

A Renewed Life – Sunday 12th April, 2015

“Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 6:11).

Beloved in The Lord,

A Christian is a person who has died to sin, and who lives a renewed life. A Christian is a person who is alive to God in Christ Jesus. A non-Christian is a slave to sin, and lives primarily for self. Such a person is motivated by self desires and self will. Life is all about pleasing self. Selfishness is one of societies biggest problems today. Everyone is living for themselves, doing their thing, and to a great degree they are not terribly concerned about the effect this has on other people. We see the fruit of this type of living almost every day.

Jesus died on the cross on Good Friday in order to set us free from the slavery of sin and sinful living. He died to set us free from our task master Satan. He died in order that we might live a renewed life. Not an improved life, but a renewed life. There is a big difference here. Many who call themselves “Christians” are really not Christians at all, but they are merely followers of a religion. Jesus put it this way:

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. ²² Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness” (Mt.7:21-23).

You see, it is possible to very religious, to do many things in Jesus name, like prophecy, work miracles, drive out demons, and still not really truly be a Christian. Jesus said that true Christians are those who do The Father’s will. Jesus knows those who live according to The Father’s will. He knows those who are living a renewed life.

We must die to sin, in order to live for Christ Jesus. Our old sinful Adamic nature must be put to death in order for us to put on Christ. So many people are mistaken in thinking that religion will save them. To hide behind a religious veneer, and to hope that your good works will cause God to look favourably upon you, is to build your house on the sand. In order to be on solid ground with Almighty God, you must die to self and put on Christ, let Him live through you. Paul put it this way:

“For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God. ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Gal.2:19-20)

Is this your confession? Can you confess ***“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me”***? This is what God is calling us to do, because only in dying to self, can we live for Him. When we die to self, we are renewed and live a totally new life. This new life is a blessed life. We read about it in

Psalm 1: ***“How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor stand in the path of sinners,
Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!
2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
And in His law he meditates day and night.
3 He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water,
Which yields its fruit in its season
And its leaf does not wither;
And in whatever he does, he prospers.
4 The wicked are not so,
But they are like chaff which the wind drives away.
5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
6 For the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
But the way of the wicked will perish.”***

It is God’s will, for each of us to be like this tree that is planted by the water, that bears good fruit. God desires for our life to be a sweet fragrance, that reflects the love and beauty of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are to reflect His grace and mercy, and love. God desires for our life to be stamped “Blessed!” This is a beautiful word, that cannot be fully described. It encaptures and entails so much. It encompasses all that is good, that is wholesome, that is right, that is perfect.

So many Christians simply wither and die, and do not bear fruit for God, because they do not rely upon Him for all things, in all places, at all times. God has given us a very powerful promise in His Word, and this is ours if we live for Him:

***“Do you not know? Have you not heard?
The Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth
Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable.
29 He gives strength to the weary,
And to him who lacks might He increases power.
30 Though youths grow weary and tired,
And vigorous young men stumble badly,
31 Yet those who wait for the Lord
Will gain new strength;
They will mount up with wings like eagles,
They will run and not get tired,
They will walk and not become weary”*** (Isaiah 40:28-31)

The verb here is wait. This promise is for those who wait upon the Lord. The meaning is those who put their trust, and their hope in Him. They will receive renewed power and strength to live this life that glorifies God. It is important to note that the emphasis is upon waiting on The Lord, not a religious institution or system or Church, but on the Lord Himself. A personal relationship with a personal God.

Christ is the epi-centre of our faith and we must keep Him front and centre all the time. In order to successfully live this renewed life, Martin Luther said that we must daily return to our Baptism. Paul wrote:

“Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, ⁶ knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;” (Romans 6:3-6).

You see, it is important that we remind ourselves of these truths on a regular basis. This helps us not to lose perspective and to keep Jesus in our line of vision always. This keeps us on the right path. We must be aware that we have a powerful and cunning enemy who does not want our life to be “Blessed”. He does not want us to live a renewed life. He wants us back in his slavery, subject to him. That is why he is constantly tempting us and bombarding us from every angle.

In order to stand firm and not to capitulate, we need to remind ourselves that our life has been renewed by Christ Jesus. We do not need to make provision for our fleshly lusts and sinful desires. When tempted, we need to remind ourselves that we have been crucified with Christ and we no longer live for self, but for Him.

God has given us many aids to assist us in living a godly and renewed life. It is important that we rely upon them and not our own self.

The main one of course is the presence of The Holy Spirit, who lives in the heart of every Christian. We need to get to know Him, to learn to distinguish His voice and His promptings. He speaks to us primarily through God’s Word -The Bible. This is why we need to read it regularly..

Remember Psalm 1? It says that the blessed person delights in the law of the Lord. He meditates upon it day and night. That is he keeps God’s Word front and centre all the time. The more you absorb God’s Word, the more you meditate upon it, the more blessed and stable your life becomes. You bear more and more fruit for God.

Jesus died and rose again not just that we could live with Him eternally in Heaven, but also that we may have a blessed life here. He said:

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

A renewed life is an abundant life. Come to Jesus today and be renewed.

Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.