

January 3 2016 Year C Second Sunday after Christmas

**Scripture Lessons ~**

*John 1:1-14*

*Ephesians 1:3-14*

*John 1:35-42*

**Sermon**      *Where There's a "Will" There's a Way*

Remember back to the story of the Prodigal Son which tells of the son who first insults his father by claiming his inheritance, claiming his share of the will while the father still lives and then he goes on and blows the entire legacy left to him on wild living even impoverishing himself in the process.

There are many people who have been able to get a fresh start in life and have made something of themselves through such a windfall inheritance or maybe even winning a lottery ticket. Not me but some people. Unfortunately, the Prodigal Son was not one of them. But what about us? What about each one of us?

Did you know that each of us has been left an inheritance at the beginning of this New Year, a kind of windfall lottery ticket. Take note that it is just waiting for you maybe at one of the local convenience stores downtown or waiting at a lawyer's office so to speak and is waiting to be claimed by each one of us. It is ready to help us to begin anew; it is ready to help us to get a fresh start at the beginning of this new year of 2016. And folks, there isn't going to be any waiting for variation or there isn't going to be a waiting for probating a will so the only thing that is going to hold us up, is us. And there is not going to be any fighting with greedy relatives over what is there because there is plenty, plenty to go around. Again what is it? And where is it? And how can you claim it?

Well, you know as this thing says; Where there's a "Will"-There's a Way" St Paul in his introductory words at the beginning of his letter to the Ephesians speaks in verse 11 of the windfall of which I speak; as an inheritance which we can claim through Jesus. But then again the question remains, what is it? And where is it? So we have to back up to what St Paul is teaching about in the previous verses, he is teaching about such things as "spiritual blessings," "being chosen by God," "adoption as God's children" and then he goes on to explain that this chosen,- what this adoption can mean to us. It means a new beginning. It means forgiveness of the wrongs of the past. It can mean acknowledge of God's loving plan for us which involves our lives in this very world and also in the world to come and it involves God gathering all things together for good at the end of time. And notice I have said it can have meaning for us because the nature of the inheritance, the nature of the lottery ticket, the nature of being loved and chosen but at some point all of these things have to be acknowledged. All of them have to be claimed. All of them

have to be lived out because there isn't anybody who is going to force us to accept this gift. No one can force us to make it a part of our everyday lives. You know St Paul has written verses 13 and 14 that says only upon belief in this marvelous gift, only upon acknowledgement that it exists and has been given; only upon embarking upon the journey of the acceptance of the inheritance can it be finally experienced and then fully lived and then fully shared with others around us; which brings us to the word that Scott shared with us from John's Gospel and how it all fits together. If the inheritance is all of these wonderful things—if it is love—it is forgiveness—if it is peace—if it is joy---if it is the ability to love and to forgive others and to live freely in the presence of God and our family of faith and if the inheritance is to be found in God's son Jesus—his life, his teaching, his presence through the Holy Spirit in our midst. And how do we lay claim to that inheritance and how do we live our lives as if they truly make a difference based on having that gift and in the way that we speak, in the way we live, in the way we act, and in the way that we treat each other in this new year.

Well it is simple. It is lots simpler than what you might think but still it is a lot more complicated than what you might think as well. When Andrew and Peter beginning at verse 35 of John's Gospel of chapter 1, was asked by Jesus what they are looking for? They don't make a lot of claims. They don't make a lot of assumption. They don't even make a fuss that is the simple part. They simply asked, "Where, Jesus, are you staying?" "Where, Jesus, are you staying?" And then they follow him there and claim their inheritance? Of course, the complicated part comes in the claiming, the complicated part comes in the living out of that inheritance but as a result of claiming that inheritance Andrew and Peter get a fresh start. They find a new life. They become new creations in Jesus which is symbolized in Jesus changing Peter's name from what to what? From Simon to Peter; a whole new name, a whole new starts in life.

The question remains for each one of us are we ready to claim our inheritance? For each one of us, God has a new name for us. Are we ready to claim that new name? Are we ready to claim our inheritance? Most people wouldn't hesitate to do that? Well only in the New Year will we find out. "Where there's a "will" there is a way. Together we say AMEN