

## Heirs With Christ

Romans 8:17a

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

A few years ago about this time of the academic year some of you may remember the Minneapolis Tribune did that survey that we've mentioned before of graduating students and they asked them why they were looking for certain jobs and what they were looking for in certain jobs. Then, you remember, the reporter kind of categorized them under three headings. He said that everybody seemed to be concerned with one of three motives in the job they were heading for. And, either it was profit, it was the profit motive that was governing them -- or it was the power, the power motive, the opportunity to exercise power -- or it was the success motive. It was the desire for success.

And you remember last Sunday we kind of agreed that we in the 20th century seemed to be dominated by those motives. We seem to be so dominated by them that at times you could almost describe us as a driven people. We seem to be driven by power, by profit, by success. We seem hardly to be free people who can paint because we enjoy painting, who can practice medicine because we really do enjoy dealing with the body and dealing in a healing and in an analytical and intelligent way with it. But we seem in spite of many of the abilities we have, to be rather driven by these motives rather than even guided in so much as by our abilities. It seems as though some of us seem to start off guided by abilities, but then when we try to mesh them in with society somehow the thing becomes twisted and we end up in the drive for profit, or power, or success.

In a way loved ones it's reasonable that we should be. When you think of our situation, when you think that here we are on a spherical piece of matter spinning through space at a thousand miles an hour with no visible means of support and for no apparent reason, it is really reasonable in a way that we would begin to have some feelings within us that we can only satisfy through fulfilling these motives in our lives. Obviously, if you are in that position on a spherical piece of matter, spinning through space at a thousand miles an hour, you certainly have a great sense of insecurity. If you don't get dizzy. But you certainly begin to wonder why, why on earth is this thing remaining in space like this? And even though we don't talk about it every morning we get up, yet there is a tremendous sense of insecurity among us just because of our physical position.

And of course, many of us feel, "Well all I can do is try to make myself as secure as possible." And the most obvious way to make ourselves secure is this old body so we think, "Well, we'll fill the old stomach with food and we'll clothe the old body with clothing so that we keep it away from the rain and cold and kind of protect it from other animals around us, and we'll build little roofs over our heads to keep us out of the storms and the thunderclouds." And so we end up dedicating ourselves to gathering food, shelter, and clothing around us to give us a little bit of security and of course that's the whole profit motive. And, we've so often said that many of us in our jobs don't get above that at all. That's what governs our whole being, that's why we go to work each day.

And then you can see too that there does come to you a tremendous sense of insignificance. When you realize that you are one of almost four billion little flies on this planet, you begin to think, "Ah I have to in some way get my head above the crowd and in some way I have to grow stronger wings than all the other little flies," or, "I have to fly faster than all the other flies. But I have to do

something to make myself significant. I feel so insignificant in this place.” And so of course we are led into the whole desire to make ourselves significant somehow.

And most of us, of course, try to do that by entering into that second motive. We try to exercise power over other people, in some way to make ourselves a little more important than the others. I don't know if you still, any of you, still would support old Richard [Nixon, US President embattled in Watergate scandal]. I think we pray for him, but I don't know if there are too many of us maybe who are still avid supporters. But we do sense that what he was doing and what Nixon was aiming at in his own life was, I am afraid, what many of us are involved in. We really are power hungry and we are trying in some way to use power to establish some significance for ourselves.

And the third motive is easy. It's easy to see how it comes. It's very simple for us to begin to feel that this situation that we are in on the universe is very temporary and we'd better grab as much of life as we can as it goes past. And so we become preoccupied with trying to enjoy ourselves, trying to get some kind of success, trying to prove to ourselves that life was a success after all. And so we are driven by the old success motive.

And I think we shared that last day that that's the way most people live in our universe, however sophisticated they are about it. However refined they are in covering it up, when it gets down to the nitty-gritty, what governs them is the desire for either profit or power, or success. And those of you that are in medical school know how tricky it is to know whether we're doing it for the good of humanity or whether there are other reasons for doing it. And I think all of us have faced that same kind of problem. When we decide whether we're going to teach, or nurse, or whether we're going to go into business, it's these old profit, power, success drives within us that seem to take away freedom from within us.

The whole thing changes dramatically if the creator of the universe is really the Father of Jesus. The whole thing changes completely. If the creator of the whole universe is really the Father of Jesus and really knows you and me and knows why he put us here, then, of course, all those motives are unnecessary -- especially if we can actually become related to the Creator. I mean it is one thing to look up at a distant Creator somewhere up there who doesn't know you and think, “Well, I'd better make my own plans because I'm not sure what he is thinking.”

