*My flesh and my heart faileth but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever*” (Psalm 73:26). Those who contend that since we are heir of all things, we can claim anything we want on earth (if only we have the faith) have failed to grasp the reality of our spiritual inheritance. An entire section of the Hebrews 11 “faith” chapter is devoted to those who did not receive deliverance on the earth. The answer to earth’s disillusionment and disappointments is that possessing Christ within our spirits, we remain at peace in the midst of the turbulence. In Hebrews 13:5—“*I will never leave you nor forsake you*”—the word for “forsake”—εγκαταλειπω (*egkatalaipo*) means literally—“I will not abandon you in the midst of your situation.” If He does not see fit to take us out of the situation, He will yet be with us in the midst of it. God’s lack of deliverance of us in our situation is often to strengthen us in it “that we may be able to bear it.” But remember, incidentally, that the strength is on a daily basis. He will not give you the grace to think about tomorrow’s problem. Take it a step at a time—1FA²—“one foot after another and another and another.” The present moment is bearable—leave the next moment to God.

Kept in heaven for you who are guarded . . . The Greek word for “keep” is τερεω (*tereo*) from which we ultimately get the word “treasure.” The treasure is kept for us and we are kept for the treasure. *Phroureo* means “to guard.” Once

the Spirit enters into us, He sets up a shield around our spirits so that Satan cannot get at us. In Ephesians 6, it speaks of “the shield of faith.” That is not a shield which we provide by our meager capacity for feelings of trust—it is faith as an energy force from God shielding us by surrounding us with His energy. It is somewhat akin to an electric eye. Satan cannot penetrate it. If we relied on our human capacity to generate feelings of trust, we would be constantly vulnerable to Satan in the erratic ability to “keep our guard up.” When we realize that our spirits are immersed in a sea of Divine energy, we need not be anxious about our human vulnerability. Satan may attack us in the flesh, but He cannot get through to our spirits.

So then what is our inheritance? It is the restoration of the Spirit of God to our spirits of which we have been bereft by the Fall. We become “partakers of the Divine nature.” We are then possessors of His Spirit within our spirits, and therefore invulnerable to the forces of Satan which occupy the earthly and fleshly realm. That is the key to understanding why it is that many Christians suffer these “slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.” Satan is indeed the “prince of this world.” God allows him a certain free reign, almost as a mockery, like someone who steals the treasure chest, but misses the gems within. In the story of John the Baptist, He allowed a lewd dancing girl to take John’s head. It is almost as though God were saying, “Do what you will with the carcass, I get the spirit.” The attempt to square earthly benefits with our inheritance in the spirit, misses the whole point of God’s ultimate intentions for His creatures. The inheritance is a gift—it cannot be earned. It is kept for us by the God of the universe, who guards our spirits with His Infinite Power—a power not dependent upon human efforts or human service or human feelings.

David Morsey

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