

1 Peter 1:3-9
John 20:19-31

OUR INHERITANCE

Many TV shows, movies and books feature dramatic
(or sometimes comedic) arguments about a deceased person's will.

When the will is read, it's personal, it's political, it's emotional.

Some people receive more than expected,
while others receive much less than they hoped for,
sometimes even getting *nothing*.

Family relationships can turn to feuds with long-standing outrage.

It reminds me of kids fighting over toys so insistently
that they end up breaking the toys, and then no one can enjoy them!

We read in our prayer from Psalm 16: "I have a goodly heritage",
which is our blessed relationship with God.

And in 1st Peter, speaking of God the Father,
"By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading,
and kept in heaven" for us.

Because we believe in Jesus and his resurrection from the dead,
we have become his sisters and brothers and thereby his co-heirs
(ref. Romans 8:17) of God's kingdom.

And as 1st Peter said, that inheritance is perfect; it cannot perish;
it cannot be tainted and it will never fade.

On the other hand, as human beings prone to doubts and fears,
we need to remember the beautiful lesson of “doubting Thomas”.

It wasn't enough for that disciple, despite his long time together
with the others, to believe them about Jesus coming to see them
and that he was alive again.

No, this very practical and skeptical man needed to not only *see* Jesus
with his own eyes but also to touch his wounds.

Today we would probably say Thomas was a scientist.

When Jesus materializes in the locked room again,

Thomas doesn't seem to be particularly impressed by the miracle
that he walked through the wall, but Thomas is blown away
by the proof of Jesus' wounded hands and side.

He proclaims, “My Lord and my God!”

Here's the most important lesson for us, to inspire us
to continue to spread the Good News—by phone, text, email and
snail mail while we are locked in our homes:

Jesus says others who have not seen Jesus with their own eyes
are more greatly blessed than Thomas,

because the others came to believe that he is Lord and Savior
with no tangible proof.

Sisters and brothers, we are among those blessed “others”.

The trials of our current times may, for many, also lead to angry challenges
against God.

People always want to know why terrible things happen.

Maybe you remember the very successful book

by Rabbi Harold Kushner, “When Bad Things Happen to Good People”.

He had very personal reasons for wrestling with the subject, both theologically and philosophically.

As a rabbi, he often had to deal with his congregants’ personal trials and anguish, and he himself saw one of his own children diagnosed with an incurable, terminal illness.

Many struggle to hold on tightly to their faith in such times.

We need to remind ourselves and each other to return to the Bible where we find many promises from God, particularly Jesus telling his disciples, “Fear not for I am always with you.”

Interestingly, there are 365 “fear not” verses in the Bible—one for each day of the year, when we think about it.

Look at the terrible suffering Jesus experienced for us, to save us from our sins and to protect us with his own righteousness.

Even he went to God the Father in prayer to ask if the event might be cancelled, but even as he prayed he realized:

“Yet not what I want but what you want!”

Is our inheritance being Lord and Savior of the world?

Certainly not.

But we inherit with our Lord Jesus the full blessing and all the riches of God’s kingdom.

We pray:

Wherever we are:

LORD God, you are our Creator.

Lord Jesus, you are our Savior.

You bless us with comfort, encouragement and healing.

And we know you watch over our treasures in heaven.

We thank you, we glorify you, we worship you,

and we count on you, especially during these devastating times,

to bless us with continuing faith and health.

In your precious name we pray,

Amen.