

(Play RESPECT by Aretha Franklin)

Even if you didn't know this song before, you probably heard it in the last month after Aretha Franklin, the Queen of Soul died. Because she was one of the best-selling musical artists of all time, her net worth at the time of her death is reported to be around \$80 million. The good news is this money should go to her heir's. The bad news is Aretha didn't leave will, so a battle is expected over her estate from those who hope to benefit from what she left behind.

Jesus died according to God's, the Savior of Souls. Even though he did not leave behind any significant amount of material inheritance, He did leave a will. The Apostle Paul recorded it. "But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children. And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, "Abba, Father." Now you are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are his child, God has made you his heir." (Galatians 4:4-7 NLT) We don't have to hope that we will benefit from what Jesus has done, we are God's heirs. The court of heaven has already approved the will and accepted our claim.

Unfortunately people don't always take advantage of the inheritance left to them. Timothy Henry Gray didn't. He was the long lost relative of Huguette Clark and could have inherited \$19 million of her \$300 million fortune. But Gray didn't claim his inheritance. Instead he was a homeless man who died of hypothermia under a railroad overpass in Wyoming in 2012. At the time of his death Gray had a cashier's check in his wallet for "a significant amount."

People don't always take advantage of what God wants to give to us either. After leaving Egypt and getting ready to enter the Promised Land, God told Moses, "Send out men to explore the land of Canaan, the land I am giving to the Israelites." (Numbers 13:2 NLT) Note that God called Cana "the land I am giving to the Israelites." In God's mind it was theirs for the taking. Caleb said, "Let's go at once to take the land. We can certainly conquer it!" (Numbers 13:30 NLT) Joshua supported him and trusted God's promise. The other 10 didn't trust God and said, "We can't go up against them! They are stronger than we are!" (Numbers 13:31 NLT) The people listened to the ten and spent 40 years of probation in the wilderness, learning to trust God.

Joshua took over the leadership of the Israelites after those 40 years. As Joshua prepared to lead the people into the Promised Land, God said to him, "Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them." (Joshua 1:6) Joshua took God at His word and lead the people into the Promised Land. They faced challenges along the way. They had to cross the Jordan at flood stage, deal with the walls of the fortified

city of Jericho and face the resistance of the Canaanites who did not want to give up their land. But Joshua acted in faith and the land was conquered. The conclusion of the book of Joshua tells us, **“Then Joshua dismissed the people, each to their own inheritance.”** (Joshua 24:28)

Joshua acted in faith. He knew that God could and would do everything that He promised. How about us? Do we do the same? Do we act in faith? Do we trust God to keep His promises? We can. God is rich. He has everything we would ever need. We will never face a supply shortage of the good things God has for us. **“Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and on earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as the one who is over all things.”** (1 Chronicles 29:11)

Not only does God own and control all things, He also wants to bless us with good things. Paul tells us, **“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.”** (1 Corinthians 2:9) Paul also wrote, **“If God is for us, who can ever be against us? Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won’t he also give us everything else?”** (Romans 8:31-32 NLT)

God wants to give us His good and perfect gifts. That should change how we live. Need more patience, the Spirit will give it to you. Need more joy, ask for it and rejoice in all of God’s great gifts. Need more wisdom, the Holy Spirit is ready to counsel you. Check out your ancestry. You are a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ. You have a name, meaning and purpose as part of God’s family. Paul wrote, **“For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God’s children. And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God’s glory.”** (Romans 8:16-17 NLT)

We have a choice. We can live with the circumstances of our lives or we can live out our inheritance. We can think of ourselves as insignificant people lost in a sea of humanity, or we can live as children of God and heirs of God’s promises. We can give up hope because of the struggles we face in life, or we can turn to God to help us through those struggles and give us the strength that we need. We can give into depression because of a medical diagnosis or a financial setback, or we can trust God to give us eternal life and bless us in ways that we could never imagine. When life gets you down stop looking only at yourself for a moment and look to God. Don’t focus on what you don’t have. Think about what God has for you as His heir and child.

Listen to Aretha. RESPECT God, His Word and Promises. He has a will for you. He has an inheritance for you. When we come to God with our struggles remember that we will never exhaust God’s resources. We will never be turned away or ignored. We come to the Lord as His Children, heirs to His promises. Be like Joshua and take God at His Word. Amen.