

An Inheritance of Love

November 2019 (3 - 30 November)



During the month of November we are going to think about the importance of inheritance in relation to our identity and how we view ourselves — and how we behave because of what we have inherited. The story of the history of the people of Israel is based on a belief that God longs to bless all the people of the earth including his creation. The small, seemingly insignificant, tribal community of Israel being God's choice to be the light bearer for all the peoples of the world.

God chooses those who have nothing, and are thought of by others as having nothing, to be his agents. Throughout scripture it is the humble, and insignificant, he raises up to become the gift bearers to the world. Everyone now has the promise of an inheritance that goes beyond time into eternity. This is the inheritance story of the Old Testament.

In our readings of scripture this month God is tempted to turn his face away from his creation. Yet his great love for us has meant that he has implemented his redemption plan thought out before the world was created.

The Old Testament readings are centred on the story of Israel's disobedience and God's mercy. While the New Testament readings seek to explain the nature of God's grace towards his creation and the legacy of the death and resurrection of Jesus for all believers.

Each week of the theme runs Sunday-Saturday and has its own subtheme, which contains daily Bible readings and thought triggers.

Inheritance is what you give away to others in life rather than what you leave in death (03 November)

We are going to invite our Sanctuary First community and writers to share family stories of bravery and compassion during the week leading up to Remembrance Sunday. The writer for week 1 is invited to explore the influence we all have on our children and friends and work colleagues, as we consider the effect our inheritance has had on us.

How we treat people matters. Often our actions are the real legacy we leave as our inheritance. A good name doesn't mean that we are without fault, but it might mean we are big enough to face up to the consequences of our actions, especially when we make mistakes. Do we own up and make restitution? What is remembered after all is said and done, is the quality of our character, not the quantity of our acquisitions.

1. Luke 19:1-10
 2. Psalm 50
 3. Habakkuk 3:1-16
 4. Habakkuk 3:17-19
 5. Zechariah 1:1-17
 6. Acts 24:10-23
 7. Haggai 1:1-15
1. **Dealing with honesty...** Zacchaeus a true Son of Abraham finding his true inheritance.
 2. **Dealing with wickedness.** Safeguarding the inheritance of faith.
 3. **Dealing with injustice.** Justice is not simply a forlorn hope — it is a promised reality. We are called to strengthen our resolve to live in such a way that we become the inheritors of life that is eternal.
 4. **Dealing with integrity.** What is the inheritance of Grace? It is not about wealth and possessions. It is about faithfulness to our calling. It is about an unswerving belief that whatever befalls us, God is with us.
 5. **Dealing with betrayal and unfaithfulness.** A call to return to the God of their ancestors. Can you inherit unfaithfulness? Could Zechariah be addressing our present generation who know little about the faith of previous generations? How do you return to the God of your ancestors without returning to their patterns of unfaithfulness?
 6. **Dealing with uncertainty.** Christian faith is all about a journey of discovery. Our inheritance is not given to us as a lump sum at one point in time rather it is gradually revealed to us on the way (as people of The Way) as Paul discovered.
 7. **Dealing with commitment.** An invitation to the people of God to consider the importance of the worship of almighty God and their own personal comfort. It is an invitation to commit to giving something beautiful to God.

A promised presence (10 November)

The writer for this week will write about the promised presence of the Holy Spirit. The reflections will show how he enables us to cope with the challenges of living for Christ in a world in which we are often faced with evil, temptation, and doubt.

This particular week falls into the week of *Remembrance* here in the UK. The writer is invited to make us aware of the various ways in which the Holy Spirit brings comfort healing and hope into our lives at times of great trauma and sadness. As we reflect on the past follies of war we remember the courage of those who have endured so much in order to secure a lasting legacy of justice and fairness in our world.

1. Psalm 98

2. 2 Peter 1:16-19

3. John 1: 1-18

4. Zechariah 8: 1-13

5. 1 Samuel 28: 3-19

6. 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4

7. Luke 17: 20-37

1. **Inheriting a new soundtrack.** Music is part of the Christian inheritance. We often read of God inviting his people to make a joyful noise. While we take time to remember all those who lost their lives in the two great world wars and also in many theatres of conflict since then: today's reading invites us to sing a new song to the Lord. The inheritance of war can be hate and revenge or we can create a new song with a new tune to influence a new generation to see the futility of guns and bombs
2. **Inheriting a new mindset.** The Epistle reading from Peter implies that each generation must await for the 'morning star', the realisation of faith to dawn in their own hearts. Then we can shout for joy.
3. **Inheriting a new relationship** God sent his son into the world.
4. **Inheriting a new hope.** The God of scripture is a God of great love who cannot abandon his creation.
5. **Inheriting a new self identity.** Scripture seems to point to a spiritual law that is a reality: actions have consequences. The story of the witch at Endor and Saul reminds us that God is not mocked — what you sow you reap.
6. **Inheriting the glory of God through suffering.** Paul recognises the suffering that believers are enduring. Christians are still persecuted today.
7. **Inheriting the Kingdom.** Jesus is reminding his disciples that the Kingdom of God is here among us. The message is that we need to be prepared for the coming glory of God.