But it is a different thing if this Creator actually wants you as his own son, or actually wants you as his own daughter and is really prepared to infuse into you the uncreated life of his own son so that you become his own child. Then suddenly you can begin to see that even your dad -- and he is not nearly as good as God -- but your dad feels a great responsibility for you. So does your mum. And, so if this Creator is really prepared to make us his own sons and daughters by giving us the Spirit of his only begotten son, then obviously he is going to feel responsibility for us. We are not on our own.

You remember, that is as far as we got last day. Would you look at it loved ones? It is Romans 8:17. This is one of those verses that take about three weeks to finish but remember we started it last day. And that's the hypothetical statement then that follows. "And if children..." If we're his children, if he's prepared to regard us as his own children, then we're his heirs. We're heirs of God. Remember we shared that last day, that it's heirs in the sense of the Greek word “kleronomoi” which means not just heirs who will inherit when God dies, because he is never going to die. But the word means “sharers, possessors”, people who enter into the positions that he has effortlessly. And that's what we saw last day, that all the things that we go after in our motives of profit, power,

and success, we are going to be heirs to, effortlessly, after this life is over.

Do you remember how God put it in those verses? Well maybe we should look at them loved ones, because some of us won't have been here last day. Matthew 19:29, "And every one who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life." The Creator is kind of saying to us this morning, "Look, would just stop worrying yourself out on that miserable mortgage? Would you stop worrying yourself out trying to get a good job so that you will be able to buy a few more acres? I'm going to give you hundreds of those when this life is over. Now would you just be satisfied and enjoy the ride?"

And, we're still saying, "No, no, I can't enjoy the ride. I have to hold tight and I have to get in as much as I can." And really you know we are like the old boys in Las Vegas [famous for gambling] who say, "Pull it in." And the Father is saying, "Believe me, you're my heirs. I will give you a hundred times the brothers and sisters and the houses and the families that you are prepared to let go of. I'll give you a hundred times that amount." And of course, he says there is one condition, "If you'll only let the Spirit that governed my son Jesus, the Spirit that is prepared to give and is prepared to stop trying to grab for itself, if you'll let that Spirit come into you, then I'll give you all these things, believe me."

Loved ones, do you see that's part of the reason why it is impossible for you to be totally satisfied with a miserable quarter of an acre, because you were made to inherit hundreds of thousands of acres throughout the universe. Part of it is we're selfish. But part of it is that when you look at that miserable little house that you have eventually got together after 50 years of struggling and then it burns up. Or you find that it is ready for about a \$100,000 worth of repairs. The sinking feeling that you have at that moment comes because you were not meant to try to satisfy those desires by grabbing for yourself. You were meant to allow the Spirit of Jesus who forgets himself and who is prepared and concerned to give to others rather than himself -- you were meant to let that Spirit come into you so that God would give you hundreds of thousands of families and brothers and sisters and homes and lands. And so it is impossible for us to be satisfied with a little acre, or with a little house, or a duplex. We're just trying to satisfy something that can only be satisfied by the infinite things that God will give us.

You know it is the same as with other things, you remember: Matthew 5:5. It explains a wee bit about people like Onassis [Aristotle Onassis, a Greek shipping tycoon] and old DeGol [wealthy businessman] here, and us ourselves. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." The Father says, "Look, if you let the Spirit of my son come into you, the Spirit of gentleness and meekness, the Spirit that doesn't want always its own way, then I tell you, you're going to be the people who inherit the whole earth. And you in fact will rule over the whole earth." And loved ones that's true. The 70 years is not the final purpose. The 70 years is a place where he makes us fit and able to begin to bring the whole universe under his control. And that's why he says, "If you allow the Spirit of my son's meekness to come into your life and take it over, if you stop demanding your own way in every situation, then I tell you I am going to give you the earth to rule and to exercise authority over."

Loved ones, that's why an Onassis, or a DeGol, or you or me are always frustrated. However much power we manage to get for ourselves, it is never enough. We're never satisfied, we always want more. Well you remember what someone said about Nixon, "If he was elected for life, he'd run again." And that's it. That's it. That's us. You know it. You know it. If we were elected for life, we'd run again because it seems we always want more power. We always want to exercise more

authority. We always seem to have to prove ourselves just once more. And the Father says, "Look, if you give that up, it's not the Brezhnev's [Leonid Brezhnev, leader of the Soviet Union from 1964 to 1982], it's not the Mao's [Mao Zedong leader of China from 1949 to 1976] that are going to inherit the earth. It's you who allow the Spirit of my only begotten son to come into you in meekness and gentleness. To you, my children, I will give you the earth to rule over. Meanwhile be content even if you can't rule everything the way you want."

