

Choosing Life

Tony

Scriptures:

Deuteronomy 30:15

John 10:1-30

1 Peter 5:8

God has offered a choice to those He created since the earliest time in the Garden of Eden. He offered the Jews a choice to follow Him, "See, I set before you today life and prosperity, or death and destruction." Believers in Jesus Christ have been granted the fullness of God's life. He came to give this to all who belong to Him.

On our mantelpiece we have two beautiful hand carved models of Jesus, each chiselled from one piece of wood. Marian's sister brought these back from a visit to Damascus. One portrays Jesus bearing His cross and the other, Jesus holding a sheep. Visitors have often asked about them which gives us the opportunity to point to two amazing aspects of Jesus' ministry.

In the early verses of John 10, Jesus speaks of Himself as "The Gate" - the only way to true Spiritual salvation. Then, He speaks of Himself as "The Good Shepherd" who leads and cares for His flock. In verse 10 He teaches that He is not a thief but a bringer of life. "The thief comes only to steal, to kill and to destroy. I have come that they may have life and have it to the full." Satan and his forces serve only themselves, their desire is to destroy people and keep them from God. (1 Peter 5:8) In contrast, Jesus has come to give people true life through a personal relationship with Him. By accepting Christ's forgiveness and new life, anyone can find and fulfil the highest purpose for which God had created them.

Living the Christian life involves daily prayer. This is not merely bringing a list of needs to God, it is far more, we need to listen, because prayer is a conversation with our Father. Followers of Christ recognise His voice, obey His voice and follow His direction, and we can find His voice in the Scriptures. Adopting a systematic pattern of reading is important to hearing His voice. Jesus said, "And I will ask the Father and He will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever, the Spirit of Truth." The Spirit will help us not to sin, but when we fail, He will help us to confess our sin. I found a simple and helpful little prayer, "Father God please help me to hate what you hate and to love what you love."

Repentance for sin and faith in Jesus Christ is the only condition and requirement for receiving God's free gift of salvation. Faith is not only a matter of what a person believes about Christ, it is also an active response from the heart of a person who truly desires to accept Him as Saviour and Lord. As we receive Him as forgiver of our sins, we must follow Him as Lord of our life.

This means that faith is more than intellectual knowledge that Christ is God's Son who died to pay the price of our sin. It is true biblical faith, which is the kind that leads us into Spiritual salvation and life.

Holy Spirit is given at the point of salvation to live within the believer and to help him/her to follow and obey Jesus. I recommend spending some time

reading John Chapters 14 to 16, which record Jesus' final teaching to His disciples.

Life with God is immediate at the point of salvation, it is for living now. Every believer has received the Life of Holy Spirit to enable their Spiritual growth, their witness to others, their hearing God through the Word and knowing the assurance of eternity with God. Eternal Life will be the focus for next week's devotion.

I wish each of you a blessed Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Author of our Salvation, I pray that you will constantly fill our hearts with a love for the things You love and hate for the things You hate, that we might walk always in Your paths of righteousness, Enable us by Your Spirit to live lives that are honourable to You. Lives that glorify You and draw many into Your Kingdom. Amen

[Alleluia, Sing to Jesus \(Tune: Hyfrydol - 4vv\) \[with lyrics for congregations\] - YouTube](#)