

“Our Rich Inheritance”
Rev. Dr. Scott Paczkowski

Now, I was thinking about inheritance all week. You will notice it says the Karl Killinger Band [on the music stands] and Karla has a wonderful inheritance in the wonderful blessing of music and faith. Karla’s dad was Karl Killinger who had the Big Band, so Karla is receiving that inheritance and carrying through with her own inheritance by leading that band and offering music; music that has been passed down, from Karla, to her children both of whom are very involved in music. I would venture to say that most of you have been influenced by Karl and Karla. That inheritance continues go on and on, and on.

I want you to think for a moment about how important your inheritance is. Let’s take one biblical figure - one you all know: Moses. It ought to be kind of simple for these guys [pointing to the Confirmands]. Just take Moses for a moment. If Moses had not accepted his inheritance, he would never have taken on Pharaoh, and there never would have been a Passover. Because, if Moses had not taken on Pharaoh, the last one of those plagues - where God told Moses, and Moses told the people to put the blood over the doors so that the first-born would be saved - wouldn’t have happened. None of it would have occurred.

Without a Passover then - go down thousands of years later - there would have been no Jesus to go into the old city of Jerusalem, because there would not have been a Passover. And, if Jesus had not gone into the Temple, there would not have been any Crucifixion - no Resurrection. Moses didn’t know that, at the time, that the impact of what he was doing would have implications thousands of years later.

When Karl started out in music, he didn’t realize the impact it would have on his daughter, and on his granddaughter, and grandson, and all of these other guys [pointing to the band]. He just did it because he loved it; and faith, in the same way, carried out. The reason Karla is sitting here in a church doing that music, is because her mother and father were people of faith, who lived out that faith here, and lived out their music in such wonderful, powerful ways. There are so many things we have inherited.

Now, a lot of us like music. Some of us who are older really love the big band stuff and remembering dancing to it when we were young. Others of us have Jimmy Hendrix. [Laughter.] “You’re almost as old,” [Pastor Scott said, kiddingly to the congregation.] “I don’t even want to know what you guys listen to.” [Pastor Scott said to the Confirmands.]

But still, when you come to church - at least our church - you have inherited a different set of music. For example, try to have Christmas Eve without “Silent Night,” and watch all hades break loose at Christmas. We have inherited our music in our hymnody, some of which seems old and stale but, boy, you sing “Silent Night” and there are tears to this day. And it’s not just the older ones [folks], it is the young ones as well. “Amazing Grace” is another one of those hymns that brings you back and reminds you of your inheritance.

And your inheritance began in your baptism.

When Caitlyn Ann's [child baptized during worship] name was shared, we were acknowledging at the font not that just Mom and Dad are people of faith, but that God remembered her, put her name down in God's Heavenly Book and said, "Caitlyn Ann, you are part of my inheritance. You are my child." That is the covenant that God made with her.

And Mitchell Cooper [Confirmand baptized during worship], that same inheritance was given to you today, and had been given to you at whatever moment you were baptized. You were blessed and put into that marvelous book in God's Heavenly Kingdom. It is God's way of saying, you are not forgotten, child. [Scott speaking to the Confirmands] You are not forgotten. Every single one of you is remembered, loved and the inheritor of God's precious gifts.

Now what do you inherit? I'm a minister and I can tell you it ain't money. There isn't a whole lot of money that is sitting there coming down for your inheritance from God - but it is so many other things that are vastly more important.

You inherit the rich history of our Bible, and Moses is your loved one - part of your family history. Jesus is part of your family history. Each one of you has your own family history, but the biblical figures are included in it.

[Pastor Scott talks and points to several of the Confirmands individually and then addresses them together as a group]. "Your great-grandmother was one of my dearest friends from Waterloo. Your grandparents were amazing. Your grandmother was an art teacher, who was the one who taught my art teacher, going all the way back to 1981." It just goes on and on. "Your school nurse is my wife. Your mom is one of my closest friends, because she is there every Wednesday night for our class. You go down the list, and every single one of you has inherited this congregation of people who love you, who care about you, and are going to be praying for you. [Still talking to the Confirmands.] But, what I want to share with you today, in the two minutes I have left, is that you also aren't just receiving, but you are going to be giving.

"Karla received so much from her dad, but she has had the responsibility of giving it to her children and to all of the students she's had. Her dad influenced thousands of [people], not just the people he played for and who were inspired by him, but all of the people who were inspired by Karla's music, and now her daughter is a band teacher and has had bands, and is inspiring children, all because of her grandpa.

"You now aren't the just the ones receiving that inheritance but you are responsible to pass that inheritance on.

"Like Moses, if you do what God calls you to do, you will do amazing things - things that may transform the world and make it different and better than it's ever been before. But, like Moses, if you ignore it, and you say, 'God, I don't want anything to do with you. I don't believe anymore, I don't care. I don't trust you. I want to do it my way, and I don't have time on Sunday morning, because I'm too tired,' - and I'm still old enough to believe that what you do on Saturday night means you still should be able to get up on Sunday morning. If you deny your faith or ignore your faith - like Moses - what will you miss? Who will you fail to touch and care for? What problem may develop because you weren't there to solve it? Who won't be helped because you didn't inspire them?

“You are adults now. I won’t call you kids anymore. OK, I may slip once in a while. But I will *try* to never again call you kids, because in the eyes of the church you’re not kids anymore. Your vote matters as much as your teachers’ Polk and Karen’s votes. Your vote counts as much as the oldest person in this room. You’re adults in the eyes of the church and with that comes responsibility. It means it’s time to grow up, to put away childish things, to see with a mature faith what you’re going to do with your lives, and do something that makes a difference.

“And, no matter what you do, please bring God along on your journey. That is part of your inheritance. And when you do, the Holy Spirit will do great things in your life. The Holy Spirit will put you in places where you can make the biggest difference. The Holy Spirit will put you in places where you will be able to change people’s lives, give you the right words to say in the right moment, to know what to say and not say, and to have the courage you never thought possible. But, you can only do it if you are inviting the Holy Spirit into your life each and every day. Don’t let this be the end; let it be a new beginning. Accept your inheritance and let your light shine, because you will make a difference, not just now, not in just your lifetime.

“Karl Killinger is now with the Lord, but we are still talking about him today. And, we will be talking about you, if you follow the will of God, long after your death. Your children and your grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and your great-great-great-great-great-grandchildren will still remember you and honor you - not because of who you were, but what you gave them: your love, your life and your faith. Be frightened, but have the courage to live the will of God. When you do, it will change you for evermore, and all those you will ever come in contact with.

“I promise you that and we worship in the name of Jesus Christ.” Amen