

Life in Jesus Christ – Sunday September 23rd 2012.

"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. (John 14:6)

Beloved in the Lord,

Have you ever got lost in a strange city? You know where you want to get too, but you are in a foreign place, have no map, and do not really know which way to go. You ask for directions, but the answers you get are more confusing than helpful. Finally you meet someone who not only offers you clear directions, but offers to be your guide to take you where you need to go. Now you are in business and can be happy.

Many people, maybe even many of you, live life in such a way. You have a vague idea of where you want to get to, you entertain a hope of heaven after this life, but you are not really sure if you are on the right path. You have sought direction and advice from various quarters, but there is no real clarity.

Many people tell me that they believe in God, but when we probe a little deeper, then we find that this belief in god is not really founded on anything solid. What is God? They may answer a higher being that somehow controls our lives; some may say destiny; others come up with a mixture of teachings from many different religions. Unfortunately things are not helped when there are false prophets and teachers in the community who espouse lies about what happens when we die. False teachings and false prophets are nothing new. It has always been that way. We are warned to be alert and to be aware.

In the book of Acts we read an interesting incident that occurred while Paul was in Athens. He was looking at all the idols set up worshipping pagan gods. We read in Acts 17:22ff:

"So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects.²³ For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.²⁴ The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;²⁵ nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;²⁶ and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,²⁷ that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;²⁸ for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'²⁹ Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.³⁰ Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent,³¹ because He has fixed a

day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

Paul tells us a number of important things here. The main thing I would like to emphasise today is that Paul clearly says that the God whom they have honoured with an altar "TO AN UNKNOWN GOD" can be known. He has revealed Himself to man through His Son Jesus Christ. You see God can and wants to be much more in your life than just a feeling; an idea; a higher power.

Paul said that God is calling upon all men, everywhere to repent and turn to Him. Why? Because God is love and it is sin that separates us from Him. In His great love, God is inviting us into fellowship with Him, He is calling us to live a blessed and holy life, a life that is abundant and free; a life full of joy and peace and love. He is inviting us to live in His presence daily, in sweet fellowship with Him, under His care and protection.

God does not desire for us to live in darkness – He calls us into His brilliant light. He does not want us to live hopeless lives, but to live in hope. He does not want us to live weighed down by sin, but calls us to leave all our sin at the cross. He wants to forgive, cleanse and set us free. He does not want us to live in loneliness but to live in fellowship and close communion with Him. He does not want us to live in stress and bogged down with the burdens of life, He invites us to lay it all on Him. Jesus said:

"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30)

Jesus is saying these words in love. He loves you. He wants to help you. He wants to ease your burden. He wants to set you free. He loves you more than you can even begin to imagine. It was for you that He left the glory of Heaven and came to earth as a man. He humbled Himself and went to Golgotha bearing the cross for you and me. He bled and died to take away our sin.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.¹⁷ For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.¹⁸ He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:16-18)

You see, it was out of His great love for you, that Jesus bled and died. He took our death penalty so that we would not have to be lost in eternity. He was guiltless/ innocent – yet He bore our guilt and our sin so that He could offer to us a pardon paid in full in His blood. If we receive this from His hand in faith, then we are pardoned from all sin – past, present and future, and our names are written in The Lamb's book of life. We are free to live and free to die, because our place in The Father's house is secured for eternity.

When we receive Jesus gift of life then our life changes. Suddenly we are no longer groping in the dark, we are walking in the Light. The path is clear and we have a guide. We come to know God in a completely different way. We come to know Him as our loving Father. No longer is God an idea or higher power, He is our Father in Heaven. There is a vast difference in knowing about someone and knowing someone personally. You may know a lot about God and not know Him personally. Jesus said: "***Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.***" (Rev.3:20)

The door that Jesus is speaking about here is your heart. When we open the door of our heart to Him, then He comes to live within. He lives with us in daily fellowship. This is what He means when He speaks of dining with us. This is what God is calling us to. A life that is lived in fellowship with Him through Jesus. This is true life. A person who is not living in fellowship with Jesus is not really living; such a person is merely existing.

In our foundation text Jesus said: "***I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.***"

He is the life. He also is the only way to the Father. He clearly tells us that." ***No one comes to the Father but through Me.***" It is vitally important that we understand that there are not many ways to God, only one way and that is Jesus. There are not many truths, only one truth and that is Jesus. There is no life apart from Jesus, neither here or in eternity.

That is why we all need Jesus. This is why we worship and proclaim Him.

I will reiterate what I said earlier: God is love and He loves you. In love He invites you, if you have not already done so, to open your heart to Him in faith. To fully trust in Him. You have nothing to lose, but oh so much to gain.

If you are already a child of God, then humble yourself today and renew your commitment to Him. Make a new commitment to live with Him every day, to grow in Him, to grow in love, to reflect His love everywhere you go. Get into the Bible, His Word because it is the only real source of truth and it is all truth.

Jesus said: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."
(Mt.24:35)

What are you placing your trust in? Things that will pass away? Put your trust in God and His Word, live for Jesus because He and His Word abide forever,

Come to Him today and live. He is waiting for you, He loves you. Amen

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.