

1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-12

THIS IS GOD'S WILL

“Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

“Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.”¹

People often make strange claims concerning the will of God. “God told me,” is a phrase frequently used to justify aberrant behaviour among the professed people of God. However, there are occasions anyone can say with certainty, “This is the will of God.” This assertion is possible because for those knowledgeable of the Word of God, there are occasions when God has spoken quite clearly to reveal His will through what has been written. In such instances, we are very foolish if we ignore what is written.

Though the message is presented on the day set aside to honour mothers, it applies to all who call on the Name of the Master. I have often held that society will never sink lower than what women allow. I fear that I am witnessing the rapid imposition of a moral morass because we who occupy the sacred desk have failed to encourage women to stand firm in righteousness. Thus, the message today seeks to encourage a return to godliness for both women and for men.

THE WILL OF GOD—YOUR SANCTIFICATION — “Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification.”

“This is the will of God, your sanctification.” There is no doubt concerning the will of God—the will of God is your sanctification. Tragically, few people among modern congregations know what it means to be sanctified. It seems rare that a pastor should ever present a message on the topic of sanctification. Few church goers can recall hearing a message on sanctification. There was a time, and not so long ago, when entire denominations were built around the doctrine of sanctification. Admittedly, some of those groups were extreme in their pursuit of sanctification; but the point remains that they were conscious of the expectation that Christians are to be sanctified. Today, few denominations teach sanctification; consequently, few Christians know what it means to be sanctified.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from **The Holy Bible: English Standard Version**. Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers, 2001. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Let's take this opportunity to think about the doctrine of sanctification. The Greek term *hagiasmós* is translated in some translations by the terms "consecrate," "holy," or "holiness." In fact, the word is translated "holiness" in today's text. In 1THESSALONIANS 4:4, 7, the Apostle urged readers to control his or her own body in holiness (*hagiasmós*) and honour. He also reminds readers that "God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness (*hagiasmós*)."

It should be obvious that holiness is important to the God who redeemed us. The Holy Spirit, through Peter, has commanded Christians, "As he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy'" [1 PETER 1:15, 16]. Peter applies the teaching first given in Leviticus [see LEVITICUS 11:44], a teaching with which his readers would have been familiar, in urging readers to reflect the character of God the Father.

Peter's instruction mirrors that of the writer of the Letter to Hebrew Christians that teaches followers of the Master, "Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord" [HEBREWS 12:14].

Having spoken of holiness, let's admit that the term is confusing to many people. Whenever people hear the term "holy" or "holiness," they tend to become confused. They think "strange dress," "no fun," "angry fundamentalists," "rules." Of course, all these concepts are distortions of God's intent for His people. Perhaps each of these concepts has been witnessed at some time, and undoubtedly there are times when people imagine they are doing the will of God in acting in this manner. However, holiness is not a matter of dress, though a person who is holy is conscious of the consequences of dress. Holiness, or sanctification, is not something you can strap on each day; it is who the believer is. Sanctification does not steal joy, though it does challenge our thinking concerning fun. Sanctification should never lead to anger; rather, holiness should make us compassionate, moved with pity on those still in darkness. Holiness never comes through observing rules any more than obedience to rituals makes one a Christians.

Throughout the Bible, the concept of sanctification speaks of purity, of separation, or consecration. The priests were to consecrate themselves before serving. They were to prepare themselves to enter into the presence of the Living God, to cleanse themselves and especially to prepare their hearts to stand before Him who alone is pure and who is perfect in holiness. Addressing this particular matter, the Psalmist has written:

"Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?
And who shall stand in his holy place?
He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not lift up his soul to what is false
and does not swear deceitfully.
He will receive blessing from the LORD
and righteousness from the God of his salvation.
Such is the generation of those who seek him,
who seek the face of the God of Jacob. Selah"

[PSALM 24:3-6]

Thus it remains to this day, to enjoy the presence of the Lord we must prepare ourselves to come before Him. When we harbour secret sin, we hinder communication. Isaiah confronted the people of his day. They were complaining that God didn't answer them, that He no longer heard their cries. This is what Isaiah said concerning that matter.

“Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save,
or his ear dull, that it cannot hear;
but your iniquities have made a separation
between you and your God,
and your sins have hidden his face from you
so that he does not hear.
For your hands are defiled with blood
and your fingers with iniquity;
your lips have spoken lies;
your tongue mutters wickedness.”

