

Inheritance of the Kingdom of God

Last week, we learned about being justified. The six things that are considered "righteousness" are: 1) to be forgiven of all sins past, present, and future; 2) to be acquitted at the final judgment; 3) to be an heir of the Kingdom of God; 4) to receive the Holy Spirit; 5) to live holy in this world; and 6) to be resurrected to glory at the consummation of the Kingdom of God.

Today, I would like to preach the inheritance of the Kingdom of God and receiving the Holy Spirit. Now, please look at verse 13. "It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith."

We can receive the blessings that Abraham's descendants receive by believing in Jesus Christ. The word "be heir" here means inheritance like from our parents. Have you ever inherited an inheritance? An inheritance is a blessing from our parents. In these days, some inheritances are negative, such as an empty old house, but an inheritance from God is a blessing, so it is exciting to see what kind of inheritance it is. First of all, in order to inherit God's inheritance, we must become 'children of God'. Since we have been justified by believing in Jesus Christ and have become God's children, we are eligible for the inheritance. And we can inherit the blessings of Abraham, the ancestor of faith, as well.

Now let us consider 'inheriting the world'. In the Old Testament era, "God's people, the Israelites," were called upon to inherit the land of Canaan and to rule it righteously. In the New Testament era, the people of God, or Christians, who believe in Jesus Christ, are meant to inherit the whole world at the end of the world and reign with Christ. The good world at creation was distorted because of human sin. But it will be restored and perfected at the end of the world. We should have this biblical worldview.

Next, I would like to consider the world, or the Kingdom of God. We may have a surprisingly limited understanding of this Kingdom of God while living a life of faith. However, the center of Jesus' mission was the 'Kingdom of God'. Mark 1:15, "The time has come", he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe in the good news." Since Jesus' public life began with the proclamation of the Kingdom of God, we

need to enrich our understanding of the Kingdom of God, too.

<The Spatial Arrival of the Kingdom of God>

In the Bible, it comes as "the kingdom of God, heaven, the kingdom of the Father, the kingdom of David, the kingdom of the Son of Man, a mere kingdom," etc., but there is no great difference.

First, when we speak of the Kingdom of God, we speak of space. As in the Messianic prophecy as the King of Peace that comes in Isaiah 11, Jesus Christ, the descendant of David, the stock of Jesse, will restore the world. **Isaiah 11: 5 to 6, we read, "Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. (v.5) The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. (v. 6)"** The Kingdom of God is a perfect and peaceful kingdom where justice and truth are realized. This Kingdom of God will be completed when Jesus Christ returns. He also promised that we would enter the Kingdom of God as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets have entered the Kingdom of God (Luke 13:28; Luke 1:55) I hope that this wonderful and perfect Kingdom of God will come soon!

<The Dominion of the Kingdom of God>

This Kingdom of God is not only about space, but also about 'God's rule'. This rule of God is "God's eternal rule" established by the life of Jesus Christ, His death on the cross, His resurrection, and His ascension. Paul emphasizes that this Kingdom of God is God's rule. **Romans 14:17-18, "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (v.17), because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval(v.18)."** The righteousness, peace, and joy of God are given by the Holy Spirit to those who receive the dominion of the Kingdom of God. And we Christians can live in a way that pleases God and we will please others also.

The nationality of Christians who receive the dominion of the Kingdom of God is in heaven. **Philippians 3:20, "But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,"** Paul said. As soon as we believe in Jesus Christ, our nationality has changed. We will eventually enter a spatial heaven. But now we are foreigners living in this world with the nationality of heaven.

With the above, I have explained the Kingdom of God. Now I would like to consider how to inherit the Kingdom of God.

<Inheriting the world by faith>

Look at verse 16. "Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all." We can be assured of God's promises through faith in Jesus Christ. Abraham received great blessings not only spiritually, but also in his earthly life. He won wars and became a millionaire. And, looking at the long history of the world, Abraham's descendants actually abound in the world. We Christians, including the Jews who are Abraham's descendants, are having a great impact on the world. Abraham's descendants will be blessed not only at the time of the restoration of the Kingdom of God, but will also be greatly blessed when they live in this world. **3 John 1:2**, "Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well." Please pray boldly to God that all our needs may be fully met.

<Receiving the Holy Spirit, the seal of the inheritance of the world>.

