

Eye-Opening Grace for Adopted Heirs of Glorious Riches (Ephesians 1:11-18)

Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at Gold Country Baptist Church on January 30, 2011

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In west Texas there is a famous oil field known as the Yates pool. During the depression this field was a sheep ranch, owned by a man named Yates. Mr. Yates was not able to make enough money on his ranching operation to pay the principal and interest on the mortgage, so he was in danger of losing his ranch. With little money for clothes or food, his family, like many others, had to live on a government subsidy. Day after day, as he grazed his sheep over those rolling west Texas hills, he was no doubt greatly troubled about how he would be able to pay his bills.

Then a seismographic crew from an oil company came into the area and told Mr. Yates that there might be oil on his land. They asked permission to drill a wildcat well, and he signed a lease. At 1,115 feet they struck a huge oil reserve, giving 80,000 barrels a day. In fact, thirty years after the discovery, a government test of one of the wells showed that it still could flow 125,000 barrels of oil a day. And Mr. Yates owned it all. The day he purchased the land he received the oil and mineral rights. Yet, he was living on relief. A multimillionaire living in poverty: What was the problem? He did not know the oil was there. He owned it, but he [was] like many Christians today who don't realize how rich they are in Christ.

Charles Spurgeon told a similar story. He said he was visiting an elderly woman ... His attention was drawn to a framed document on the wall of her room, and he asked her about it. She said that years before, she had cared for an aged gentleman, and before he had died, he had written out a little note of appreciation to her followed by his signature. He had shortly afterwards died [she didn't know what it said] ... Spurgeon was allowed to borrow the paper. When he took it to the bank, they [said] "We've been wondering to whom the old gentleman left his money." She [had his massive inheritance], but she had been living like a beggar.¹

Our text today is like the classic story of a pauper in poverty who finds out he is actually a prince, that he's the son of the king. Think how different each of those might have lived all those years if they only knew the riches of the glory they'd been given. Paul prays in Eph. 1:18 for eyes to be opened spiritually to who we are in Christ and to the riches of the glory of what God has given, so we would live differently, as a child of the King, as an heir of His inheritance

Paul is praying in Ephesians 1 for Christians who don't realize how rich they are in Christ and so they don't live like it. Paul prays they come to **the realization and appropriation** of these riches and blessings, because Paul knows how different life can be when one sees and understands the riches he has in Christ. I want us to consider this text in its context and flow, which starts in v. 11. Notice as I read "inheritance" repeated 3x and "glory" 3x:

¹¹also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, ¹²to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory. ¹³In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴who is given as a [guarantee] of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

¹⁵For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; ¹⁷that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. ¹⁸I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are **the riches of the glory of His inheritance** in the saints

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord, open the eyes of my heart
I want to see You. I want to see You. To see You high and lifted up.
Shining in the light of Your glory ...

Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face
And the things on earth grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace

Paul knew first-hand his need for God to open his eyes to spiritual truth because he spent many years a Pharisee of Pharisees, learning and studying Scriptures but missing its whole point and true glory. This language from v. 18 of God opening eyes in relation to glory and the inheritance of the saints Paul knew in his own testimony in Acts 26. Paul tells King Agrippa he was once spiritually blind, but the Lord opened his eyes to His glory and called Paul **“to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified [another form of word “saints” in Ephesians 1:18]**

In Colossians 1:12, Paul use similar language: **“the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.”**

In Ephesians 1:11, inheritance is spoken of in past tense of what we already have obtained, but v. 14 speaks of it in a future tense as well, along with the present down-payment from God’s Spirit, as the first installment, with still much more in the future guaranteed. The glorious riches and resources of v. 18 are not just for us after we die; they are for us in this life, not physical wealth, but spiritual like 2 Cor 6:10 **“rich as having nothing but possessing everything”**

The language of inheritance in Eph. 1 has to do with possession. In Jewish OT culture, usually the firstborn son received inheritance as a possession when his dad died. If a man had no son for an heir, it was a great dilemma. A child with no father had great difficulty. The fatherless orphan with no estate sometimes became enslaved to work for another just to make ends meet, or worse.