It was the same you know, with that verse in Matthew 25. Because it doesn't only deal with that profit and power motive where we want all the lands we can get. Or we want all the houses we can get. Or we want all the authority or power we can get. But it applies to this business of success. "Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.'" And God is saying, "I'll give you all the success that you want after you come to be with me. I'll give you all the love, and all the excitement and exhilaration that you could hope for." That's why, loved ones, we are often involved in demanding more love from our dear wife than she is capable of giving. That's why we are often demanding more love and affection from our children than they are capable of giving, because we were made for a supernatural excitement and exhilaration that only God is able to give us.

Loved ones, it doesn't matter how fast you take a Harley Davidson [motorcycle] around a corner; it is nothing like skidding around Jupiter. And that's really what God is saying, "That there is an exhilaration and an excitement and there's a fulfillment of love and of emotional life that can only be satisfied with what I have for you after this life is over if you are prepared to die with my Son to the need of those things now in this present life. If you are prepared to stop being those who want to be fed, who want to be made happy, and if you will become those who give to strangers and who will concentrate on giving joy to others, then I will give you all the joy, and success, and exhilaration that you need after this life is over." And loved ones, I think that is as far as we got last day.

But isn't that "pie in the sky when you die"? Isn't that the old story, "Well, it's not so good now but it will be better the next time around. So, just suffer now and at the end God will give you heaven and everything you want." Is that not what it means to be an heir? And, I think a number of us probably would answer, "Well, yeah, I suppose that is what it means because we can see you're saying all of this will come to us after we have died and we can't come into our inheritance until we have died so I can kind of see that yeah, I suppose we won't get those things until after death." But loved ones, there is somebody who has already died and has already entered into those things. There is God's original only begotten son. And if you think of it for a minute, he's already died. And so he has already entered into his inheritance. And he's entered into all these things.

In other words, at this moment he is resting in the middle of the planets and he knows he's having conversation and fellowship with old Thomas a Kempis, and Saint Francis, with Luther, with Augustine. He's having all the fellowship that he could want because he's experiencing the immediate sense of the love that comes from his Father. He has a great sense of approval from his Father at this moment. He knows his Father accepts him utterly and completely. He experiences all the exhilaration of his Father's love. And he looks out on an infinity of a universe over which he has full authority. So Jesus has already entered into all those things.

Now let me show you how we benefit from that. In John 16:14 dear ones, Jesus is talking about the

Holy Spirit you remember. "He," the Holy Spirit, "will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you." The Greek word means "to share it with you". "For he will take what is mine and share it with you." In other words for any of us here this morning who are prepared to let the Spirit of Jesus rule and control our lives, that same dear Holy Spirit will take all the benefits that Jesus has in his inheritance at the present time and he will make them real in your own life. He will make them real inside you. That's what it means.

The Holy Spirit is able to give you the same feelings that Jesus has even though you and I have not entered into our inheritance. We are able to experience the same feelings as Jesus himself has. That's why we come to that next phrase, and maybe you'd look at it in Romans 8:17b. "And if children, then heirs, heirs of God." That is something we have not entered into yet, our inheritance as heirs of God, "And fellow heirs with Christ." In other words, we are able to experience inside in our own emotional and spiritual and mental lives all the feelings and attitudes that Jesus has himself now that he has entered into his inheritance.

Loved ones, the Holy Spirit is able to make real in you, the feelings that Jesus has in this moment. So at this moment, Jesus looks out on planets that you and I cannot see. He looks out on space that we have no idea exists. And he has a tremendous sense of being a million-billion-billionaire. Now loved ones, if you are willing to let Jesus' Spirit of unselfishness and a forgetfulness of your possessions, if you are willing to die to your preoccupation with getting the old food, shelter, and clothing that you need, then that Spirit of Jesus is able to impart to you the attitude of a millionaire. Now that's right.

Now you can't produce it yourself. You can listen to me describing it and you can say, "Oh, let me juggle those thoughts a few more times to see if I feel that way." Loved ones, it isn't something you create by your own mental gymnastics. It is a miracle of God's Holy Spirit. He is able to give you the same feeling of confidence in the midst of emptiness, in the midst of even poverty. He is able to give you the same sense of confidence that the son of a billionaire would have. He is able to give to you the feelings of contentment that Jesus himself has as he looks out on all that he possesses.

