

St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Penrith

9 Doonmore Street, Penrith NSW 2750

www.penrithpresbyterian.com



ENCOURAGEMENT LETTER 11/9/2024

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

How are you today? I am thankful for the sun and the warm spring brings and the light of God's truth that shows us his path to live life.

Today's encouragement is "Dead to Sin, Alive to God" after which there are church matters.

ENCOURAGEMENT: Dead to Sin, Alive to God

How do you live by faith? One of the things I do in order to live by faith, is memorise Scripture to meditate on it and fix my heart on Christ. I have it in my heart to recall when faced with a challenge to my faith that I may feed off it to strengthen my heart to live in step with Christ. In my contact article last month, I talked about how our thoughts, our words and our actions stem from a faith position that is either grounded in Christ or ourselves. With Scripture at hand to recite to myself, it helps me to retain a faith position on the firm ground of the gospel. Over the next two weeks before I go on leave, I want to share with you memorised verses that help me walk by faith in Jesus.

The current passage I am memorising and meditating on is:

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness.

Romans 6:11-13

Verse 11 is the driving verse here. It is the faith position that I am to retain. The reality is that have been united to Christ in his death and resurrection, so because he died for our sins, I am dead to sin and because he rose from the dead to live forever before God, I am alive to God to know and enjoy him. The work of Christ moves me from being dead in sin to being alive to God.

The encouragement of Romans 6:11 then is to take hold of this reality. Paul says, "count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus." We need to repeat this reality to ourselves and see it as now applying to us in Christ. So when I am faced with a choice that compromises my faith in Christ or when I am tempted towards sin, then I count myself dead to sin and no longer belonging to it, and alive to God so I now belong to him. It clarifies the choice for me and strengthens my faith to continue in step with Christ.

Verse 12-13 crystallise the application further. It shows that the difference between living a life ruled by sin and living a life by ruled by Christ comes down to worship. To be alive to God is to live to worship God. The consequences of v11 are realised in an act of worship. We either offer the parts of our bodies to sin to be used as a tool for wickedness, or we offer the parts of our bodies to God to be used as a tool for righteousness. We either give ourselves over to sin or over to God. Paul again stresses in v13 that we offer ourselves to God as “those who have been brought from death to life”. The immediate application of being dead to sin and alive to God is to give yourself to God in worship to be used by him as a tool for righteousness. Our lives are to be given over to God and his purposes in increasing measure.

So, in each decision faced during the day, in each moment where I am tempted to distrust God and follow my own desires, each time I am inclined to ignore God’s word and make my own “truth”, it is then that I bring to mind Romans 6:11 and count myself as dead to sin and alive to God to live for him. Will you join me in doing this? Will you feed and guard your faith by memorising Scripture? Will you fight sin by wielding gospel truth against it?

FINAL COMMENTS

For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

Romans 6:6-10

As always, love and prayers,
Steve