In the culture Paul is writing to, the hopeless and fatherless could be adopted (1:5), even a slave could be made an heir. Roman law allowed inheritance to be shared among fellow-heirs / joint-heirs. All rights and privileges of a firstborn son applied to adopted sons, and *the book of Romans*, chapter 8, applies this spiritual truth to all adopted children of God who are all heirs of all Christ is heir of, or to use the words of Eph 1:3 **“every spiritual blessing...in Christ.”**

Scott and Ruthy Clark are missionaries our church supports in Africa. You may know they adopted from Africa 2 children, Moses and Miriam, who some of you have met. Their children are now grown and out of the home here in the US and their biological daughter Carissa is now a missionary we support. My wife and I talked with the Clarks about their adoption experience.

One of the things they ran into in Cameroon was the locals there as they would talk about coming to the US on furlough for a year, the Cameroon people would ask “who are you going to leave the African kids with here in Africa?” Their answer “well, of course, we’re bringing them with us, they are our real children as much as Carissa is. We *adopted* them.” But, you see, not every culture fully understands this concept (including some in America) but what helped the people in Cameroon finally understand was Scott and Ruthy explaining “the inheritance is going to Moses and Miriam the same as Carissa.” For that culture, that’s what opened their eyes to see and say “Oh ... they’re *really your children* then!”

That’s what Paul wanted his culture to see as well. The language of inheritance is supposed to open our eyes (v. 18) to our riches as well as the reality of adoption (v. 5). We’re really God’s children!

1 John 3:1 (NAS) *See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are [!!]*

We need to see it, beloved. We need eyes opened to see it. Behold what manner of love the Father has given unto us, not just to call us children, but we really are His children, and all the privileges and blessings that entails! We need to see this, and speak like this, and live like we really are children of the King and heirs of glory! NIV: ¹ *How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!*

Paul prays in Eph. 1:18 God would open eyes to see this reality and the riches of the glorious inheritance coming with it. He wants us to see what we were before Christ, and who we are in Christ, before he tells us how we should live for Christ (ch. 4-6). If you really see this and really believe this and really think of this as you live your life as a child of the King, it can change everything. Paul wants us to grasp this reality before he tells us *what to do* later in Ephesians 4-6. He wants us first to understand in chapters 1-3 *who we are in Christ, and what God has done for us His Sons in Him.*

Charles Spurgeon: ‘Did you ever think what a high honor it is to be called a son of God? Suppose a judge of the land should have before him some traitor who was about to be condemned to die. Suppose that equity and law demanded that the wretch should shed his blood by some terrible punishment. But suppose it were possible for the judge to step from his throne and to say, “Rebel you are guilty, but I have found out a way whereby I can forgive your rebellions—man, you are pardoned!” There is a flush of joy upon his cheek. “Man, you are made rich!—see, there is wealth!” Another smile passes over the countenance. “Man, you are made so strong that you shall be able to resist all your enemies!” He rejoices again. “Man,” says the judge at last, “you are made a prince! You are adopted into the royal family and you shall one day wear a crown. You are now as much the son of God as you are the son of your own father.” You can conceive the poor creature fainting with joy at such a thought, that he whose neck was just ready for the halter should have his head now ready for a crown—that he who expected to be clothed in [a black robe] and taken away to death, is now to be exalted and clothed in robes of honor. ... We do not know the greatness of adoption yet. Yes, I believe that even in eternity we shall scarce be able to measure the infinite depth of the love of God in that one blessing of “adoption by Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.”²

Each time the word adoption is used in the NT, heir / inheritance is used nearby in context. Inheritance in v.18 links back to adoption in v. 5. For adoption to occur for slaves, redemption had to take place, which v. 7 describes. King Jesus by His blood bought us back from the slave market of sin and made us sons who in v. 7-8 the Father lavishes riches on, as part of His inheritance (v. 11, 18).

So what are some of the riches of the glorious inheritance in v. 18?

⁷*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace* ⁸*which He lavished on us, in all wisdom and insight, making known to us ...*

So we need to keep in mind *riches of glory* are spiritual resources for every need we have, including practical physical needs as well: Philippians 4:19 *And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.* [not our greeds, but needs]

Look back at Galatians 4 for another application. We *are* slaves, but God lets us come to Him in prayer as a child to the lap of His papa (Abba in Aramic)

⁴ *But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,* ⁵ *so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.* ⁶ *Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"* ⁷ *Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir ...*

Through God all His children are heirs of His Son's inheritance by virtue of what the Only Begotten Son has done for adopted sons. We not only get the same inheritance, we get the same intimacy! Russ Moore in *Adopted for Life* helps us understand inheritance language in biblical culture, which our modern culture can miss:

'I don't know about you, but inheritance was something I, growing up in my working-class world, never imagined would apply to me. An inheritance was something rich people left for their kids – for the spoiled trust-fund heir who might speed around Malibu in their sports cars. It's hard of us to imagine the place of inheritance in the world in which our Bible was first revealed.

