

Psalms 46: 1-6

1st Les. Gen. 15:1-6

2nd Les. Lk.12:1a &4-9

Text: Rev. 14:6-7

THEME: BE ON YOUR GUARD (1Cor.16:13)

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, today we are glad to join the Christian family of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC) to celebrate 65 years of independence from the Basel Mission. 65 years are not 65 days. We are celebrating a long and tedious journey of faith and service to God and humanity. We are celebrating because God has been our shelter and strength. We are celebrating because our God is “always ready to help in times of trouble” (Ps.46:1). Even when “The earth may be shaken, and the mountains fall into the ocean depths; the seas may roar and rage, and the hills be shaken by the violence”, He will always be there to shield us; irrespective of the mountains of conflict in the church, political, social and economic crisis in our society. The mountains of challenges and problems in our lives and families are putting pressure on us every day. The sea that stands for the forces and powers of darkness and evil may arise against the Church of God. Yet we will celebrate with joy because we have “a river that brings joy to the city of God, to the sacred house, (the holy family) of the Most High God.

Today we are celebrating on the theme, “Be on your Guard” taken from 1 Corinthians 16:13 where it is written, “Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love”. ‘Be on your guard’ is a military term and command used by the apostle Paul to encourage the Christians of Corinth and us today to stand firm in our faith, to be courageous in our services to God, and to remain strong with the strength that God gives to all believers. The Church in Corinth had been suffering a lot under the weight of challenges like disunity, pride, and confusion resulting from arrogant attitudes of some Christians, negative competitions, immoral practices, false teachings and doctrines. Right from the beginning the church has always suffered attacks from inside the church and from people outside. So the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul sought to leave for posterity and us today a strong command that will keep us vigilant and to be on the watch. As Christians we need to watch out and be on our guard lest we be surprised by the enemies of our progress and success. Surprise is the best tactic used by the enemy to attack. Be on your guard.

Our text comes from the chapter of the book of Revelation where we see a group of believers who have gone through more pains and tribulations than any of us will ever experience in this life. These believers had gone through all kinds of tribulations and pains of persecution; but on the other end they will stand victorious with Jesus himself and sing His praises. These are the 144,000 Jewish Christian believers who had the name of Jesus Christ and the father’s name written on their foreheads. This number represents all the faithful Christians who have received their baptism and sealed with the special mark of God’s power and anointing. God has sealed them to show the world that they belong to Him; to protect them from the evil one. With God on their side they will overcome and stand with Jesus Christ to sing a new song of victory.

Dearly beloved in Christ, whatever problem you go through and whatever challenge we have gone through for these 65 years as a church nothing can separate us from the love of God. That is why the scriptures say, “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us”

(Rom.8:37). PCC is the church of Christ and the gates of hell can never overcome it. That is why we are able to celebrate today. As faithful Christian believers we are sons and daughters of the Most high, and will stand victorious with Jesus in glory. This is the eternal message, the Good news that the angel of God in our text comes to announce to us today as we celebrate. With a loud voice the angel is calling upon us even this morning to honour God and praise his greatness. Our God is a great God; He is a 'big-big God' greater and bigger than whatever you bring to Him in prayers. This is the God the angel called upon us to worship. The God who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water. He is God of the Church, the PCC we are celebrating today and His son Jesus Christ the Lord and Master. Whatever it is that we are going through as a Church honour God and praise his greatness because it is His Church. Whatever you are going through in your life or family honour God because He is great. He is able to make the impossible possible. At a time it seemed Abraham would end up without a child that God had promised him, he was so worried; and this is what God told him, "Do not be afraid, Abraham, I will shield you from danger and give you a great reward" (Gen.15:1). Our God knows every sacrifice you and I are making to grow the Church to his honour. He also sees all that some of us are doing to blackmail and tarnish the image of the Church and to dishonour the name of God. The time is coming for Him to judge all people and we will all receive our rewards according to what we are doing.

The day of today is also very special in the life of PC Ntaghem. Historians would have a great and nice story to tell that after a long journey of hard work, sacrifice and prayers to renovate the house of God, today on the 65th Presbyterian Church Day we are celebrating here in the refurbished church house. You have been a wonderful people. The Associate Pastor and I can only say, "Ebenezer-thus far the Lord has brought us"-Praise the Lord. We want to thank God for our predecessors the Reverends Kekuntang Simon and Mrs. Ngole Patience for the wonderful work they did. We want to thank the Session under the able leadership of Elder Tasama Gladys, the Congregational Chairperson. The Project/Roof Committee under the indefatigable and assiduous leadership of Mrs. Nchitu Joan has been so wonderful. Finally, to all of you my dear Christians of PC Ntaghem who sacrificed a lot for this project and all our friends who supported us, we want to tell you that any sacrifice and commitment you make for the honour of God cannot return empty. God will reward you abundantly.

While on the Island of Patmos escaping from persecution God opened the eyes of John and he was able to see the deep things of heaven. That was when he saw the angel who came to announce the message in our text calling on us to honour and praise God. This project has united us more than ever before. Above all, this project has opened our eyes to see that there is nothing impossible for us to do when we want to honour and praise God. We have had many challenges during this project but see how from the beginning to the end God has kept us safe from any bad incident. I believe that a new era has come for PC Ntaghem. I see an era of deep spiritual revival; I see an era of break through; an era of serving God with joy that comes from the heart. The time has come for us to see one another as brother and sister, son and daughters of one true God whether you come from Bafut or Bali, from Nkwen or Ndop, from Bansa or Babanki, from Santa or Meta, from the Southwest or North west. It is time we look at each other in the eye and say from the heart, "I love you my sister, I love you my brother".

In the course of this project, and from the last PC Day to this one somebody might have done wrong to you and you are hurt. As we go under this new roof, it is time to say from your heart, 'I forgive you'. It is time to reconcile ourselves. I pray for unity among us than ever before; I pray for peace and understanding. Be on your guard. Be on your guard against hatred, against jealousy, against gossip,

against rivalry and blackmail. Be on your guard against the tricks of the enemy of peace and progress. To God be the glory. Amen.

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Parish Pastor.