



April 14, 2023

Commitment

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

After the destruction of the United States (or American) naval fleet at Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the pacific theater of war was a perilous arena for what remained of United States forces in the Pacific.

The Japanese military continued their brutal rampage -- operating at will. One island after another was being pounded into submission by the Japanese army and navy.

Then, their powerful war machine ruthlessly smashed into the Philippine Islands. American and Philippine armies were forced to retreat to the snake and malaria infested Bataan Peninsula.

It was then just a matter of time before Bataan and the fortress island of Corregidor would be completely overrun. It was a desperate time in these nations history!

Because of this, President Roosevelt ordered U.S. commander, General Douglas MacArthur to evacuate the island of Corregidor. Reluctant to leave his troops, MacArthur had only 3 words for his comrades as he boarded as escape PT boat destined for Australia on March 11, 1942, "I shall return!"

A little more than 2 1/2 years later on October 20, 1944, he stood once again on Philippine soil after landing on Leyte Island, and said "This is the voice of freedom, this is General Macarthur speaking...people of the Philippines, I have returned".

Regardless of the odds against him, he was bound and determined to make good on his promise. General MacArthur kept his pledge ... and he honored his commitment to the Philippine people.

It's an inspiring story. Whether one liked him or not, the fact remains he honored his commitment. Today however, we live in a very different world. In society, the word "commitment" seems to be one people would just as soon avoid using!

Commitments or promises are kind of like money - "easier made than kept". Yes, sometimes you and I can become cynical about commitment and often for good reason.

For example, consider the commitment of marriage - more than 1/2 of all marriages end in divorce.

And, how many times has someone failed you? I owned and operated companies in several states over a period of almost 30 years. All too often business contracts, employees, and states and local municipalities did not follow through on what they had committed to do under contract. I would at time question if commitment was something few even understood. Unscrupulous lawyers would often find ways to help a client weasel out of what they had agreed or committed to perform.

Maybe you've been promised your car or appliance be repaired by a certain time, and it isn't.

Perhaps someone promises to meet you at a certain time, doesn't show up, and they don't even bother to call to tell you why.

Remember when a contract was a contract? Yes, times have changed. Unfortunately most of us have been on the giving and receiving end of this one! It seems that for some today, commitment is seen as drudgery.

People certainly want the good results of commitment, but far too many are unwilling to pay the price.

I reflected upon this concept during Passover evening this year. Our Savior and His Father were committed to follow through on their plan to make salvation available to all mankind by Jesus Christ's death.

What might have happened to the course of this world if either of them had simply said, "it's no big deal, let's scrap this whole plan".

Now, we know we've been called to a special, holy calling. And, as these seven days of Unleavened Bread show us, we are to be committed to that calling, removing sin from our lives, and allowing Christ to live in us aren't we not?

We are to remove sin from our lives, with God's help...and live a different way, an unleavened way of life! We are called to share that way of life with others through our example, through serving and helping others, and a very real course correction in our lives.

How committed are we, you and me, to our calling?

Again, God gave us the perfect example of commitment by the sacrifice of Christ. Jesus Christ pledged himself to us - enduring the intense, mind-numbing agony on the cross, and the brutal emotional stress prior to the crucifixion.

I'm also reminded where He said in Hebrews 13:5, "I will never leave you nor forsake you..." That's a huge commitment!

And just as general MacArthur committed himself to return to the Philippines, so has Christ committed himself to be with us now, today, but also with His return to this earth, bringing lasting peace and giving us that reward of salvation.

God the Father and Christ are committed to the plan that they've designed from foundation of the world.

Over the years in counseling prior to baptism with many, I'm reminded how we cover this same concept in Luke 9:62, where Jesus replied, "*No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.*"

With our commitment at baptism, and when we partake of the Passover each

year, we agree to be committed to serving God and Jesus Christ, and our fellow man. We've agreed to become a living sacrifice, at all costs to follow Him.

I hope that during these days we've just observed that as we partook of that Unleavened Bread, each and every day, we thought about how Christ told us that by eating of that Bread of Life we would truly have life within and on into eternity!

He's committed to us. He's made a promise. How about you? Psalm 37:5 *"Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this"*.

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Hoefker', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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