

## HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM

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 of Latter Day Saints  
 Independence, Missouri

Sunday, March 28, 1954  
 8:30 a.m. KMBC & KFRM  
 Kansas City, Missouri  
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SCRIPTURE: Romans 8:9-17

Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, though the body shall die because of sin, yet the Spirit is life, because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit which dwelleth in you. Therefore brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh unto sin, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit to mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live unto Christ. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ .....

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As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.

Many of the people who talk most glibly about the kingdom of God miss completely one of the major significances of that phrase. If it is the kingdom of God, it is God's kingdom, not ours. We cannot build it for ourselves, as a man builds his own house and moves in. We cannot even design it. The plans were drawn centuries ago, and the kingdom was prepared from the foundation of the world. God has already built it. We may build it up, or increase it, as we work with God; but we cannot build it. Furthermore, because of the nature of the kingdom, we cannot earn it, as we earn the money to provide an earthly inheritance for our children. Nothing we can do in our own strength, in our own life, can earn a place in the kingdom for us; for the kingdom is God's, and he is not selling a single bit of it. He is holding it as an inheritance for his sons. If we want to possess a portion of the kingdom of God we can only inherit it, as his sons and daughters. Only as we become heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ may we possess the kingdom.

Not all men are heirs of this kingdom of God. Not all men are worthy to receive such an inheritance, or would know what to do with it if they receive it. Many men, if they received such an inheritance, would not only waste and dissipate and prostitute their own inheritance, but would at the same time destroy the inheritances of others in the kingdom. No unclean thing can inherit the kingdom of God; Corruptible flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom; an incorruptible life, and an incorruptible body are prerequisites to such an inheritance. Sons of the devil follow after devilish ways, and can receive an inheritance only from their father, the devil, just as sons of God receive their inheritance from their Father. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God ...," says John. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, says: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God! Those who forsake the ways of wickedness and become God's sons, may expect an inheritance from the Father who has begotten them to a new and lively hope,

Now that we have seen that certain people cannot inherit the kingdom, let us try to discover who can. We suggest these scriptural qualifications for the heirs of the kingdom. First, they must have faith in Jesus Christ; they must believe on him; they must have hope through him. Second, they must be repentant; for as we have seen, no man may bring his sin with him into the kingdom. Third, they must be baptized for the

remission of his sins; those sins must be washed away, and the believer must make public affirmation of his faith and of the covenant he makes with God to renounce his former allegiances and serve him. "Except a man be born again of water and of spirit, he cannot see the kingdom." Fourth, the heirs of the kingdom must be justified by their faith in and obedience to Christ. Fifth, they must overcome all things through the Spirit which is bestowed upon them as a result of their obedience. Sixth, they must become righteous; they must show forth their righteousness by performing the deeds of righteousness. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." Seventh, and last, the children of God and the heirs of the kingdom must continue faithful to the end; they must endure; they must finish the race and not stop half way to the goal, or turn around and run in the opposite direction.

The life that is in the natural man ends only in death. Unless the life of Christ is in us, we are still dead in trespasses and sins, and we are children of the devil, not children of God. If we are children of the devil, we are heirs of the devil, and subjects to his kingdom. If we would be heirs of God, we must be children of God, made alive by the same Spirit which brought Jesus Christ from the dead. Man must be born again if he would inherit the kingdom of God. "Except a man be born of water, and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

The heirs of God are those who are begotten of God into his spiritual likeness. James says; "Of his own will he begat us with the word of truth.." Peter writes: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." John writes: "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." The Book of Mormon says: "Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and women, all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, must be born again; Yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters; and thus they become new creatures; and unless they do this they can in no wise inherit the kingdom of God." That this begetting of new spiritual life is through Jesus Christ, is made clear in modern revelation given through Joseph Smith, who writes: "that by him (Christ) and through him, and of him, the world are and were created; and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God."

Those who have been born again and justified through faith in Christ, repentance, baptism, and the laying on of hands, then receive the Holy Spirit as an abiding comforter, as the seal of their adoption. Paul, in writing to the Ephesians speaks of this Holy Spirit as the "earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." The "earnest" in the old fashioned language of the King James' Bible means a small token payment given to bind the bargain, until full payment is made. In his letter to the Romans, Paul speaks of the "Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ."

Without this Spirit we have no life in us; for this Spirit is the power which shall bring us forth in the resurrection. Without that Spirit, we are still dead in trespasses and sins; for "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

It is well that we should work to build up God's kingdom, to spread it abroad among the peoples of earth. But it is also well to remember always that the kingdom is God's -- not ours. We cannot design it, plan it, or build it; we cannot earn it. We can only inherit it as we are begotten sons and daughters of God, and as we have his spiritual life dwelling in us -- the same life that raised Jesus from the dead, which will raise us from the dead, and make us the children of God. If we are children, we are God's heirs, and joint heirs with God's Son, Jesus Christ. Only through this filial relationship can we inherit the kingdom which God has prepared from the foundation of the world.