He is really able to make you like the early apostles. And it's said that they possessed nothing. Yet you'd think they owned everything. And dear ones, the Holy Spirit is able to do that. He is able give you -- if you are willing to stop being preoccupied with the food, and the shelter, and the clothing -- he's able to give you enough to get you by, but he's able to give you the sense of security that he himself possesses at this moment, and the sense of contentment. See, I think a lot of us say, "Oh well, I mean I'm prepared to give things up, I am prepared to give them up, but what would I feel like inside?" Loved ones, the Holy Spirit gives you the feelings of a millionaire. He gives you a sense of knowing that the daily bread will come each day. No more watching the old IBM stocks to make sure they stay up or going through the 3M shares and making sure they're staying up. No more worrying whether your investments will survive the recession or not, but at last a sense that your destiny is in the hands of the Person who owns all the shares in the world. And the Holy Spirit is able to give you that sense even in the midst of poverty and in the midst of lack.

So many dear ones have lived as rich millionaires and yet they have owned nothing. George Mueller [founder of orphanages in England in the 1800's] never had a sense of being anything but the son of the King. He knew that he could get everything he needed. And you remember how he built hundreds of orphanages through what his Father gave him. And yet he himself had very little in his pockets from day-to-day.

Now loved ones if you're prepared to let the Spirit of Jesus' death to this profit motive come into your life and rule it then the Holy Spirit is able to give you the same sense of confidence that Jesus himself has. I'll show you a verse -- Matthew 6:28. Have you ever tried to psyche yourself into this verse? Some of you obviously have -- you remember the verse. "And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." I think a lot of us take that old verse and we say, "Yeah, consider the lilies of the field, consider the lilies of the field. Yeah the lilies of the field they toil not and neither do they reap. Now remember, "They toil not and neither do they reap and Solomon..., yeah." And it's hopeless. You cannot psych yourself into it, can you? You can't. I mean, you do your best. You try to memorize it. You try to put it up on your wall. You write it down in the back of your bank book. You try to keep persuading yourself, "I believe it. I believe it. Yes, no, well, yes I believe it." And at the end of each month you kind of aren't sure. And then half way through the month, "Yeah I believe it." But as the month comes to an end you're not sure if you believe it.

Loved ones, you can't psych yourself into that. That's a gift of the Holy Spirit when you allow the Spirit of Jesus to come into you and die finally to it being your responsibility to get all the food, shelter and clothing you need. When you at last are prepared to join Jesus on the cross and die to being in control of all your own possessions, then the Holy Spirit is able to make that verse real in you miraculously and is able to give you a sense of detachment from your possessions and is able to make you sit loosely by your possessions. But loved ones, it's a gift of the Holy Spirit working in you, if you fulfill the condition of letting him come in and die with Jesus to this food, shelter, clothing motive in your life.

Loved ones, it really is that. When you take the step of faith, the Holy Spirit begets in you this grace. And you know how often somebody has asked you, "Do you believe that God will provide every need of yours from his riches in glory in Christ Jesus?" And you will say, "Well yeah, but sometimes my faith is weak, you know." Well, it's bluff. Your faith isn't really there at all but you're just trying to believe it intellectually. But loved ones only when you allow the Spirit of Jesus, God's only begotten Son, to come in and rule your life and control your life, only then will you begin to sense within that feeling that my Father is the king of the universe. He will provide bread for me each day -- daily bread as I need it. He will provide for me from his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. It's a fruit of the Spirit within you, you see. And that fruit is begotten the moment you begin to allow the Holy Spirit to govern you.

If you want to know what that means, that means -- oh well, I'll tell you a horrible experience I had. It was my first experience of letting my wife follow the Spirit. Brothers, be very careful of doing that. We had a gentleman from the west coast who was speaking in the Methodist Church that I preached in, in North Minneapolis. I've told some of you about it. And he said, "Now when it comes offering time just do what the Holy Spirit tells you to do." Well I've never been as rash as that in my own life. And I certainly wouldn't be as rash with my wife's life. But I was sitting in the pulpit with him. And then I felt and I realized she had the checkbook. And I just said, "Well Lord I'd better just leave it to you." And, then I think she was moved to put \$50 in that day. And that was our first breakthrough when we started to let the Holy Spirit govern our attitude toward material possessions.

That's what I mean by giving it over to him you see. It's when it comes to a moment like that saying, "Holy Spirit, what do you want me to do?" It's when it comes to the moment where you're

about to buy the bike, or you're about to buy the coat, or the davenport, it's at that moment saying, "Holy Spirit what do you, dear Spirit of Jesus, what do you want to do at this moment?" That's what I mean by letting him control your life.

