

## **Blessed to Be a Blessing – January 9, 2011**

### **A New Spirit**

**And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. Ephesians 4:30-32 NKJV**

Once again, if we are honest, we find ourselves “smack” in the middle of the words of Holy Scripture. Bitterness, wrath, anger, and clamor touch the lives of every sinner. If it is not thrust upon us we bring these things upon ourselves or even unwittingly foist them upon others. It is the nature of our sinful human flesh. We want what we want when we want it and we become increasingly indignant when we don't receive our due. So much so, that we harbor malice in our hearts against one another and such malice cannot help but translate itself into the evil speaking that flows from our lips. Blasphemous gossip against others we categorize as “free speech” or “just telling the truth” and we feel justified in demanding our rights without shame for the manner in which we go about such demanding. Putting one's self in the place of another, empathizing and sympathizing with the neighbor goes out the window if there is any advantage to be gained on our behalf.

God here warns us against such displays and attitudes with the severest of commands. “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit”, He says, and points us to the reason why: He is the One who has sealed us until the day of redemption. That is to say, He has claimed us as His own in the waters of Holy Baptism and given us a “new spirit” in Christ Jesus; a spirit which is not reflected by such behavior and actions. We have been forgiven to be forgiving people until Christ comes again in glory to judge the living and the dead.

A wise man once said that “there is no proper place in the church for demanding our rights...the church is ruled by the Word of God and governed by the axiom that we love one another as Christ has loved us.”

And how has Christ loved us? While we were still sinners, Christ died for us! Although Christ Jesus, the holy Son of God, had every right to demand and receive just treatment, He suffered and died as a substitute for us that we might be forgiven of all of our sins and through such sacrifice become His holy people.

The blessing we have received is forgiveness and redemption through His blood. The blessing we impart to others is the tenderhearted attitude of love engendered in us through the Gospel...yes, we forgive others also no matter how greatly they have wronged us and we patiently bear the crosses of this world clutching the precious love of Jesus by faith that we may not grieve the Holy Spirit of our God, but instead in word and deed proclaim His holy name to the world.

Pastor Jacobs

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