



# Bromley Baptist Church

**PLEASE NOTE:** due to the recent government guidelines in response to the coronavirus crisis, there will be no meetings here until further notice.

## **SUNDAY AT HOME 1 22.3.20**

Readings – Romans 8 v 1-4, 1 Peter 1 v 3-9

Our readings today are all about life in the Spirit and the inheritance we have in the Spirit.

The first one came from what is possibly the most familiar chapter in Paul's letters, except perhaps for Philippians 2 or 1 Corinthians 13, but either way it's famous. It begins with this life and faith affirming statement: there is now no condemnation for those who belong to Jesus. Well, that's a relief! Sin and death and the law, even our own failings, none of them can have any power over us.

How was that possible? Well, that's a good question and one which we often struggle to comprehend. Paul tells us that it happened because God sent his Son in a body like ours in every respect, except that we are sinful and he is sinless. It was the sacrifice of that body which brought about our salvation and enabled us to have a Spirit-filled and directed life.

While the Romans passage has a focus on grace, 1 Peter talks about mercy. When we turn to 1 Peter we read about the inheritance that comes to us through the Spirit.

I wonder if you like detective stories? If you do you will know that inheritances are never a good thing. They cause all sorts of trouble and not infrequently murder. I wonder if you've ever had an inheritance, I hope it didn't cause Agatha Christie-type trouble. You sometimes hear of people who receive an inheritance from someone they don't even know exists. It is totally undeserved.

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Our inheritance is also undeserved. That's where the mercy comes in. If of course you know an inheritance is coming you might be living in a state of wonderful expectation. What will you do with it when it comes – a holiday maybe or a renovation or a nice new car? You'd want to be sure it was being kept safe while you waited expectantly for it.

Well, our inheritance is safe, safe in heaven where nothing can spoil it. We don't need to worry about something happening to us until we can receive it because God in his mighty power is able to protect us until the last day when we will finally receive it.

Verse 6 tells us to be truly glad that there's great joy ahead. What's not to be glad about? But then there's a bit of a sting in the tail. There will be trials and many trials at that. So what's that all about?

Peter tells us that it's all to test our faith. Not in the way that a new car range might be tested to destruction, but in the way that gold is tested in the fire so that it becomes pure. These trials also reach their conclusion on the day that Jesus is revealed, at which point there will be praise and glory and honour for all those who have come through the testing.

Verse 8 is a real challenge to how we live our lives. We love and trust someone we have never seen. That's what faith is all about. We put our hope in someone who lived 2000 years ago in a country many of us have never visited, who we read about in a book only compiled 300 years after his death, and whose followers were slaughtered in their droves.

But for all those 2000 years people just like us have been trusting and following through good times and bad, and still today in the face of terrible persecution. How is that possible? Because the Holy Spirit makes it possible. He is the means by which we come into a place where we will have an inheritance. What is that inheritance, the salvation of our souls? The promise of life with Jesus, not just now in an imperfect way but for ever with him in perfect love and peace.

May God bless and keep us as we trust in his promises during these difficult times.

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