

This epistle is probably the most emotional of Paul's, reminding one of the Old Testament prophets and of the Lord Himself when appealing to the wayward hearts of God's people. The apostle is agitated, stressed by his recent experiences in Ephesus and by their spiritual need. Clearly laying down of laws, ordinances and rules never brings the heart of a saint, much less a sinner, to voluntarily love God. So he takes on the delicate task of drawing their hearts closer to the Lord and to him. He writes with great feeling and emotion. Realization that God loves each of us more than we can comprehend comes not through the intellect but the heart. Paul speaks to their hearts. They had too much intellect at work already.

He had disappointed them by not arriving as soon as he had stated when closing the first letter. But why does he feel he has to explain? We may be inadvertently delayed and apologetically arrive late without then feeling we have to defend ourselves to someone. (Well, we do need to have explanations if we are children returning late to worried parents.) But here he is a grown man, a brother in Christ, an apostle, the one who had been the means God used to bring them the message of the gospel resulting in their salvation and they dared question his motives and his love. Therefore in verse 12 he rejoices he can write to them with a clear conscience that he had a public testimony of walking through the world in simplicity and godly sincerity. He had walked that way even more clearly with them when they were first converted. They knew it and if they were honest they would acknowledge this. He was writing nothing new but now states that he, and those with him, were sources of their rejoicing, at least partially, v 14. He attributes the highest thoughts to them, as true love does, even though there was some doubt they really felt that way about him now.

1Corinthians 13:7 (love) believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Even if they only partially acknowledged and rejoiced in Paul as the channel of their blessings **they** were going to be objects of his rejoicing in the day of the Lord. He looks all the way ahead to their time before the judgement seat of Christ to the glorious day of His appearing. They would be among the rewards given to Paul publically then. Paul says he would in like manner be their reward. What grace that he assign this blessing to them. He is raising their sights from what was occupying them at present. More on the judgement seat in chapter 5.

Now beginning with verse 15, even though he owed them no apologies, he goes over the reasons why he hadn't yet come to visit. The bottom line was that it was to spare them, v. 20. He states this again later, ch 13:2, 10. But some there were openly attacking his character, questioning his love for them. They were not attributing

the best motives to him. They apparently viewed him as a threat to their position of leadership and respect in the assembly. How sad. They were like the Pharisees in the Lord's time, seeking to place every thing He did in a bad light

What a trivial complaint! They feigned to be ready to welcome his return but didn't really want him there. Then attacked him for not coming when expected. (Such attacks often manifest the heart of the attacker in unintended ways.) Apparently Titus heard their complaints before he returned to Paul. They seem to have said something like "if he can't even be trusted to come when he says he is how can we trust his ministry and instructions." Verses 15 though 20 give his patient but firm response. They attributed his delay to lightness and fleshly, impulsive decision making. They accused him of saying yes, then saying no. But he was not unstable. He simply had their well being in mind when he changed his plans. His response makes them look foolish without resorting to replying in kind to their attack on his character. Instead he uses the occasion to turn the discussion to the faithfulness of God towards them and the resulting spiritual blessings that are theirs as a result (verses 18-23).

What wonderful blessing and solid stability became theirs when they accepted the gospel news he had brought them. God does not waver and reverse himself, although He does change His ways to maximize blessings. His underlying character (love) doesn't change nor do the principles He reveals to mankind. He stands solidly behind every promise He makes. Yea and Amen (trustworthy)!

God validates His promises personally. He therefore has established (confirmed) each believer in Christ! He is the solid foundation.

1Corinthians 3:10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

And he has anointed and sealed every believer with the Holy Spirit. In the old Testament the priests, kings and prophets were anointed for their position, 1Kings 19:16. It symbolized being selected for a service or position by a higher authority, usually God. Moses anointed Aaron and his sons to serve as priests. Samuel anointed Saul, and later David, to be king. So the very name "Christ" means "anointed."

Psalm 45:7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath **anointed** thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. Also Hebrews 1:9

So we are also His anointed.

1John 2:20 *But ye have an **unction** from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*

27 *But the **anointing** which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same **anointing** teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.*

We are also permanently marked as belonging to God by an unremovable, unalterable **Seal**, the Holy Spirit. Jesus Himself was sealed, John 6:27. As the Son of Man God claimed Him as His. Every believer is sealed upon trusting in Christ. We don't have to ask for it or wait for it, God does it right then. We are immediately connected to Christ. We are not left vulnerable to Satan for another moment.

Ephesians 1:13 *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the **earnest** of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

4:30 *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

See also Jeremiah 9:14 and Revelation 7:1-8, for other examples of sealing by God.

As if establishing, anointing and sealing were not enough the Holy Spirit is given each believer as the **earnest** or down payment holding us for Christ's return to claim His inheritance. (Chapter 5 speaks of this in more detail.) And held we are, for no man can pluck us out His

hand or from His Father's hand, not even ourselves, not that we would ever want to. This "down payment," unlike mere earnest money, entails a remarkable present involvement in the inheritance. We enjoy daily communion and enjoyment of heavenly blessings with Christ while yet in the body here on earth. This is the God Paul wants them to know. Us too!

He takes great care not to even appear to seek to dominate their faith. They don't need a clergyman! They had enough "would be's." He simply wants to move them to enjoy more fully the blessings that were theirs with Christ. Again, this was in stark contrast with those among them who were seeking to retain power and influence over them. These were competing with him but he would not compete with them. He simply presents Christ as their sole resource of faith and the Spirit as the "enabler."

Note the character of the functions of the Holy Spirit. He is a Person. He is God but is here to represent Christ and to form the link of communion and blessing between earth and heaven. He points us to Christ, and moves us to pray as we ought. Therefore prayer and worship to the Spirit is not scriptural. To use human terms He would be praying to Himself if He moved us to pray to the Spirit. Love isn't selfish that way. He points us to Christ who in turn points us to God the Father. The Spirit reveals Christ to us not Himself. Thank God for all the blessings He has given us through the Holy Spirit.

By Ron Canner, April 14, 2004.