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# ***A LOST INHERITANCE***

Reading: 1 Peter 1: 3—12

*A living hope . . . an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.*

I recently posted a message on my web-log about being the next-of-kin for an elderly member of my congregation who had passed away. I should, perhaps, say *sadly passed away*, but the sadness would reflect what I felt for myself rather than considering the reality of her passing. She had a tremendous faith, a very strong belief in both God and salvation, the latter of which she had secured through her faith in the former, and through her acceptance Jesus Christ.

I have learned that she has left me a small bequest --- an inheritance --- and this has made me think about the inheritance that we should all bequeath. In the bible, Peter writes the following in verses 3 to 6 of chapter 1: **(3) *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (4) to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, (5) who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.***

When we know that someone whom we care about had a right relationship with God in and through Jesus Christ then we should rejoice in their hope of salvation according to the promises contained in Scripture, even though we may feel saddened at the fact that they have moved on out of view as far as we're concerned in this life.

This set me off in another different, albeit similar, vein of thought. Once we have accepted Jesus as our Lord and Saviour then we have the assurance of our own salvation. We have been offered and have accepted the most wonderful and priceless gift in the whole of creation, and what's more it's FREE! We have also been instructed by Jesus, through Scripture, that we should share the knowledge acquired with this gift with the rest of the world, meaning at least those with whom we have any sort of relationship, however brief it may be. The priceless Gift of Life, (for that's what it is!), is ours to share, not to lock away never to see the light of day for fear of it being lost or stolen. This is one gift that we have for ever, no matter how many times we share it with others. In fact



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when we share it something wonderful happens to us, for in the sharing our own faith grows and strengthens.

The Bible refers to this gift as an inheritance. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, an inheritance it means *a thing that is inherited*. To inherit is *to receive assets or a title at the death of the previous holder*. In his letter to the Romans, Paul writes that we are children of God, and reminds us that it means that we are joint heirs with Jesus *if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him* (Ch.8 : vs.17). This means that, together with Jesus Christ, we will inherit the Kingdom of God.

When I was growing up life was simpler. Generally speaking, we knew our limitations and our boundaries, and we understood the order of things. This was irrespective of whether we actually agreed with them or not. We grew up in an environment where we were taught to show respect --- to others, to property, to opinions, and to ourselves. We were taught about God the Creator and about Jesus the Redeemer. We grew with a knowledge of right and wrong, some instilled, some seemingly inborn. And we respected those boundaries, recognising that they were there for a good reason, and growing up into adulthood, we found that we had benefited from all that we'd been taught, even those portions of our learning that we later rejected in whole or in part.

The following, headed 'My Beliefs', was written by a 13-year old boy as part of a school exercise:

- I do not believe in any religion or any god. I was christened after I was born but I do not follow Christianity in any way.
- I believe in reincarnation when you die, that you come back in a new life as a person or another living thing.
- I believe that religion in whole starts off many Wars and arguments. Without Religion the world would probably be a peaceful place.
- I believe that everybody should treat people equally, no matter what colour or race they are.

The world has changed since I was a 13-year old, for at that age I would never have considered writing anything like this. Irrespective of the various rights or wrongs, imagined or perceived, in our upbringing, years ago we benefited from the inheritance passed down to us through our parents, our teachers, the



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church, and the variety of other people and organisations that influenced our lives. Children today are the victims of a hedonistic society which strives to find ways for the individual to satisfy their own desires with scant regard for others. So often parents, following the well-trodden path of trivial pursuit, fail their children, believing that it's someone else's responsibility to teach their children morals and ethics. Teachers are fearful of losing their jobs if they dare to go against the system and actually punish children for doing wrong --- in fact we are told that we should not use the word *wrong* as it is a **negative** word that will affect the child's upbringing. What they fail to point out is that you can affect a child's progress in a **positive** way by directing them to understand the difference between right and wrong. Then there's the church. Well, generally today the church fails miserably at influencing people or situations because it's like a lion that not only has no teeth but also fails to roar above a whisper anymore.

What all this means is that our children today, and for the past generation, have largely lost the inheritance which is theirs to claim. They've lost it due to our carelessness rather than to their own disinterest, for it is the average voter that has allowed our governments to enact laws which they claim protect human rights yet which, in reality, protect the opinions of the few against the rights of the majority. In many parts of the civilised (so-called) world it is against the law to teach children about God in school, yet perfectly okay to teach them about the perversions that exist in our society which are regarded as an abomination by God.

We should act before it's too late altogether if we really care about the situation, and if we truly believe as we profess to. Politician's can be changed by voters, and they should be made very aware of this. They are there to represent our views, not just the views of a party.

It's time for Christians everywhere to put on the whole armour of God and get marching. The battlefield is set; the front-line is marked; the enemy is with us. Let us reclaim for our children the inheritance that has been stolen from them by stealth and deceit!