[ISAIAH 59:1-3]

Thus, to sanctify oneself means that the individual has prepared himself or herself to come into the presence of the True and Living God. It means the individual has confessed all known sin, sought God’s cleansing for such sin, renounced evil and accepted God’s sentence for all such wickedness. The individual is thus prepared to seek God’s blessing. Thus, the one who seeks sanctification endeavours to consecrate her life to God, seeks to purify herself from all that would hinder access to the Master. Consecration is nothing less than that which is presented in the Letter to Hebrew Christians. “Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God” [HEBREWS 12:1, 2].

There is the concept of separation inherent in the thought of sanctification. We do need to think briefly of what is implied in this concept. The idea lying behind sanctification is the thought of reserving a person or a thing for the use of one person. When we speak of being sanctified, we imply that an individual is reserved for God’s use—that one is set apart to God’s service. While many people understand that concept, it seems harder to grasp that the individual is also set apart from the sin that marks this dying world. This is the concept that has enabled so much of the distortion that characterises sanctification.

Many groups want to be set apart from the world. Like the Pharisees of Jesus’ day, they focus on the external aspects of life, scrupulously addressing these areas of life. Unfortunately, because of our fallen condition, it is easy to become so focused on these aspects of life that we ignore what is truly important. How we dress is important! Certainly, each believer should be modest in dress and in deportment. Undoubtedly, each Christian should be conscientious in avoiding drawing attention to himself or to herself. However, I learned long ago that a woman can wear a dress that reaches her ankles and sleeves that come down to her first knuckle, and still manage to be deliberately seductive. Dress does not make one holy, though one who is holy will be cautious in how she or he dresses. Likewise, a man can dress in black and have a beard that reaches his navel, and still have a heart that is as black as his clothing.

The Master addressed this issue when He confronted the Pharisees on one occasion. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.” He had pointed out the meticulous care with which they tithed, with which they crafted their various oaths and with which they made proselytes to their religion, and failed to address the condition of the heart.

Jesus continued excoriating the religious leaders of that day. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness” [**MATTHEW 23:25-28**]. Thus, if our holiness is merely external, we deceive ourselves. This is the tragic condition of many of the followers of Islam who imagine that bathing and shaving the hair on their chest will cleanse their heart, who think that if they don’t see a woman’s leg they will not think salacious or lascivious thoughts. Of course, wickedness is bound up in the heart and until the heart is changed by the grace and mercy of the True and Living God, mankind only deceives himself.

Confusion for many of the people of God arises from the thought that sanctification occurs in three tenses—we have been sanctified; we are being sanctified; and we shall be sanctified. Before pushing on, think about what has just been stated. The Christians has been sanctified. Paul, writing the encyclical we know as Ephesians, opens the missive in this manner. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

“In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory” [**EPHESIANS 1:3-14**].

That is an awful lot of words. The Apostle must surely have been excited when he wrote that. He began with verse three and continued without stopping through verse twelve. In other words, verses three through twelve are one sentence in that original language! What I want you to see at this moment is what is said concerning our situation before the Father at this time. Scope in on verse four: “[The Father] chose us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.” Think about that! The Christian has been chosen in Christ, and this before the world was ever founded. Moreover, the purpose of God’s choosing was that we might be “holy and blameless before Him.” Before the throne of God, the believer is now declared holy and blameless.

We are now sanctified in Christ. This is an accomplished fact. The child of God is now declared holy because he or she is in Christ. The basis for this declared holiness is the work of God’s Spirit in the life of each believer now. That this is so becomes evident from reading something that has been included in Paul’s second letter to the Thessalonian Christians. “We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” [**2 THESSALONIANS 2:13, 14**]. Believers are “saved through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.” Christ called us to this through the Gospel so that we might share the glory of Christ.

In this life, the child of God is required to work at being holy. The holiness we now enjoy in the presence of God is referred to as positional holiness. It is a way of saying that because of our position in Christ we are now sanctified or declared holy. However, it is necessary in this world we strive to be holy, or follow what is known as progressive sanctification. This means that we are to move toward becoming more and more godly now. Throughout the New Testament are passages that speak of this movement toward holiness. Among the passages that point to progressive sanctification is our text.

Let's recall the words of the text. "This is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness" [1 THESSALONIANS 4:3-7].

In a practical sense, the need to accept responsibility for our progress toward holiness is evident in this apostolic affirmation. "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have swerved from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some. But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are his,' and, 'Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.'

"Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.

"So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels" [2 TIMOTHY 2:15-23].

