

Sermon, March 6, 2022
Romans 10:8-13 & Luke 4:1-13
“Kingdom Living: Claim the Inheritance”
Rev. Dr. Brian Jones, Senior Pastor



A few weeks ago in a Bible Study, we got into a discussion about what makes humans different than other animals on earth. We discussed, because we are made in the image of God, there is a vast difference between us and other species. We can contemplate the future, we can weigh options about decisions around something we have never experienced.

One of the things that, if not separates us from other species but certainly is indicative of who we are as human beings, is that we love a good deal. We do. It's almost as if we are born wanting to barter and make a good deal with someone.

When we are very small, we barter and deal with siblings and friends over toys. No one teaches us this, we figure it out on our own. When you went to school, how many of you learned to make a good deal and traded a lunch with someone? I'll give you my baloney sandwich for your apple. I'll give you two apples for your dessert.

The entertainment industry has made millions off of this with television shows built around our desire to get something for your stuff, *Antique Road Show* and *Pawn Stars* are shows, if you think about it, are no more than a glorified lunch trade. I have a ham sandwich. Best I can do is a bag of Cheetos.

And of course the granddaddy of them all “Let’s Make a Deal. Younger generations with 8 million streaming services and the internet will not understand, but for my generation, when you were sick and stayed home from school, this is what you watched. It was great when you had a fever because you weren't sure if you were hallucinating and there was giant chicken in the room or just a lady dressed up in order to get on the show.

If you remember, the premise of the show was you could trade something you had for something better. If you have a rubber band, I will give you this prize. And then it got even better, you can trade this prize, which perhaps you hadn’t opened to see what it was for an even bigger prize, And then maybe you could take that deal and trade it in for a chance to pick something behind one of the three doors on stage,

The idea was to make the best deal you could, to get the best prize. And it was hard because you didn’t always know what you were trading or what you were trading it for. Sometimes they had a bad deal behind one of those doors. Many people traded away a vacation to Hawaii for two ostriches behind door number two. I’ll confess I didn’t understand that as a child. I thought that was a good deal, you get two ostriches. Who wouldn’t want that?

From our toys to cars to game shows, it seems as if we are born with an insatiable need to make a good deal, the best deal possible. Of course, then we must ask ourselves *how do we know tis a good deal?* What delineates a good deal from a bad one? Well, I would think that’s a fairly simple thing to define. A good deal is when you trade something that you don’t want, or need or has very little value to you for something that has more value or a greater value to you. Similarly, a bad deal is when you trade something that is of great value to you for something that is of no value. That’s a bad deal.

What type of deal would you want to make? Keep that question in the back of your mind this morning. We had a wonderful beginning to the season of Lent with our Ash Wednesday service. This morning, we begin our Lenten series “Kingdom Living” What does it mean for us to live as a Citizen of the Kingdom of God?

And so we turn to our Gospel Lesson, Luke's account of the temptation of Jesus. Three times Satan tempts Jesus, he tempts Him to prove He is the son of God by making stones into bread, by proving to the world who He is by throwing Himself off of the top of the temple, and in the end he tempts Him with having Kingship of all the earth, essentially giving Jesus back what He came for and with the bonus of avoiding the cross and having all of the world’s sin placed upon His shoulders. Let’s think about this, adulation of the

people and no longer having to worry about others and kingship over the earth and no cross. All in all, that sounds like a really good deal.

But in the end, it's not a good deal. Why not? Because in the end, all Satan can offer Jesus is what He already has. He can't offer Him anything new. Let's have some assurance you are the Son of God, Jesus needs no such assurance. You can have adulation, Jesus needs no adulation, He knows He is loved by His heavenly father. I offer you kingship, and Jesus says I am already king. I've simply come to get back what is mine.

Let's pay close attention to that. Jesus is able to resist Satan because He knows His inheritance. And He knows that the devil has nothing good to offer Him, certainly not as good as what He already has in His heavenly father. As we look to Jesus as our definition of what it means to live as a citizen of the Kingdom of God, let us not miss this important point. A citizen claims their inheritance and knows that whatever Satan offers us is either something we already have or a pale substitute, at best. When a citizen of the Kingdom of God knows their inheritance, they are able to discern a good deal from a bad one.

I know this to be true in my life. Anytime I have been tempted to not live as God calls me to live, I've been tempted with something I already have or a pale substitute for what God offers me. And when I've given in, and I'm sure it's true for you, as well, it's never satisfying, it never makes us happy, and it always happens when we lose sight of our inheritance.

It is simply heartbreaking to see the children God turn their back on their inheritance and take the bad deal. Refuse to forgive that person because that's one of the ways we can gain power in a disagreement. But God has already given me power over a disagreement by being able to forgive and walk away. I've already been given something better than resentment. Follow me, and I'll give you the desires of your heart. But I already have them. My desire is to grow closer to Jesus and be made in his image. Nothing you can offer me compares to what I have in Christ. We have already been made Kings and queens. As we noted last week, God has already promised us the riches of heaven. What more could I possibly want? When has giving into sin and to Satan ever made me happy? It's never been a good deal.

Do you know your inheritance? You are a citizen of the Kingdom of God. I wonder when the church will not only realize this but begin to live it out. The more we see and treasure the riches of our inheritance, the less power and strength temptation has over us.

I think of churches all over the world who face martyrdom for their faith and they refuse to stop meeting, they refuse to stop evangelizing, they refuse to stop proclaiming the word of God even in the face of death? Why, because they know their inheritance, and they know that whatever a political regime offers them, they already have. Peace? What's the world's peace in comparison to the peace of Christ. Freedom? What is

the world's freedom so easily taken away in comparison to the freedom found in Christ? The applause and appreciation of a government? What is such noise in comparison to the throng of heaven applauding as we enter the gates of heaven to hear the voice of the eternal one shouting and clapping *well done my good and faithful servant*.

You are a citizen of the kingdom of God. So let me ask you again, do you know your inheritance? Do you claim it? What has the world to offer you in comparison to the riches God has for us? His morning, we will celebrate the sacrament of communion. It's an opportunity to be thankful we have been made a part of the Kingdom of God. I want to encourage you to claim your inheritance. To resist temptation, to live as a citizen of God's Kingdom. Know a good deal when you see one. And celebrate. Amen.