In the world of the Bible, one's identity and one's vocation are all bound up in who one's father is. Men are called "son of" all their lives (for instance, "the sons of Zebedee" or "Joshua, son of Nun"). There are no guidance counselors in ancient Canaan or first-century Capernaum, helping "teenagers" determine what they want "to be" when they "grow up." A young man watches his father, learns from him, and follows in his vocational steps. This is why "*the sons of Zebedee*" are right there with their father when Jesus finds them, "*in their boat mending the nets*" (Mark 1:19-20).

The inheritance was the engine of survival [and society], passed from father to son, an economic pact between generations. To be an orphan was to lose [or to have no] inheritance ... [in the beginning, God gave the whole world as a gift to His first children in Genesis to] rule and serve under their Father. It was all to be ours. The [sin] in the garden, though, turned the universe into an orphanage – the heirs were gone ... the whole universe is now an orphanage [spiritually].

But then there's Jesus. When we were still orphans, Christ became a substitute orphan for us [though fatherless humanly, He was adopted by Joseph, and willing to be forsaken by His heavenly father on the cross, taking] on the humiliation of a slave and the horror of death (Phil. 2:6-8). Jesus walked to that far country with us, even to the depths of the hog pen that we'd made our home'³

As I read Russ Moore's book, I couldn't help but think of the prodigal son forfeiting his father's inheritance for pig's leftovers. Think of Esau trading his inherited birth-right for a bowl of stew. Think of the Israelites on their way to their inheritance in the Promised Land, longing to be slaves back in Egypt again. I think of Russ Moore's adoption story, telling his new sons "you won't miss the orphanage..." but his new sons are terrified in that car, reaching back to the only thing they knew, not yet trusting their new father. Think of us, heirs of glory but you could never tell it by the way many of us act, preferring our former spiritual slavery or orphanage to His glorious riches. Then think of Christ, willing to trade the riches and glory of heavenly inheritance to live like a lowly slave on this earth to save us despite, and despite our ingratitude, he gives us His inheritance. He still saves us as we grumble all the way to glory. Can we see it?

Paul in 2 Corinthians 8:9 says "*you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.*"

From rags to riches spiritually. We had nothing to offer, our most righteous deeds were filthy rags, but He exchanges them for riches.

He takes our trash and gives us His treasure, a trade called grace! He takes our wretchedness and exchanges it with His righteousness and He takes our iniquity on the cross and gives us His inheritance!

Christ forsaken by His Father so we can be adopted by His Father and so that everything the Father gave Him He can share with us! Are we beginning to have the eyes of our heart opened to grace, the magnitude, massiveness of God's Riches At Christ's Expense?

Christ lays aside His princely robes and heavenly crown and glory and comes to this cursed planet to save people who are under the curse of the law for their sin, some cursing Christ as He dies for sin.

Galatians 3:13 *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"—¹⁴ in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith ...*

v. 26 "*you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus*

v. 29 *And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.*

You can study this concept further in Gal. 3 later. The point: if we're spiritual descendants of Abraham by having the same faith in the Lord that he had, we are heirs to the same spiritual promises.

Gal. 3:16 links the promises to Abraham and His seed to Christ.

“Father Abraham had many sons, had many sons had Father Abraham. I am one of them, and so are you, if Jesus is your Lord.” This is spiritually tied to all God the Father does for God the Son and all His fellow joint-heirs.

In Romans 4:16 Paul says of salvation: ¹⁶ *For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so **that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants**, not only to those who are of the Law [Jews legally], but also to those who are **of the faith of Abraham**, who is the father of us all, ¹⁷ (as it is written, “**A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU**”)*

In other words Abraham’s promised inheritance wasn’t just earthly or ethnically, it’s also for a multi-ethnic adopted family eternally. Not just about a promised land or the nation of Israel, the spiritual promise of the gospel is for all nations or people trusting in Christ and the inheritance for believers goes far beyond land or this life. Look at v. 13, this is amazing: “...*the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that **he would be heir of the world** ...*” – stop there.

