

Spirit as a pledge – 5/06/2016

“For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ² For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, ³ inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. ⁴ For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life. ⁵ Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.”
(2.Cor.5:1-5)

Beloved in the Lord,

God’s provision is always total and we can trust God in everything because He is always faithful and always keeps His promises. What God has promised, He will always do. In our text today, Paul is writing about eternal life, and points out that this is our sure and certain hope. Jesus shed His innocent Blood on the cross, in order to save us from eternal damnation, and to secure a place for us in His Father’s House.

Our place in The Father’s House is secured and guaranteed the moment we are saved. The moment we are born again we have this sure promise of eternal life in Paradise. When we repent of our sin and accept Jesus into our heart as our personal Lord and Saviour, then we are eternally secure in Him.

When Jesus abides in our heart, then we know, without a shadow of doubt, where we will spend eternity. This is not based on our merit, but solely on His promise and provision. It is His gift of love that He bestows on those who believe in Him.

In order to help us not waver in this faith, God has given us a pledge or guarantee, or deposit – His Holy Spirit. A pledge or deposit is a down payment in order to secure something.

About 30 years ago, I needed a new car, as my old car had broken down and was not repairable. Just down at the end of this street, there was a used car yard. I went for a wander and saw the car I believed God wanted me to purchase. It was a Friday afternoon and I had very little money on me. I asked the dealer how much deposit he needed in order to secure the car. He said if I paid him \$100.- he would not sell the car over the weekend but would hold it for me. By paying the \$100.- I had a deposit that guaranteed the car was mine if I paid the balance, which I did on the following Monday.

The deposit was an important part of the transaction, because it bound both the seller and myself to an agreement.

God has given us His Holy Spirit as a deposit, or down payment, guaranteeing that He will one day fulfil what He has promised and take us home to Heaven. In His time, He will give us a new resurrected body and a place in His House in Heaven.

June 5, 2016

God has given us His Spirit as a pledge.

I said at the outset that God's provision is total. Not only does He give us the promise, He has given us a pledge, His Holy Spirit as a deposit guaranteeing His Word. This deposit or pledge is so wonderful, it is so much more than mere money. He has given us of Himself, His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God. He is the third person in the Holy Trinity-the God Head. He is omniscient (all –knowing); omnipotent (all –powerful); and omnipresent (present everywhere).

As I mentioned earlier, when we trust Jesus as our Saviour, then The Holy Spirit takes up residence in our heart. He works on our behalf to encourage us, to strengthen us, to remind us of God's Word. Jesus named Him "*Parakleitos*" which means Advocate, Helper, Comforter. He abides in the heart of every true believer.

In his second letter Peter writes:

"seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. ⁴ For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust." (2.Pet.1:3-4)

God's divine power, has granted us everything we need in order to live a holy life. God's provision is in His Word, in His promises. It is vital that we know what they are, and that we believe them and daily live by them.

One of Satan's tactics is to divert our attention from Jesus. He tells us many lies. He works hard to derail our faith life, and is constantly trying to trip us up, and render us fruitless for God. He wants to mar our testimony and rob us of our joy and peace in Christ Jesus. That is what he does. Jesus said about him:

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." (John 10:10)

What our life is like, what amount of joy and peace we experience, and how effective our testimony is, is largely dependent upon us. God has provided all we need. He has given us His Holy Spirit, His Word, His promises. If we ignore them and do not trust and obey the Holy Spirit, if we do not believe, then we are easy prey for Satan and his minions.

On the other hand, if we stand firm on God's Word and walk in the Spirit, then it is a different story completely. We have an abundant life.

David put it so eloquently in Psalm 23:

"The Lord is my shepherd,

I shall not want.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures;

He leads me beside quiet waters.

³ He restores my soul;

He guides me in the paths of righteousness

For His name's sake.

***⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I fear no evil, for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.***

***⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You have anointed my head with oil;
My cup overflows.***

***⁶ Surely goodness and loving-kindness will follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.***

For this to be our testimony, we need to be daily walking in the Spirit. What does that mean? It means that we knowingly and willingly surrender our lives to God every day. We pray that He would lead us and guide us in all things. We tune our heart to hear the promptings of the Holy Spirit. We become sensitive to His voice, His nudging, His promptings. We read the Word of God every day.

Martin Luther stressed that God The Holy Spirit and the Bible are inseparable. God's Word contains everything that we need in order to live a victorious, glorious Christian life. We need to read it, absorb it, meditate upon it. We need to fill our hearts with His word. We need to believe it, confess it and live it.

God's Word is powerful. God created the world by speaking His Word. God said let there be and there was!

Jesus healed the sick by speaking a word. He even raised Lazarus from the grave with a command. Lazarus had been dead four days and Jesus said "Lazarus come forth" and Lazarus walked out of the tomb very much alive!.

There is power in the spoken word. God's Word spoken is very powerful. If we trust God's Word and use it according to His will and purpose, then we are more than conquerors all the time.

God is preparing us for life with Him in Heaven. This life is a school and God uses tests and trials to grow our faith, It is in difficult times that we grow the most.

When we find ourselves in the dark valleys of life, we need to remind ourselves that God has given us His Spirit as a deposit. What usually happens in times of difficulty and trials is that Satan comes along and puts doubts in our minds. He says "where is your God now? or is this how God rewards faith? He doesn't care, He has abandoned you. He doesn't love you....."

These are blatant lies. God has not left you. He is where He has always been. When Satan lies to you, you need to respond with God's Word:

***"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I fear no evil, for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me." Ps.23:4
or***

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God has given us His Spirit as a pledge.

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?³⁶ Just as it is written, "For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered."

³⁷ But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35-39)

That is the truth, and so that we would not waver or doubt, God has given us His Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. May we live in faith. To Him be all the glory, honour and praise, forevermore. Amen.

***Pastor Colvin MacPherson Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sydney.
All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.***