So how can we inherit such a great blessing and inheritance from God? **Galatians 3:14**, "He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit." This verse is very interesting. First of all, God promised us Jesus Christ from Abraham's descendants and we are saved by believing in Jesus even though we are Gentiles. We know this blessing already. But there is one more thing we receive. It is "the Spirit, the Holy Spirit. When I read this verse, I was again surprised at how important the Holy Spirit is.

Ephesians 1:13-14, "And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit (13), who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession – to the praise of his glory (14)." How do we know that we are citizens of heaven? Do you have proof? Yes, there is. The Holy Spirit Himself will prove that we are citizens of heaven. God sent the Holy Spirit to enable us to live as citizens of heaven, not only for the future Kingdom of God, but also for our life in this world. We must have pride and identity as Christians and firmly accept the Holy Spirit as the guarantee to inherit the Kingdom of God (2 Corinthians 1:22, 5:5).

Oh, Yoko! You're talking about the different thing. Wasn't our inheritance something like the land, property, and many descendants like that Abraham received? What good is receiving the Holy Spirit? Don't you think? I am ashamed to admit that I

once thought so like you. But I don't think like that now.

Genesis 15:1 says, "After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." The English translation of this verse is even better than the Japanese translation. God our father introduces Himself to Abraham. "I am your shield and your great reward". At the time, Abraham thought that his only son was his reward, and he was sad that God did not give him a son yet. But God tells him that God Himself is a greater reward than his only son Isaac. I think it is helpful to understand the Holy Spirit" that God Himself is a great blessing for us. Is receiving the Holy Spirit really a great blessing for you? Do you really think so? Is God enough for you?

The Holy Spirit is not just a force or an object, but He is the Personality of the Trinity God. The Holy Spirit is the Creator of heaven and earth and also the Spirit of Christ. (2 Corinthians 3:17). The Lord here refers to the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. The Holy Spirit lives in us. This is the great blessing and reward.

<Benefits of Receiving the Holy Spirit>

The Holy Spirit fills us with everything we need to live as Christians in this sinful world. John 16:8, "When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment." The Holy Spirit teaches us about sin, righteousness, and judgment, and leads us to live in a way that pleases God. The Holy Spirit leads us so that we can receive God's inheritance properly.

1 Corinthians 12:7 says, "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good." The Holy Spirit gives us a message of wisdom, a message of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, power to perform miracles, prophesy, distinguishing between spirits, to speak in tongues, and to interpret tongues, which we need to live in this world. He shares these gifts with each of us as the Holy Spirit desires (1 Corinthians 12:8-11).

Isn't God the Father, in whom we believe, very kind? As children of God by faith, we are not yet fit to be matured as citizens of heaven in many situations. Although we have been "justified by faith," we are not yet perfect toward the Holy God. For our immaturity, God gives us gifts through the Holy Spirit. This gift is from heaven and is a great blessing for our life in this world. We can receive the inheritance of the Kingdom of God here and now through the Holy Spirit. We will learn more about the Holy Spirit in Romans 8.

I had not had much experience of receiving the Holy Spirit's guidance. I think I had generally made my own decisions and made things within the bounds of common sense. Many things seemed to go well, but there were also failures. I had not consulted with the Holy Spirit in many situations because I had been living my life centered on myself. However, at these days, I became aware of the Holy Spirit and began to pray. I pray that all of us will pay attention to the work of the Holy Spirit and live our lives guided step by step with the Holy Spirit.

Summary. There are two things that will inherit the Kingdom of God. We Christians will inherit the Kingdom of God that will be completed when Jesus Christ eventually returns. The other is that we receive the reign of the Kingdom of God when we live in this world. And it is the Holy Spirit that we inherit by faith. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we will live like citizens of the Kingdom of God in this sinful world.

Let's pray.

Beloved Heavenly Father. Thank you for recognizing us as righteous and accepting us as your children. We thank you for this blessing alone, but we also thank you for the blessing of receiving the Kingdom of God as our inheritance. Please let the Holy Spirit, who is in us now, teach us and guide us as to what the Kingdom of God is. Please also bless us with blessings in heaven and on earth. Please give wisdom to us to solve our problems, to our brothers and sisters who are facing various problems such as illness, financial problems, human relations such as discord with family members, legal problems such as a trial, and so on. Please guide us, Holy Spirit, so that we will not be defeated by these problems and can live bravely as citizens of heaven. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.