

Grace to you and peace from [God our Father](#) and our [Lord Jesus Christ](#)!

As I thought about our Gospel, how someone said to Jesus, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me," my thoughts turned to the death of my dad, and to the more recent deaths of my mom and my youngest brother. I thought of the inheritance I received from my parents, that I share with my siblings. But it is not necessarily the kind of inheritance you might be thinking of. The real inheritance I received from my parents is not so much material things, although I suppose my inheritance does include the genetic components that combined to make me yours truly. Nor am I referring to the family system things that I and my siblings picked up, which I witnessed over the years. No, instead I am talking about the kind of inheritance that really matters, an inheritance we should long to share.

An inheritance that includes being baptized a long time ago when I was 2-1/2 months old, then being brought up in the faith. It is an inheritance that includes being taught how to pray. You might remember the old "here's the church..." prayer that for many of us was our first prayer. Then "Now I lay me down to sleep..." and after that the petitions of the [Lord's Prayer](#). An inheritance that included being taken to services at First Lutheran in Bemidji, then at St. Olaf in Austin.

My inheritance included learning to appreciate being with dad, just being with him, in his presence as he studied while he was in college, I like to think that I helped him in his college classes as I sat with him and then would fall asleep, find myself in bed in the morning and not know how I got there. An inheritance that includes realizing that even now I am in God's presence, even as I sometimes fall asleep as I say my final prayers at night.

My inheritance included learning things about [social justice](#), long before that term was in the vogue, my mom's willingness to include Native American kids in the cub scout den back when no other mom would do this. My dad giving stuff away when we had only two rooms, no running water, a pump in the front and an outhouse in the back. My dad rooming with a black American in the mid-sixties, even as the race riots tore up some of our larger cities.

My inheritance included learning about never parting from a loved one in anger, not letting the sun set on anger, and then passing this on to my own son. My dad had a heart attack which led to open heart surgery back in the early 1970s, he could have died then, and when he did die 23 years later, it was still unexpected. I was so glad that we never parted in anger.

So what would I do different if I knew I were going to die tomorrow? [Martin Luther](#) said he would "plant a tree." Me, I would want to spend the day with Cynthia, our son Eric and his family, especially my grandkids. I would probably start reading another book.

I doubt I would plant a tree. Although when I think about it, I realize that a seed from the tree of life was planted in me at my baptism and watered and nourished by

my folks, and others, and God has given it growth. I guess it is a seed that has itself produced seeds and fruit and those things are tended by others and God has given growth to them as well. It is my true inheritance, It is also your true inheritance, faith given and grown by the **grace of God**. It is also the legacy and inheritance that we pass on to our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. You know, living in our faith is a way that "our souls magnifie the Lord!" and this is how we are rich toward God! So what would I do different if I knew I were going to live forever? Not a thing! I will continue to do what I am doing now, because I am going to live forever, saved by grace through faith.

AMEN