

Sermon, July 26, 2015 - Pentecost 9

## You Are Mine!

Genesis 9:8–17



Dear friends in Christ

Grace and peace from our Lord and Savior  
Jesus Christ!

You remember when your children were, I don't know maybe small to five years old, they would fight for what was theirs. Mine, mine, mine! They would say, and wouldn't like to share with others whatever it is they are fighting for. In fact the child would hold onto it as a treasured possession.

But it is not only children who say "mine, mine, mine! We know these words, don't we? For we always have something we hold on to as our treasured possession.

A couple goes out for supper one evening and while the young man goes to the restroom, another guy approaches his girlfriend and talks to her. He becomes jealous. Why? She is his. He says, "mine, mine, mine". He is jealous!

Two people are up for a promotion. They started at the company at the same time. Both have been successful, leading various projects. One gets the promotion, and the other cries, "Mine, mine, mine." He's jealous.

We know these feelings well! A treasured possession! We love it! A jealousy because we love it! Therefore we too say mine, mine!

Now, likewise, in our text of meditation today, the reading of Genesis chapter 9, God says of us: Mine, you are mine! In fact He not only says it, but actually makes a threefold covenant to assure that we are His. In vs. 9 He says "I establish My covenant"; in verse 11 He says: "I establish My covenant"; and in verse 15 He says "I will remember My covenant."

Now, did you know that you're God's treasured possession? And yes, He becomes jealous when you go off and about. Did you also know that?

Yes, God calls you His treasured possession! In various parts of the Scriptures God speaks of all of us as His treasured possessions. Here are some verses that tell of this truth: In Exodus 19:5, He says: "you shall be My treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine." In Deuteronomy 7:6 God says: "For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His treasured possession..."

Then, in Deuteronomy 26:18, we read: "And the LORD has declared today that you are a people for His treasured possession, as He has promised you..."

In Malachi 3:17 God calls you: "my treasured possession..." and 1 Peter 2:9 says: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession."

But as a treasured possession, God is jealous for you! He says in Exodus 20:5: "I the LORD your God am a jealous God." In Exodus 34:14 He says: "You shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God." In Deuteronomy 4:24 we read: "The Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God." In Deuteronomy 5:9 we read: "You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am

a jealous God.” And lastly in Nahum 1:2 we read: “The Lord is a jealous and avenging God.”

God calls you His treasured possession, and He is jealous for you! It is His covenant.

Yet there are times when we think “we are” ours, I’m mine! How many times do we think we’re in charge? I’m mine! How many times do we think we’re in control? I’m mine. How many times do we think we can change it? I’m mine.

One of the obvious examples of I’m mine, is the fact that we too often make up and own our own beliefs! Those beliefs we make up can be in a variety of ways contrary to what God wants us to trust and believe in.

For example, in the 1994 remake of *Miracle on 34th Street*, New Yorkers far and wide, from every socioeconomic status wore “I Believe” buttons to show support for dear old Santa Claus. Within hours, almost everyone donned a button.

It’s a scene in the first movie that sticks in my mind. In the 1947 *Miracle on 34th Street*, almost to the end of the movie, you see little Susie sitting in the backseat of the car on Christmas morning. Throughout the movie, she slowly comes to believe that this jolly old man in her life is in reality Santa Claus. But by then, driving along the road, she psyches herself up to believe in him. “I believe. I believe. I believe.” From the backseat, she mutters the phrase over and over. Then she shouts, “Stop, Uncle Fred.” She jumps out of the car and runs toward a vacant house she’s certain Santa has given her. It’s as if her belief brought about this reality.

We are like little Susie, repeating, “I believe. I believe. I believe.” We take ownership and are certain we can create our own belief. What is in fact reality, of course, is that we aren’t in charge. We can’t make true what we believe to be true. But God comes to us, gives us His greater and real blessings, and even creates the faith by which we believe in His goodness. He does with us as He spoke to Noah: “I establish my covenant with you” (Gen 9:11).

As sinful human beings, we think we’re in charge, in control, can change things.

Here Luther’s explanation of the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed is helpful: “I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me.” We aren’t in charge, in control, able to change it. But God is!

Consider the flood. It was unlike anything mankind has seen before or since. The flood was, without doubt, a holocaust of enormous and exceptional proportions. One day everything was normal, and then . . . the deluge! The water rose for 40 days, and the whole earth remained flooded for 150 days. God is in charge.

So as God created the world, He then re-created. He set the rainbow in the cloud. He established His covenant with you, plural—that is, all of you! He established His covenant with every living creature. He established His covenant with all flesh. He established His covenant for all future generations. And He remembers, He remembers His everlasting covenant! Seven covenants we see, although all come to one single covenant, you are His. It was first with Noah, then with Abraham, then His covenant at Mount Sinai. His covenant with David. His covenant with Israel. And His covenant with you. He call all His people, “Mine!” and that includes you.

Yes, without a doubt, you are God’s treasured possession. God said so Himself. He said, “When the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant.”

And in His covenant with us we do have the assurance that He will never forsake us. And all through history we see that He has fulfilled His covenant for He has never forsaken us, nor will His son Jesus Christ. Never, no way ever, never leave or forsake you (Heb 13:5). That's like saying, "You are mine, forever mine!"

And in Jesus' covenant with us He did obey the Father's will even to death, on our behalf. Jesus did the will of the Father and took the beating, the scourging. Jesus did the will of the Father and endured the weight of the cross. Jesus did the will of the Father and willingly gave up His spirit on the cross for you. But more than that, He rose on Easter morn for you. So that you can be His. So that He can possess you.

No wonder the apostle Paul tells us: "so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love,<sup>18</sup> may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,<sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." (Eph 3:17–19)

Yes, you are God's treasured possession! Our God is jealous for you! Now, when we hear that God is jealous, it doesn't make sense, after all, how can God be jealous? Jealousy is not a divine characteristic. According to its definition and use, "Jealousy is a complex emotion that encompasses many different kinds of feelings that range from fear of abandonment to rage to humiliation. Jealousy can strike both men and women when they perceive a third-party threat to a valued relationship, it can be a problem among siblings competing for parental attention, or envy for a wealthier more successful friend." And also means "vigilance in maintaining or guarding something." "Conventional wisdom holds that jealousy is a necessary emotion because it preserves social bonds. But jealousy usually does more harm than good to relationships, and can create relationship conflict and violence." (From Psychology Today and Dictionary-Reference) But if that is how jealousy is defined then it doesn't make sense. Or maybe it does. As you see the use of the word jealousy and attribute it to God that means God doesn't approve of you going after other things than Him, because you belong to Him. That's why He is jealous. After all you are His treasured possession!

You belonging to Him and He having a strong bond of love and care, as well as fellowship is what our text today tells us. In there we hear God saying that that is His covenant, and He says it three times: v 9: "my covenant"; v 11: "my covenant"; v 15: "my covenant." Three times? He must really want you to know it, on the one hand, and on the other hand He says it so that we understand the value and the extent of His care for each one of us. You are mine He says, you are my treasured possession!

Rejoice dear friend for you are God's treasured possession, in Jesus' name.  
Amen!