

St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Penrith

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ENCOURAGEMENT LETTER 18/9/2024

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

How are you today? I am thankful for the wealth of Christian literature we have to encourage us and spur us on towards looking God and trusting Christ.

Today's encouragement is "Yet Not I, But Christ" after which we move on to church matters.

ENCOURAGEMENT: Yet Not I, But Christ

How are you using Scripture to live for God? One metaphor that is used to describe the word is as a sword. The Word of God is a weapon to be wielded. But it is one thing to hold a sword, it is another to use it. In the war against sin and the world, it is the cut and thrust of the Word of God that is going help live for Jesus. Last week I shared a Scripture I memorise to help me live for Jesus, today I share another.

For me, this verse is an oldie but a goodie,

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20

The verse has similarities with Romans 6:11 from last week, as it shows our identification with the death and resurrection of Jesus. His death is our death to sin, His life is our life which we live to God. So Paul begins the verse, "I have been crucified with Christ..." that is, the old self, the self under the mastery of sin, died with Christ. We no longer live for sin. Paul takes it further saying, "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." The life he now lives is the expression of the life of Christ in him.

The life we live now is a life of faith. We live trusting in the Son of God. Obedience is not the means by which we know God but rather faith. Obedience is not the means but the goal of a life of faith, our goal is to live in step with Jesus so that he lives and breathes through us for his kingdom and his purposes. We enter into the life of faith by the gospel – the good news of Jesus and his death and resurrection – and we continue to live the life of faith by the gospel. There has been a change, to no longer live our way according to the dictates of our sinful desires but to live in the freedom of the life of Jesus trusting in his promises and yielding our life more and more to him.

Our lives are to be lived in response to his love in that he gave himself to death on a cross for us. We live in the joy and confidence of what Christ has achieved for us, and because he has given us everything, we seek to give him everything that we are.

It is this verse where we get the great, “Yet not I, but Christ.” It turns my heart towards Christ in prayer as I am faced with the difficulties of life and the hard decisions that come my way. I pray this verse and trust the reality this verse describes. I pray as one old saint used to pray, “Lord, I invite you to walk around in my body, love with my heart, speak with my lips and think with my mind.” This is the life I want to live and Galatians 2:20 spurs me on towards this, reminding me that life is lived well as Christ lives in me and through me. Will you seek to memorise Galatians 2:20, to pray “Yet not I, but Christ” and to live by faith in the Son of God in the face of all that life throws at us?

ENGAGING WITH GOD #6: EVANGELISM

Come and join a conversation about how we engage with God tonight (18/9) at 7.00pm. In this sixth session, we will consider how evangelism helps us to engage with God and its role in how we love God and grow in his love for us in Christ. We will ask:

- How does telling others about Jesus help us to know God more?
- How can sharing Jesus give me a fuller understanding of God’s love?

FINAL COMMENTS

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Galatians 5:16-18

As always, love and prayers,
Steve