There awaits a blessed day when all who are redeemed will have been perfected. That day will be at the return of Christ to gather His people to Himself. "We shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality" [1 CORINTHIANS 15:51-53]. John points to that day when he writes, "Little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming. If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

"See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure" [1 JOHN 2:28-3:3].

John's teaching points to the completion of what is now taking place in the life of the obedient child of God. Paul presents a powerful petition for the saints in Thessalonica when he writes, "May the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it" [1 THESSALONIANS 5:23, 24].

Paul teaches this identical truth. “We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified” [ROMANS 8:28-30]. The child of God is predestined to be conformed to the image of God's Son!

I must urge you to look to one final passage of the Word to emphasise this vital truth. PHILIPPIANS 3:20, 21 teaches, “Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.” We are destined to be perfected at His return!

WHAT SANCTIFICATION LOOKS LIKE —“This is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.”

Paul specifically focuses on one area of life in which one is to reveal sanctification. Before exploring the Apostle's concern in more detail, let me state without equivocation that one cannot avoid this particular area if he or she is not a Christian. An individual may avoid staining his or her life for a period by consciously focusing on this aspect of life. Eventually, however, the individual will fail. I am not saying that non-Christians are necessarily evil, wicked people just looking for opportunity to act on baser impulses; I am saying that no one has the capacity to avoid sin and to please God without His strength which is provided through the Spirit of God who lives within each believer.

As an example of the truth I have just stated, note Paul's instruction concerning the believer's advance toward purity. It is found in his Letter to Roman Christians. “Just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

“For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life” [ROMANS 6:19-22]. Note, in particular, how the Apostle ties submission to God and freedom from sin to the corollary sanctification, which in turn results in eternal life! He is not saying that we make ourselves pure in order to be saved. He is saying that because we are saved we reveal our relationship to God who is holy by a pure life.

The specific area that is identified in our text as revealing the sanctification of believers is abstaining from sexual immorality. Specifically, Paul makes it apparent that his concern is for Christians to treat one another like family. Believers are to be respectful of one another, protecting one another from harm, including the harm of gossip. There is to be no impropriety, no attempt to reduce one another to mere objects to be used for personal gratification and then discarded, no dishonouring of the body. In fact, each believer is responsible to assume responsibility for his or her own body.

Perhaps you imagine that the subject of sexual immorality is an inappropriate subject to be addressed from the pulpit. However, sex is one of the strongest motivational forces driving our world today. Our music is largely composed of songs addressing our feelings toward others, and contemporary music seems overly focused on sexual interactions. Hollywood would fade into insignificance without sexual themes to drive the few creative sources that appear to be resident there. The same holds true for much of our television industry. Sitcoms seem driven by statements about bodily functions and sexual activity. Even crime dramas attempt to bring in sexual activity, endeavouring mightily to normalise every deviant form of sexual congress and to drag what was once the private domain of those who were married into the harsh glare of family television. Even our language has degenerated into expressions of the most intimate actions, in an effort to demonstrate how broad-minded we have become. Therefore, I suggest that the preacher who fails to address the issue of sexual purity does his parishioners a disservice. Conscientious preachers are compelled to speak of the subject of sexual morality.

Over twenty-five years ago, Richard Foster wrote a book entitled, “Money, Sex & Power.”² The book addressed what Foster believed to be the strongest motivational forces in life. His thesis was that if we were to master these three desires, we could master life. He counselled that we Christians adopt vows of simplicity, fidelity and service. Foster was correct in pointing to these aspects of life as potentially the most detrimental to the life of the Christian. There is little doubt in my mind that only through reliance on the Holy Spirit who lives within each believer can we address these areas. Certainly, sound counsel on how to treat members of the opposite sex is frequently lacking in the contemporary church, and when infidelity does occur, few among the churches are prepared to hold one another accountable.

It would be easy enough for us to state that holiness means avoid defrauding one another in the realm of business transactions; but the Apostle warns us against violating the rights of others, stating that reducing a fellow believer to an object rather than one who share the grace of God is violating the rights of that individual. We can deflect the divine criticism and avoid the pain of God's exposure, but ultimately we must confront the sordid truth that we are contaminated by our culture to a distressing degree. Paul states that being holy means knowing how to control one's body in holiness and honour. Sanctification means refusing to surrender to lustful passion as is characterised by the world. Holiness means that we assume responsibility for our brothers and sisters to treat them with respect, refusing to transgress against them.

