

## WITNESS PROTECTION PROGRAM

*From the moment that Paul left the court through the Judge's exit, he knew there would be no going back. Paul lives under the Witness Protection Program; he has a false name and identification to match, he moves house frequently and makes few friends. "I was taken to the police headquarters under an armed escort," he recalls. "After two days in a hotel, I was taken to my house to pick up my stuff. After that there is no going back to your home – that doesn't exist any more. My birth certificate doesn't exist, my own sister thinks I'm dead. There is no evidence of me in a past life."*

*"When I first left I had to drop everyone, that's why my sister thinks I'm dead. I disappeared and heard nothing more and I've heard nothing since. I left it all behind. I have a son, but I've not seen him since the beginning of this. He has not got a clue. As far as he is concerned, I disappeared off the face of the earth. If my name was mentioned I would endanger him, so I don't."*

*"I make short-term friendships, you can't trust anyone. I tell them that my dad was in the Navy, I've slept rough in a tent, I've never settled down, lived in Europe; anything which explains why I don't have a history. I look to other details to draw a picture of myself and read a lot of books and watch TV programs. From a holiday program I got a couple of names of [restaurants] ... and told people I worked there. You play along with it."*

*"When they came for me [to start the Witness Protection Program] the police said, 'This is what will happen: A new name, a fresh start and whatever you have will be changed into your name,'" he says. "Do I regret it? No, because I saved people's lives. I did a good job and that counts. Will I ever be able to go back? Never, that's permanent. [The criminals] got long sentences, but that makes no difference because they put out big money to find me."*

Many nations, including Canada, have a **Witness Protection Program**. Our current legislation was enacted by the House of Commons on June 20, 1996 and is defined as ... "An Act to provide for the establishment and operation of a program to enable certain persons to receive protection in relation to certain inquiries, investigations or prosecutions ... **Protection** ... may include relocation, accommodation and change of identity as well as counselling and financial support ... in order to ensure the security of the protectee ... **Witness** means ... a person who ... has agreed to participate in a matter, relating to an inquiry or the investigation or prosecution of an offence and who may require protection ...

From the moment you entered the Kingdom of God, you became a WITNESS. The Greek word is "martus" – a martyr, or one who gives his life (sometimes literally) for the cause of Jesus Christ.

- **Acts 1:8** But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be **witnesses** unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.
- **Acts 2:32** This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are **witnesses**.
- **Acts 22:15** For thou shalt be his **witness** unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.
- **Acts 26:16** But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a **witness** both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

From the moment you entered the Kingdom of God, you also found out that you had a new enemy, the devil. He had never really bothered you before, because you had never really bothered him before. Since your lifestyle was one of sin, he knew he could run you by remote control so he stayed in the shadows. You never even gave his existence a second thought as you did his bidding. But now, it's a different story.

- **Revelation 12:10** And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.  
*(That sounds good, but it's future! Today, Satan is still accusing us.)*
- **1 Peter 5:8** Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:
- **2 Corinthians 2:11** Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.  
*(Mark 4:15 tells us that Satan will even try to steal the Word away.)*
- **Mark 4:15** And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.

It would actually be quite a frightening thing to become a WITNESS for Jesus Christ with such a powerful enemy waiting to destroy us, EXCEPT that the very moment you entered the Kingdom of God, you also found out that you had a new Father to love you, a new covenant to guard you, a new heart to guide you, new mercies to forgive you, new power to sustain you, a new life to bless you, a new song to inspire you, a new name to identify you, and the New Jerusalem to motivate you!

- **2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.
- **Revelation 21:5** And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

I read a quote from Golda Meir's autobiography "My Life" yesterday. She was Israel's much loved woman Prime Minister. "As for the Jews being a chosen people, I never quite accepted that. It seemed – and still seems to me – more reasonable to believe not that God chose the Jews but that the Jews were the first people that chose God, the first people in history to have done something truly revolutionary, and it was this choice that made them unique."

I CHOOSE JESUS CHRIST! I choose to have my sins covered by his blood, my past exonerated by his name, my present empowered by his spirit, and my future assured by his word.

- **Romans 8:1 (KJV)** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.
- **Romans 8:1 (NCV)** So now, those who are in Christ Jesus are not judged guilty.
- **Romans 8:1 (GW)** So those who are believers in Christ Jesus can no longer be condemned.

Do I have a past? Yes, but only in the devil's record books. He keeps trying to hunt me down and pin it on me, but my sins – the only control he ever had over me – are now hidden under the precious, powerful, saving blood of Jesus Christ. I'm under the Witness Protection Program!

Satan was once my boss – and he was a bad one! I picked up my paycheque every week and it was always in the currency of death. My sin, my past, my lifestyle, my guilt, my problems, my old nature were all conspiring to kill me. And my pension plan at my old job was eternal punishment in a place called hell. But one day I heard about a new employer named Jesus Christ. I didn't ask for a leave of absence to think about it; I didn't interview for the new position (I couldn't qualify anyway!); I wasn't even courteous enough to give my notice. One day, I just didn't show up for work! I quit!

- **Romans 6:23 (KJV)** For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- **Romans 6:23 (MSG)** Work hard for sin your whole life and your pension is death. But God's gift is real life, eternal life, delivered by Jesus, our Master.