The inheritance, for Abraham and for those with his faith, is much bigger than being an *heir of wealth*, v. 13 says “*heir of **the world!***” Unbelieving Jews and Muslims both claim Abraham as their father and the land of Israel as theirs, but for any Jews or Muslims who convert to Christ, lasting peace is theirs and a promise way bigger than real estate in Palestine or the Promised Land—it’s the planet! “*Heir of **the world.***” Yes, there were and are promises to ethnic children of Abraham, but spiritual children of Abraham, believers in Christ, unbelievably will inherit more than the most faithful OT saint ever got to see!

v. 13 “*heir of **the world!***”! Psalm 37 says: *the righteous inherit **the earth.***

Christ’s first sermon begins with inheritance language all over it:

“*for theirs is the kingdom ... they shall be called sons of God ... rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven ...the meek inherit the earth*” - not just Canaan, the cosmos! Far more than a kingdom in Israel, if Jews or Gentiles will only bow to King Jesus, theirs is the kingdom, they inherit a kingdom over the whole earth!

That’s not to minimize the inheritance God promised the nation of Israel, but it is to maximize the bigger biblical scope of the seed of Abraham spiritually ultimately (first line of NT calls Jesus “Son of Abraham” – He is the culmination of the covenants and promises).

When Jesus died on the cross, OT law required they didn’t leave a body hanging accursed overnight. They must bury him same day. Deuteronomy 21:23 explains: “*so that you do not defile **your land** which the LORD your God gives you as **an inheritance.***”

So the Messiah is buried in this land He had given the nation Israel as their inheritance, and Acts 4 applies Psalm 2 to the crucifixion. Psalm 2 has God the Father speaking to Messiah of His inheritance to come: “*You are **my Son** ... I will surely give **the nations as your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as your possession.***”

When God resurrects His Son from His burial place in the land of the inheritance of the nation Israel, He gives to Jesus all the nations as inheritance. Jesus rises from His grave in the earth to receive the very ends of the earth as His possession. He's got the whole world.

The world / nations Christ was heir to, and the amazing truth of adoption into His family (Rom. 8:13-16) is that God already had an heir whom He had already promised all these things to, He didn't need to adopt children for heirs, but He did! Romans 8:15 says He adopted us, v. 16 says we're His children and v. 17 says if children we're heirs also, *fellow heirs with Christ*.

This truth, being joint-heirs with Christ, may be the most amazing grace of all, the richest and most glorious truth of salvation. May God open our eyes to the glorious riches of the saint's inheritance.

Ezekiel 46:16 explains how a prince could share His inheritance: *"If the prince gives a gift out of his inheritance to any of his sons, it shall belong to his sons; it is their possession by inheritance.*

Now listen to Psalm 111:6 (ESV) *He has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the inheritance of the nations.*

God gave His Only Begotten Son the nations, and He turns around and gives all the other adopted sons, the nations as full joint-heirs.

In OT times, His people got a nation, in future time, all the nations. Israel's national inheritance becomes an international inheritance first given by God the Father as a gift to God the Son, the heir who shares what was bought from every tribe, tongue, people, nation. Isaiah 54 says to Israel's future redeemed remnant, regathered and repentant *"your descendants will inherit the nations"* (v. 3, NKJV).

The inheritance promises to Israel, though not realized for all of them throughout history automatically for being physical Israelites, Isaiah 54's blessings are given to those trusting Messiah of Isa 53.

And for all who have Jesus as King, whatever our ethnic origin, the inheritance we receive is even bigger than earthly things. What is possibly bigger than earth's nations/lands? Peter once asked Jesus what they'd receive who had left everything earthly to follow

Jesus answered these words, Matthew 19:29: *"everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for My name's sake, will receive many times as much [lit. "a hundred times as much"], and will inherit eternal life.*

Not just lands, Jesus said, a hundred times more lands and life! Did you know it gets even bigger than that? The poorest believer in this world, receives what's bigger than even the world. What's bigger than the world? The Kingdom of God is bigger than this world.

James 2:5 speaks of spiritual riches for spiritual heirs: *God chose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom ...*

In OT times a King might offer “up to half my kingdom is yours” – with our heavenly King, He says “the whole Kingdom is yours”!

Genesis 25:5 says “*Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac.*” That was to Abraham’s physical son, the inheritance was all the father had, and to spiritual sons of Abraham, by grace through faith in Jesus, the ultimate Son of Abraham, Son of David, Son of God, we amazingly receive for inheritance all that the Father had to give!