Let me be very practical for a brief moment. We Christians cannot say that we are sanctified while watching two individuals engage in sexual activity, all the while excusing our action by calling it entertainment. We who are believers cannot reduce the act of love to a ribald “joke” and still respect one another. We cannot feed our minds on a diet—even transiently—of sexuality that degrades and debases others while exalting our own desires and expect that doing so honours the Lord. Have we not used the excuse too many times that there was “only” one sexual scene in the show we enjoyed so much last evening? Have we not justified our entertainment too often by suggesting that there were only a few filthy or suggestive comments about members of the other sex? Have we not sought approval in our own mind of what we watch or what we listen to by arguing that there was only a little suggestive behaviour by the actors and actresses or by contending that the songs reflect society? Let me say as an aside that Hollywood and the cable and television stations are not the friend of the individual seeking to progress in holiness.

² Richard J. Foster, **Money, Sex & Power: The Challenge of the Disciplined Life**, (Harper & Row, San Francisco, CA 1985)

Men, we cannot permit ourselves to think of our sisters as objects to be used for our own gratification; we are responsible to protect them, treating them with respect and honour. Women, you must not permit yourselves to treat men disrespectfully as though they were merely instruments designed for your personal pleasure. Each Christian, each follower of the Son of God, must accept responsibility for those who share life in this holy family. The transformation begins as we assume responsibility to control our own body in holiness and honour. I recommend that each believer review what she watches, consider what he listens to, think of the implications of what is entertaining, and determine to avoid slipping back into the lifestyle of death that once characterised your existence in this darkened world.

As a guide for our conduct in the world, I commend the words of the Apostle recorded in **EPHESIANS 5:1-17**. “Be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

“But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not become partners with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Awake, O sleeper,
and arise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”

CHRISTIAN DEPORTMENT IN A BROKEN WORLD — “Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.”

Love is the overarching principle for finding and applying the will of God in our lives. From the Word, we are taught, “God is love” [**1 JOHN 4:8, 16**]. When John makes this assertion, he provides a commentary that is easily overlooked. “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the Day of Judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world” [**1 JOHN 4:15-17**].

I question whether we often realise the import of what John says. Love is not an emotion; love is who we have become in Christ the Lord. In fact, we become the expression of God's existence. The manner in which we interact with people reveals the reality of the True and Living God. If we focus on our own desires, we demonstrate that He is not on the throne of our lives. If we focus outward, seeking the benefit of others, we demonstrate that He is on the throne of our life. Thus, in our text, Paul emphasises that the believers in Thessalonica were revealing the presence of God among them through their deportment in the world. Especially were they known as followers of Christ through their love for one another. Despite this demonstration of God's grace among them, the Apostle urges them to act with even greater love toward one another. Undoubtedly, was he to visit us, he would urge us to be just as diligent in pursuing the expression of God's love through our interaction with one another.

It is significant to note that love for others is tied closely to turning from sexual immorality—it is an issue of relationship, especially as we avoid degrading one another even in our mind. Note also that associated with the matter of love for fellow believers is the fact that we choose to live a quiet life, minding our own affairs even as we provide for ourselves. These aspects of life speak of our respect, of our love, for others. We do not want to be a burden to others, we avoid worrying others because we care for our own affairs, we do not draw unwarranted attention to ourselves. It is a mark of love for others when we assume responsibility for ourselves and avoid imposing on them the necessity of intervention to rescue us from harm.

Let me state the principle as a summary statement for the message. Each Christian must assume responsibility for his own life. Each believer is responsible to control her own body. Each follower of the Master must accept responsibility to love deeply, watching that we avoid wronging our fellow believers. We cannot fulfil the mandate given if we are not Christians. Outside of the Master, we are still at the mercy of lustful passion. Our great need is to be born from above and into the Family of God.

Would you be a Christian? Would you know the love of God? Would you live for eternity rather than living for the moment? The Word of God declares that Christ the Lord, the very Son of God, gave His own life as a sacrifice for your sin. He was buried; and He rose from the tomb on the third day. He walked among those who were His followers, and ascended into Heaven after forty days. Now, He is seated at the right hand of the Father; and from there, He has promised to return to bring salvation to those who look to Him and to bring judgement on those who live only for their own pleasure.

At this time, He calls all who are willing to accept His reign over their lives. This is not a mere ritual, nor a perfunctory act performed and then forgotten; Jesus truly lives, and He reigns over the life of those who are born from above. To be born from above, it is necessary that one receive Him as reigning over life. This is the biblical promise given to all who will accept it. "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, 'Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved'" [ROMANS 10:9-13].

Believe this message and be saved. Do it today; do it now. Amen.