Then as you do that day-by-day, the Holy Spirit will begin to beget in you an absolute sense of security even though you have nothing. Even though you may possess nothing, he will give you a great sense that you own everything that Jesus owns and that whatever you need tomorrow he'll provide for you. Now, that loved ones is part of the way in which we are co-heirs with Christ.

It applies to power, you know, exercising authority. Jesus at this moment exercises authority over every proton and neutron. Loved ones, that's why we all stay together. If Jesus were to lift his little finger at this moment, we would blast apart. We would explode. It is because Jesus is at this moment controlling the whole world of nature that we stay together at this moment. It is because he is holding your body together by invisible powers that you stay together at all. It is because he holds the pressures of the universe right. It is because he controls the orbits of the planets that we are able to continue to exist. Now Jesus therefore exercises tremendous authority throughout the universe.

Now, if you will die to making your wife do what you want her to do, if you will die to insisting that everybody in your office does what you want when you want it, if you will die to insisting that your children not only obey you but just become the kind of person you are, if you will die to that, the Holy Spirit will impart to you the sense that Jesus has of tremendous authority. And you will realize a conviction within you that God is going to work all the events in your life according to the counsel of his will. And you'll sit there in a situation where things are all blasting apart and you'll want so much to wrest it out of their control and get it back under your own. And there will come this tremendous conviction within you, "But God is in charge of this thing. He is working everything according to the counsel of his will." The Holy Spirit will impart to you a tremendous certainty and assurance from Jesus that the angels are already on their way to deal with the situation. If, loved ones, you will let the Holy Spirit impart to you the meekness and the gentleness of Jesus.

Now you don't have to be a school teacher to know what we are talking about there. You who are school teachers know it. You begin to see the class getting out of control and you feel you're the only one. And so the temper goes. Or the "righteous indignation" we call it, goes. And we try to haul them back. Every mum knows it in the situation in the home. Every dad, when you see she spent a dollar too much or five dollars too much, you want to bring it under control. Loved ones, if you will join Jesus on the cross -- when the Roman soldiers were destroying him and he knew with one finger he could destroy them -- if you will die to your right to have your way in every situation and to control everything the way you want it, if you will let the Holy Spirit beget in you the meekness and the gentleness of Jesus, then the Holy Spirit will give to you a quiet sense that there are other powers at work bringing the situation under God's control. And you'll begin to find the situations in your life come into order.

That's what I found. I found it in school teaching and in finance situations, where you know the way we act on a hair trigger. You see the thing going the wrong way and we're out after it. And we just mess up the thing worse. If you will die to that right to control it the way you want it and let the Spirit of Jesus come into you in meekness then the Holy Spirit will give you the sense that Jesus has of limitless authority. And you will have a quiet sense -- you'll sit there and someone will say, "Why aren't you doing something? Why aren't you doing something?" And you'll hardly

know. You'll just sense, "No, God is in control of this thing and the angels are already on their way to deal with it and I'll rest." And then the Holy Spirit will tell you when you have to move because at times you'll have to make some moves. But it won't be that old panic move to get the thing back under your control.

Now loved ones, if you say to me, "Ah, you mean it is 'pie in the sky when you die' -- you enter into all that inheritance when we die?" No loved ones, we are co-heirs with Jesus. You can enter into these things now because the truth is this. It's not the land or the house that gives you security. Sure it's not.

Finally, is that true? You remember the security you felt when you were with your dad in his arms going upstairs to bed? You didn't own a house then. You didn't own a car. You didn't have a big bank book then. It's not the houses or the land that gives you a sense of security. It's knowing that you're in the hands of someone who has everything available that you need and will give it to you as you need it. Now that conviction is a fruit of God's Holy Spirit. And that fruit comes if you let the Spirit of Jesus come into your life. And you can do it even this morning. You can say, "Father, I have lived for profit, power, and success all my life. And I'm worn out doing it. And I still haven't got security. Lord Jesus, I want your Spirit to come into my life and when these issues come up, I'm prepared to follow you. And, Holy Spirit will you give me what I am trying to find with all these other ulterior motives?"

And loved ones it really does work. It really does work. You are not only God's children but you're his heirs and you're co-heirs with Jesus. That's why they call the Spirit the guarantee of our inheritance, because he gives us the feelings that we're going to have when we eventually enter into our actual inheritance. He gives us the conviction that we can have whatever of Jesus' inheritance that we need at this time.

So I'd ask you to think about it and pray about it. The old recession is bottoming out, isn't it? And I suppose the employment thing will improve in about a year's time. So, really in a sense we're still in a beautiful opportune situation to deal with this issue. It won't be long before we're wealthy again and we don't need it. And now is a good time to deal with God about your position with him. Let's pray.