

## Promise

Luke 24:49 "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

Sunday, April 18, 2021 at The First Congregational Church of Marshalltown, Iowa

- Introduction

The best definition of faith that I know is in Hebrews 11:6, which says, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." Faith is not only a conviction that God exists, but a confidence that He makes promises and keeps them, that He rewards those who diligently seek Him. So today I have a few thoughts about promises, and who gives them. Some promises turn out to be clever, as found in this story from columnist Ann Landers.

The story is told about a man who all his life, every time he got paid took \$20 out of his paycheck and put it under his mattress. Then he got sick and was about to die. As he was dying, he said to his wife, "I want you to *promise* me one thing." "*Promise* what?" she asked. "I want you to *promise* me that when I'm dead you will take my money from under the mattress and put it in my casket so that I can take it all with me." He died, and his wife kept her *promise*. She went in and got all that money the day he died and went to the bank and deposited it, and wrote out a check and put it in his casket." (*Ann Landers*)\*

- Set the stage

The Lord Jesus, just before His Ascension, gave His disciples a promise with the words, "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." It is a clear reference to the events on Pentecost, and to the gifts and fruit of the Spirit described later in Scripture, but today we consider simply that the God who always keeps promises, has promised to endue, or clothe us with power from on high.

- "endued"

The word, "endued", not common in modern English, means "to come upon" or "to clothe," but there is more to it than the idea of clothing, or a uniform, or a coat. It is a metaphor for a change in character. A person could become clothed in audacity, or strength or nobility. In the Old Testament (2 Kings 2:1-18), when the great prophet Elijah was taken bodily and alive into heaven, his student Elisha was clothed with Elijah's authority and power. It means a fundamental change in nature. We take on the delegated authority and nature of the one in which we are clothed. This promise was fulfilled at Pentecost and is still being fulfilled. The Holy Spirit didn't leave once He arrived. The promise to clothe with power from on high continues to this day.

- application

- a. Waiting is not wasted time

In comparing this promise to other Scriptures, I find several applications. First of all, the Lord works in His own ways and in His own timing. Waiting for Him is not wasting time. Isaiah 40:31 tells us that waiting on the Lord by faithful service will lead to good results. It says that "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

- b. This speaks to your destiny

Another application is that this promise refers to growth in your present life and also thereafter. 1 Corinthians 15:53 tells us that "this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." Your resurrection is part of your being clothed with power from on high.

- c. Choose to act like you believe this.

Another application is that we are clothed with power from on high by means of promise, we still must choose to live as if we trust this promise on a daily basis. Romans 13:14 tells us to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts."

- d. Speak truth to each other.

A specific example of making that choice is in Colossians 3:9-10, which says "Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,..."

Those are some of the applications affecting your outlook on life and your choice based on the promise Jesus made.

- Conclusion

The widow in Ann Landers' column kept her promise, but was rather clever and dishonest about it (though I don't blame her). Jesus, just before His Ascension, gave a promise to all His disciples that they would be clothed with "power from on high". The word is rich with meaning, indicating power, a change in character and in destiny. It affects how you see time, how you see your destiny and how you treat each other. Remember, the meaning of faith is that there is a God and He truly keeps His promises.

\* <https://www.family-times.net/illustration/Promises/201980/>