

1 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow-elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed:

2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers— not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve;

3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock

4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

5 Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility towards one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble".

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

8 Be self- controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

11 To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

12 With the help of Silas, (*literally, Silvanus, the full version of Silas, quite possibly Paul's companion on 2nd missionary journey*)

whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.

13 She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark.

14 Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

Bonjour, Messieurs et Mesdames

Bienvenue a l'Eglise de Killearn

Am I talking sense?!

What language? French (please forgive the accent)

Many countries, many languages. First followers of Jesus together, praying, and something happened: sound like a rushing wind. Light like flickering flames of fire came down on them They started praising God. Sermon, 3000 new Christians

Pakistan North West Frontier Province

The members of Killearn Kirk come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Those of you in paid work have a wide variety of jobs - teaching in schools or universities, running your own company, small or large, managing money, or production or staff. Some of you are in the medical profession, doctors, nurses; you may work in shops or offices, or clean houses. We have the full range of occupations:

Imagine living in Pakistan, in the NW Frontier Province, where the Pakistan army has just re-taken the town of Mingora from the Taleban.

12 Million of the population of 16 million is from the Pashtun tribe, that runs across the artificial border into Afghanistan. The 100,000 Christians, on the other hand, are ethnically Punjabis, who are treated as the lowest of the low. The Bishop of Peshawar says, '85% of my

people are toilet cleaners. We have 0.7% of the jobs in the federal govt, and 80% of these are menial workers....

'Today, if I became a Muslim, I could be counted among the top one per cent of Pakistanis, not because of wealth but because of my education and experience. Currently, I am counted with the bottom 3%.'

That's what it can mean to be a Christian in some parts of the world today. But they don't give in to despair. The church runs Hospitals and health care centres, 13 educational institutions, some for Christians, some serving everyone, and community development work. "We are trying to enact God love as experienced in Jesus Christ. ... 95% of the patients in our hospitals are Muslims. They know they are Christian places and still they come." Source, Life and Work, June 2009 edition

I wonder how many of us rich Christians would be ready to clean toilets for a living? If we were Punjabis in Pakistan's North West Frontier Province, 85% of us would have jobs cleaning toilets!

Clothe yourselves with humility, says God through Peter. Humility towards one another, because (and he quotes Proverbs 3:34, as does his fellow apostle, James (James 4:6)) "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

Don't most humans have a 'pride' gene in them. We want to be first in the race, to show off, get the best-paid job, tell others how good we are or were. We don't want to be toilet cleaners.

Well, Jesus wants us to recognize pride as a temptation to be resisted. Oh, there is nothing wrong with wanting to be the best you can be, if you are measuring something worthwhile like kindness, helpfulness, love, service.

But to then want to tell everyone about your virtue (or that of your family) has a whiff of sulphur about it.

ON Pentecost Sunday, we usually think about being filled with the Holy Spirit of Christ. Instead, today, we need to know v8:

"Your enemy, (adversary, anti-dikos, opponent in a lawsuit) the devil, (diablosos slanderer, false accuser; this word used in Septuagint to translate Heb Satan, accuser) prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Resist him."

That is, we need to be alert for a counterfeit influence, that pretends to be the Spirit, but is anything but Holy.

We ought not to pooh-pooh the concept of a personal tempter.

Jesus encountered him straight after his baptism in R Jordan. He had just heard the voice of God saying, 'This is my son, my beloved. I am well-pleased with him,' a voice that put side by side two OT verses from different strands of prophecy, the conquering king messiah, and the Suffering servant. While Jesus was thinking how to fulfil both roles in one person, a different voice challenged the statement. 'If you *are* the son of God, do something to prove it. Turn these stones into bread.'

Now we need to remember that Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God. God tempts no-one, but it was important that God the Son faced the temptation as man to doubt God the Father - and maybe disobey his word, else he could never be said to have been fully human, and to have chosen to obey the Father.

So the devil tempted him, but the Spirit helped him to answer with Scripture, and when Devil tried again, quoting another verse, the Spirit helped Jesus to weigh one Scripture with another:

'Jump, because his angels will keep you from dashing your foot against a stone' / 'Ah but,

the Bible also says, 'do not put the Lord your God to the test.'

That is exactly as we would expect of the Spirit, who inspired the writers of the OT then, on a new level, the Son of God made flesh in the New. In the past God spoke by prophets; so the Spirit prompted Jesus to recall the OT. But in these last days he has spoken by a Son.

(More on the devil prowling, looking for someone to devour?

Jesus' parable about 7 worse demons filling the void

Repeat of the temptation on the cross, 'If you are the Son of God, save yourself, and us.')

Now the message of Pentecost Sunday is that whatever opposition is ranged against people who believe in Jesus Christ, Jesus is always stronger. In the spiritual realm, Jesus is always stronger than the devil, or anything he can throw at us.

Peter, on the day of Pentecost, Acts ch 2, stood up and spoke. This boastful man who said he would never deny Jesus had failed miserably in the courtyard; but the Lord had conquered death, and now, 7 weeks later, nothing could hold him back.

'This Jesus, whom you crucified, God has made both Lord and Christ.'

Chapter 4, They were ordered not to speak or teach in the name ever again. The devil, speaking through a religious court (!) Peter and John replied: 'Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.'

That's what happens to a man's nerve when he is filled with the Holy Spirit of Christ - total courage.

When Christ enters our life by his Spirit, we find we *can* resist the devil and his attacks, be they :

inward temptation, (anger, jealousy, pride, lust)

or outward attack, subtle innuendo or downright violence; we *can* stand firm in the faith *because Jesus did*. We can answer with his strength, never losing his gracious words and tone.

True, it is some comfort knowing his attacks go on all over the world

(Pakistan - article in Life and Work for June - kidnapping...

And all over the world, people have proved the truth of this: Standing up to the devil deflates him. God is Sovereign.

WE need insights from Luke and Paul here; Remember how the Holy Spirit came to fill the first disciples on Pentecost, and worked through them in preaching and healing. Peter could say, 'Why do you stare at us, as if by our own power of godliness we had made this man walk. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him, that he has given this complete healing to him, as you all can see.

And Paul in Ephesians said:

11 Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

13 Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Do you see a parallel here?

The Holy Spirit fills believers and works through them.

May not the devil try to work through people who do not know god? Are we not to see past the actions of a wrongdoer, the individual sins, to the sinful nature, and behind that again to

Satan. Sins, sin, Satan
 Fruit, root, brute!

1 John 4: Dear Friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God.

1 Corinthians 12: No-one speaking by the Spirit can say, 'A curse on Jesus.' No-one can say, 'Jesus is Lord' and mean it, without the help of the Holy Spirit.

The God of all grace,
Who called you to his eternal glory in Christ,
After you have suffered for a little while,
Will himself restore you and make you strong
Firm and steadfast.
To him be the power for ever and ever, Amen

Silvanus in AV is full version of Silas, very likely the same Silas who travelled with Paul on the second missionary journey (Acts 16). Perhaps as scribe he was the one who rephrased the dictation of Peter into the polished Greek we have in this book. Or perhaps Peter had acquired the polish over the years
Or perhaps the Holy Spirit inspired it.

'She who is in Babylon' ?
Babylon in the OT was a city of evil. It could be code in Peter's day for Rome, the capital of the empire.
'She' might be the church, (chosen together with you)
or Peter's wife!

Greet one another with a kiss of love Cheek to cheek
Usually congregation separate, male and female areas.
Peace to all you who are in Christ.