

# THE HOPE JOURNAL

LEARNING TO LOVE, TOGETHER

July 10, 2022



## INHERIT

*what must I do to get it right?*

by Drew Downs

To inherit something, someone else has to die.

This is the whole economic scheme. A person has something. They die. They you get it.

Sometimes we inherit traits from our parents. They pass down their dominant and recessive traits to us through our genes. None of us gets a say in that kind of inheritance.

To ask how to inherit eternal life in the economic sense is to demand knowledge of the future. To gain what no one else has. Which, let's be honest, is full of hubris.

To ask it in the genetic sense, is to gain something you already possess. It's already there inside you.

Rather than eternal life, I suspect most people are hoping to inherit certainty.

# ORDINARY TIME

*Summer 2022*

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## WHAT'S GOING ON

*"You know we've got to find a way  
To bring some loving here today".*

-Marvin Gaye

Disciples, Apostles, and Saints!

Starting next week, I'll be going on vacation for a few weeks. I know the time away will be rejuvenating for me and our family as we spend time together.

I will confess that going away is always hard for me. Some of it is the ingrained desire to see things through and worrying about how everything will go while I'm gone.

This sense: of worrying of what could go wrong without me: is natural to leadership, for sure. And it is *very* common in the church. It is, however, also not a very trusting posture, is it? And what is trust but an aspect of faith?

It is hard to admit in writing that I don't trust. Because that isn't *true*. At least not in that all-or-nothing way we like to talk about it. But it is hard to admit that I trust with my *head* and then my gut starts to get all rumbly and my heart gets all anxious.

How does my *belief* about trust align with my action?

Well, I often find myself needing to step in and help. Even when it isn't necessary. Like a parent with a child, not wanting them to ever get hurt.

For me, taking vacation is a bit like letting go. Trusting that everything will run. Knowing everyone is capable. And believing the best in every one of you. As I do.

With love,  
Drew

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## FOR SUNDAY

*Fifth Sunday after Pentecost*

July 10, 2022

### **Collect**

○ Lord, mercifully receive the prayers of your people who call upon you, and grant that they may know and understand what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to accomplish them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**Amen.**

### **Reading**

From Luke 10:25-37

"But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

### **Reflection**

There are two parables that captivate the imagination unlike any others: the parables of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son(s). In the case of either one, it is hard to truly comprehend the impact this one teaching lesson from Jesus has had on our world.

What prompts Jesus to tell this parable is not the inquisitive encouragement of his disciples. It comes from a snotty know-it-all who is trying to test Jesus's wisdom. In essence, this is Jesus's response to a bad faith question. Which makes it all the more remarkable.

I can't speak for you, but I'm always trying to think about how my words connect with other people. I want to know if I'm having an impact on the lives of the people around

# ORDINARY TIME

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me. Honestly, most of the time, I can't even tell. But I try to better understand how to connect with people. Not just so that they will listen to what I have to say, but so that I might understand how to connect with them.

In that way, the Good Samaritan is all the more striking as a way of getting through to someone who didn't want to be gotten through with.

But I suspect an even more valuable bit for us might be found in that middle bit, right before Jesus tells the parable. The part where the lawyer is trying to "justify" himself.

This reminds me of something I learned years ago. During discernment for ordination, one of the tests we have to take, measuring our "fitness" measured how much we act on "self-preservation" and treat it as a *negative*. Because the more we seek to protect ourselves, the more we may reactively harm others.

It struck me at the time as extraordinarily novel given our culture and just how overwhelmingly *normal* self-preservation is. In government, business, law. It seems to quite literally be the greatest asset of *anyone* with power.

But to recognize the need to justify oneself, to prove oneself, is not an act of *righteousness*, but one of power preservation, reveals its dark side.

The antithesis of self-preservation, of justification, is the Good Samaritan. The one who doesn't *avoid* being compromised, but *enables* the healing and saving of another.

And let it also be said that the Samaritan seeks out a *partner* in the innkeeper, who aids in healing and saving the life of the man abandoned. These merciful ones are the good neighbors.

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