Joel Beeke in his great book *Heirs with Christ*, says of adoption:

‘The overarching privilege can be best summarized as *heirship*. God’s adopted children are all royal heirs apparent and coheirs with Christ (Rom. 8:16-17). [The Puritan Jeremiah Burroughs said in OT times] “Men may have many children yet but one is an heir ... But all the children of God are heirs.” Hebrews 12:23 calls them “firstborn” heirs. [Burroughs continues] “I say, whatsoever you are in the world, Jesus Christ is not an heir to more than you have an interest in. You are as certain of your salvation and glory as it is certain that Jesus Christ shall be happy forever; because you are a co-heir with Jesus Christ ... Oh, who can utter the soul-satisfying, soul-ravishing consolation there is in this ... that the same Father that is the Father of Jesus Christ is my Father!”⁴

That’s not to say there’s no suffering on the way to the inheritance. Romans 8:17 explains we suffer with Christ before we share with Him. Christ passed through suffering and death before, so will we.

John Piper explains trials on the path to glory are for ‘knocking the props of self-reliance (and trust in things and people) out from under us, and making us rely more on God (see 2 Cor. 1:8-9). If there were no afflictions and difficulties and troubles and pain, our fallen hearts would fall ever more deeply in love with the comforts and securities and pleasures of this world instead of falling more deeply in love with our inheritance beyond this world ... Suffering is appointed for us in this life as a great mercy to keep us from loving this world more than we should and to make us rely on God

... There is no other way. Do not begrudge them. They are hard to bear. I know they are. But if you keep your inheritance before you, and if God gives you the grace to see what Paul calls “*the riches of the glory of his inheritance*” (Ephesians 1:18), then will you not say with the apostle [also in Romans 8:18], “*I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us*”?

Picture this life as a journey on your way to receive a spectacular inheritance. It will protect you from idolatry and make all your burdens lighter, and quiet all your murmurings. Here's the way the old John Newton put it:

Suppose a man was going to New York to take possession of a large estate ... and his [carriage] should break down a mile before he got to the city, which obliged him to walk the rest of the way; what a fool we should think him, if we saw him ringing his hands, and blubbering out all the remaining mile, “My [carriage] is broken! My [carriage] is broken!”⁵

Newton says “what would you think of such a man?” And that’s what we are. We’re on our last mile on our way ... to inherit the universe, and we murmur. This is why grumbling and murmuring is so offensive to God! And if we would just understand what it means to be adopted, and what it means to be an heir of our Father, I don’t think we’d grumble so much on the way ...

...[if you're guilty, pray] forgive our murmuring. We are so guilty of belittling our inheritance with our murmuring about our broken carriages. Forgive us, Father, as a church, families, single people, young old ... we're a murmuring people. We scarcely value the infinitely valuable. Have mercy upon us and open our hearts that we might see with the eyes of our heart ... the exceeding greatness of the richness of the glory of our inheritance.'⁶

Why should the children of a King Go mourning all their days?
Great Comforter! descend and bring Some tokens of your grace.
Dost thou not dwell in all the saints, And seal the heirs of heav'n?
When wilt thou banish my complaints, And show my sins forgiv'n?
Assure my conscience of her part In the Redeemer's blood
And bear thy witness with my heart, That I am born of God.
Thou art the earnest of his love, The pledge of joys to come ...⁷

Our inheritance is bigger than a nation, and even all the nations.

In Rev 2:26, Jesus promises *'He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS;'²⁷ AND HE SHALL RULE THEM ... as I also have received authority from My Father;'²⁸ and I will give him the morning star.*

Listen, I'm not even sure I know exactly what that means, but it gets even bigger and better than that. What could be even higher?

Rev. 5:9-10 (NKJV) ⁹And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy ... For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God ... ¹⁰And **have made us kings ...and we shall reign on the earth.**"
2 Timothy 2:12 says "... we shall also **reign with Him.**"

Listen to the end of the famous words in Mt 25:21 *Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'* [NKJV "I will make you ruler over many things"; ESV "I will set you over much"]
v. 34 *"Then the King [Jesus] will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

And in that kingdom, there's something even greater we inherit. What could possibly be greater, you say, than all of these things?