Purpose and character (17 November)

The writer in week 3 will write seven reflections and prayers to enable us to understand the purposes of an inheritance. Using the scriptures below leads us to consider there is an inheritance of character that we pass on to others that is seen in our work ethic, or by the way we treat others.

1. Isaiah 12:1-6

1. **The inheritance beyond wealth.** Isaiah points to a day when all will be well, a day when all our struggles will be over. This is our inheritance. Sometimes we get glimpses of it in the here and now.

2. Psalm 141

2. **The inheritance of a good example.** The inheritance of the Kingdom is the daily presence of the Holy Spirit living in the life of the believer. This passage remind us of the internal struggle to allow our old nature to die. We must not feed it with thoughts that make us bitter and resentful.

3. 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1

3. **The inheritance of practical Christianity.** Integrity and openness are at the heart of Christian living. Here Paul seeks to give a very practical example of how to live out the doctrine of grace. We are called to be practitioners of our inheritance.

4. Psalm 118:1-14

4. **The inheritance of love.** Nothing in this life stays the same or indeed lasts. Only the love of God endures forever.

5. Hebrews 9: 23-28

5. **Jesus our benefactor.** Jesus is the one who helps us discover peace with God because of the immensity of his actions. The cross is the crossroads between heaven and earth. This is an opportunity to explore how the Advent season is a human response to being aware that Love has truly visited our lives and planet through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

6. 1 Peter 1:3-9

6. **A sustaining inheritance.** In times of great trouble we can rest assured that God is our refuge and strength. As Peter points out in the midst of all the suffering and difficulty we need to hold on to the inheritance we have received in Christ. The promise is that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

7. Luke 18:15-17

7. **An inheritance only for children.** Just as a child trusts and believes in the impossible when told all will be well in the face of difficulty. So those who are of God's Kingdom need to be childlike in trusting God. We have a promised inheritance — we will survive.

A majestic inheritance (24 November)

The writer in week 4 will write seven reflections and prayers to enable us to prepare for Advent. Christ the King Sunday seeks to help us understand the majesty and grace of King Jesus our Redeemer and Lord. He is the one who is our benefactor and helper. These seven reflections and prayers centre around our worshipful response to all that we have been given as our inheritance in Christ.

1. Jeremiah

23:1-6

(see also
Colossians
1:11-20)

2. Revelation

21:22-27

3. Jeremiah

30:18-21

4. Luke 1:1-4

5. Daniel

9:15-19 (see
also *James*
4:7-10)

6. Hebrews

11: 1-7

7. Matthew

24:1-14

1. **Our Incredible Benefactor.** Jesus is the great Shepherd King. The parable Jesus told of the lost sheep and the shepherd, echoes this Jeremiah passage. Colossians further extols the glory of Jesus as the image of the invisible nature of God. This is the vast extent of the power and love of the one who has redeemed us.
2. **The inheritance of no church buildings...** How can we ever grasp that which is beyond our understanding? We have been gathered into something that is bigger and greater and more lasting than we could ever imagine. The all pervading love of God. A love that will not and cannot be contained or shaped in a building made with human hands.
3. **Inheritance of worship and merrymaking.** An inspiration to begin to explore joyful and alternative ways to worship God and enjoy the company of God's people.
4. **A faithful story inherited.** Worship is all about celebrating the faithful story of our inheritance. God's people in every generation using music and dance and stories, words and poetry have told and retold to succeeding generations the rich inheritance we have as followers of Jesus. Let us continue to be creative in the ways we tell our stories deliverance and salvation.
5. **An inheritance restored** When we think all is lost in the church, or our personal lives, and all our hopes for renewal have faded — this passage reminds us that God listens to broken and humble people. In this reflection we are forced to ask where is the place for confession and true repentance in churches across the world today? Where is it found in our personal lives?
6. **The inheritance of faith.** The passage reminds us of the central part that faith plays in our lives. Faith drives us to action to bring about that which is thought to be impossible... justice, mercy and compassion through the coming Kingdom of God.
7. **The inheritance is coming, wait...** Advent is a time of waiting. The reading sets out to warn the believer that as surely as night follows day so the Kingdom of God will come. But no one can tell when this dawn will come. We must live our lives with expectancy. Ready to do the will of the master.