

The Spirit as a Pledge

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: 2 Corinthians 5:1-5

In this passage, Paul talked about God giving the Holy Spirit to us “as a pledge.” We might wonder what this means. What is a pledge? Why did God do this? How is the Spirit given? It is helpful to understand what Paul meant here. This was said to provide us with assurance of our hope.

What Is a “Pledge”?

- Other translations use earnest (KJV), guarantee (ESV), down payment (CSB)
- This is a down payment – ex: typically when we buy a home, we put down a down payment; it includes a promise that the full amount will be paid in time

What Is God’s Purpose for This?

- God “prepared us for this very purpose” (2 Corinthians 5:5), but what is this purpose? – that we would receive “a house not made with hands” and “our dwelling from heaven” (2 Corinthians 5:1-2); more than just a dwelling place, it includes eternal life (2 Corinthians 5:1, 4)
- Jesus promised His disciples that He was going to prepare this place (John 14:2-3) – the dwelling place is “in My Father’s house,” signifying closeness to God; the Holy Spirit was given as a “down payment” or “first installment” (New American Bible, Revised Edition)

How Is the Holy Spirit Given?

- First, the “gift of the Holy Spirit” was promised on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38) – this “gift” involved fellowship with God (Acts 2:30, 33; Psalm 132:11-12; cf. Ephesians 2:6); possible because of forgiveness (cf. Isaiah 59:2; 1 John 1:5)
- Second, remember the role of the Holy Spirit – to reveal the will of God (1 Corinthians 2:7, 10-13; 2 Peter 1:20-21); the Spirit fills us as the word is in us (Ephesians 5:18; Colossians 3:16)
- Third, the Holy Spirit dwells in the church (1 Corinthians 3:16) – this is where we approach God and worship Him
- Fourth, the Holy Spirit dwells in each one of us (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) – we belong to God because we were bought with a price (cf. 1 Peter 1:18-19); now we are to glorify God in our bodies by doing His will (cf. John 17:4)

How Do We Receive This “Pledge”?

- We must first hear the gospel (Ephesians 1:13) – it is the power of God for salvation (Romans 1:16); it is also the source of faith (Romans 10:17)
- We then must believe (Ephesians 1:13) – this is used in the comprehensive sense; it cannot mean belief only (cf. James 2:19, 26); it necessarily includes obedience (cf. Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46)
- We can follow the example of what happened on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38-41, 47) – they heard the gospel, were cut to the heart, and asked what they needed to do; they were told to repent and be baptized in order to receive forgiveness and the gift of the Spirit; the promise is for all, even us today (Acts 2:39; 2 Thessalonians 2:14)

The Result of Receiving the “Pledge”

- We enjoy fellowship with God – gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38)
- We are guided by the word of God (Psalm 119:105; 2 Timothy 3:16-17) – revealed by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:10-12)
- We are part of the Lord’s church (Acts 2:47) – the Spirit dwells in it (1 Corinthians 3:6)
- We glorify God as His people (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) – our body is a temple of the Spirit

Conclusion

- We are looking forward to our eternal home in heaven – Jesus promised to prepare this place for us; as a “down payment,” the Holy Spirit was given; this includes fellowship with God, guidance from His word, and a place of belonging in the church
- As a result, we can be confident in the reward of heaven – we walk by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7); let us continue to glorify God in our bodies and prepare to meet Him in judgment (2 Corinthians 5:10)