In Revelation 3:21, listen to what King Jesus says: *"He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."*

But brothers and sisters in Christ, adopted siblings here today, it doesn't stop here! It gets even bigger and better than that! What could be bigger or better than reigning in that kingdom to come? What could exceed even this universe? How about a newer, better universe!

Revelation 20 says *"they reigned with Christ a thousand years..."* but that's not the end.

Revelation 21:1 *"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away ...*

If you read through Romans 8:18-25, the whole creation is waiting for this adoption completion

Revelation 21:7 “*He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.*”

The last 2 chapters of the Bible explain how on that day finally and fully our eyes will be enlightened to see the riches of the glory of our inheritance

Revelation 22:5 “... *and they shall reign forever and ever.*”

“Eye hath not seen nor hath ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man what the Lord has prepared ...” – it’s even better than we can imagine, things unable to mention, Paul said in 2 Cor.

Will you believe me if I say it gets even bigger and better? There are a lot of things in this heavens and earth and the one to come, we don’t even know what “all things” are or will be, but whatever they are, when Romans 8:17 calls us joint-heirs with Christ, Heb. 1:2 says God the Son who made the world is “*heir of all things.*” Just in case anything we don’t know about out there or haven’t mentioned yet, *all things in any universe* He is heir to; so are we!

1 Cor 3:21–22 (NKJV) *all things are yours: whether ... the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours.*

Romans 8:32 *He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?*

What an astonishing truth this is! And yet, that’s not all! It gets bigger still! It gets even bigger and better than this! What could possibly be bigger than this, you ask? There is nothing bigger or better than all things in this universe, or next one, right? Is there anything bigger, better than the universe? What is it? What is it?

We get God! Rom 8:17: *And if children, then heirs, heirs of God ...*

Psalms 16:5 *The LORD is ... my inheritance and my cup ...*

⁶ *... Indeed, my heritage [or inheritance] is beautiful to me.*

¹¹ *... In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.*

"A Christian's First Prayer"

Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers, p. 53

I could never have sought my happiness in your love, unless you had first loved me [Eph. 2:1-4]. Your Spirit has encouraged me by grace to seek you, has made known to me your reconciliation in Jesus, has taught me to believe it, has helped me to take you for my God and portion. [another OT word for “inheritance” in 1:18]

May he grant me to grow in the knowledge and experience of your love [1:17], and walk in it all the way to glory. Blessed forever be your fatherly affection [v. 3], which chose me to be one of your children [v. 4] by faith in Jesus:

I thank you for giving me the desire to live as such. In Jesus, my brother, I have my new birth, every restraining power, every renewing grace. It is by your Spirit I call you Father, believe in you, love you; strengthen me inwardly for every purpose of my Christian life; let the Spirit continually reveal to me my interest in Christ, and open to me the riches of your love in him [like v. 18];

May he abide in me that I may know my union with Jesus, and enter into constant fellowship with him; by the Spirit may I daily live to you, rejoice in your love, find it the same to me as to your Son, and become rooted and grounded in it as a house on a rock;

I know but little - increase my knowledge of your love in Jesus, keep me pressing forward for clearer discoveries of it so that I may find its eternal fullness; magnify your love to me according to its greatness, and not according to [what I deserve] ..., and whatever increase you give, let it draw out greater love to you."

And all God's adopted children said ... Amen.

¹ *Parables, Etc.*, vol. 3, No. 11, January 1984, p. 4; Leslie B. Flynn, *19 Gifts of the Spirit* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1975), p. 203–204; cited by R Morgan, *Nelson's complete book of stories, illustrations, and quotes* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), p. 75.

² Charles Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Vol. 7, Sermon #360, "Adoption."

³ Russell Moore, *Adopted for Life: The Priority of Adoption for Christian Families and Churches* (Crossway, 2009), p. 44-45.

⁴ Joel Beeke, *Heirs with Christ: The Puritans on Adoption*, p. 75-76; citing Jeremiah Burroughs, *The Saint's Everlasting Happiness*, 192-94. Old English pronouns updated by me.

⁵ Richard Cecil, *Memoirs of the Rev. John Newton*, in *The Works of the Rev. John Newton*, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1985), p. 108.

⁶ <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/ask-pastor-john/what-does-it-mean-that-we-have-been-adopted-by-god#/listen/full>

<http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/sermons/children-heirs-and-fellow-sufferers#/listen/full>

⁷ *The Psalms and Hymns of Isaac Watts*.