Satan has been trying to track me down ever since, but he's been having a difficult time. Every time he tries to talk to God about me, I just talk to God about him. Every time he trips me up or knocks me down, I just stand back up, take a better grip on God's hand and keep on walking. Every time he reminds me of my past, I just remind him of his future. We were visiting with Vaden & Dianna Ellesworth this week and Dianna told us an old Newfoundland expression: "Me nerves are rubbed right raw!" That's the devil!

*It's like the older lady who got pulled over for speeding ...*

**Woman:** *Is there a problem, Officer?*

**Officer:** *Ma'am, you were speeding.*

**Woman:** *Oh, I see.*

**Officer:** *Can I see your license please?*

**Woman:** *I'd give it to you but I don't have one.*

**Officer:** *Don't have one?*

**Woman:** *I lost it four years ago for drunk driving.*

**Officer:** *I see. Can I see your vehicle registration papers please?*

**Woman:** *I can't do that.*

**Officer:** *Why not?*

**Woman:** *I stole this car.*

**Officer:** *Stole it?*

**Woman:** *Yes, and I killed and hacked up the owner.*

**Officer:** *You what?*

**Woman:** *His body parts are in plastic bags in the trunk if you want to see.*

*The Officer looks at the woman, stunned, and slowly backs away to his car and calls for back up. Within minutes, five police cars circle the car. A senior officer slowly approaches the car, clasping his half drawn gun.*

**Officer 2:** *Ma'am, could you step out of your vehicle please?*

**Woman:** *Is there a problem sir?*

**Officer 2:** *One of my officers tells me that you have stolen this car and murdered the owner.*

**Woman:** *Murdered the owner?*

**Officer 2:** *Yes, could you please open the trunk of your car?*

*The woman opens the trunk, revealing that it is empty.*

**Officer 2:** *Is this your car, ma'am?*

**Woman:** *Yes, here are the registration papers.*

**Officer 2:** *Uh, well, one of my officers claims you do not have a driving license.*

*The woman digs into her handbag and hands a license to the officer.*

**Officer 2:** *Thank you ma'am. One of my officers told me you didn't have a license, that you stole this car, and that you murdered and hacked up the owner.*

**Woman:** *Yeah right, and I bet the liar told you I was speeding, too.*

The devil is constantly trying to get the goods on me, but I keep slipping through his fingers. Not by lying or deception, and certainly not by running scared. You see, God's **Witness Protection Program** is quite different than that of the Canadian legal system. I'm not just pretending to be a new man, I AM A NEW MAN!

In the court system, there is a fundamental legal right known as "double jeopardy." It is the right not to be tried twice for the same offense. It is found under Article 14 of the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, under the Fifth Amendment of the US Constitution, and under Section 11 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Here's how it reads in Canada ...

Any person charged with an offence has the right ... if finally acquitted of the offence, not to be tried for it again and, if finally found guilty and punished for the offence, not to be tried or punished for it again

You see, my old man was unequivocally guilty of all the sins he ever committed. But he was punished for those crimes in Jesus Christ. So when the devil goes looking for the evidence, he runs into a cold trail. It dead-ends at the blood of Jesus Christ at Golgotha, where my sins were forgiven. It dead-ends at the edge of a baptismal pool, where my sins were remitted in baptism. My old man was guilty, but he's DEAD! My new man has a record as clean as the spotless blood of Jesus Christ.

(Pharaoh and the Egyptian army couldn't get through the waters of the Red Sea to drag Israel back to Egypt, and the devil can't get through the waters of my baptism to drag me back to my old life.)

- **Colossians 2:12 (NLT)** For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to a new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.
- **Romans 6:4 (CEV)** When we were baptized, we died and were buried with Christ. We were baptized, so that we would live a new life, as Christ was raised to life by the glory of God the Father.
- **Galatians 3:27 (CEV)** And when you were baptized, it was as though you had put on Christ in the same way you put on new clothes.

Is there still danger? Is Satan still seeking to destroy us? Yes, our enemy is crafty, subtle and treacherous, and he has had thousands of years to perfect his technique. We would certainly make a mistake and fall into his clutches once again were it not for one unassailable Biblical fact: I DO NOT LIVE FOR GOD IN MY OWN POWER!

- **Galatians 2:20** I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but **Christ liveth in me**: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.
- **Romans 8:13** For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye **through the Spirit** do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.
- **Galatians 5:16** This I say then, Walk **in the Spirit**, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.
- **Romans 8:2** For the law of the Spirit of life **in Christ Jesus** hath made me free from the law of sin and death.
- **Romans 8:37-39** Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is **in Christ Jesus** our Lord.

The devil can utterly devastate and destroy any good works or righteous efforts that I put forth, but he can't touch the perfection of Jesus Christ. That is why you have to get "YOU IN CHRIST" and get "CHRIST IN YOU." It is not an option! You have to get under God's "WITNESS PROTECTION PROGRAM" if you want to survive the devil's onslaught against humanity in general and the children of God in particular.

I get "me in Christ" when I get baptized. I get "Christ in me" when I receive the Holy Ghost. And I start the whole wonderful process of the new birth when I make a decision to follow God's way instead of mine. That's called repentance.

- **Acts 2:38 (KJV)** Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
- **Acts 2:38 (CEV)** Peter said, "Turn back to God! Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins will be forgiven. Then you will be given the Holy Spirit.