

DEUTERONOMY 19:15-21

EVIL CANNOT BE CURED

“A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established. If a malicious witness arises to accuse a person of wrongdoing, then both parties to the dispute shall appear before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who are in office in those days. The judges shall inquire diligently, and if the witness is a false witness and has accused his brother falsely, then you shall do to him as he had meant to do to his brother. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. And the rest shall hear and fear, and shall never again commit any such evil among you. Your eye shall not pity. It shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.”¹

To the modern mind, evil is a malady to be cured. The mass murderer must be understood and the government must take steps to avoid the undesirable action ever occurring again. The underlying motive driving the thief must be uncovered and addressed so he will not want to steal again. National leaders and the cultural elite feel compelled to discover what drives the Jihadist who slaughters the innocent; and when the mass murderer is caught, we feel compelled to imprison him so that we can cure him. The overarching concept in modern jurisprudence is that evil can be cured. We incarcerate criminals, but the prevailing purpose for incarceration is treatment rather than punishment. However, evil cannot be cured.

Candidly, I am fearful of any government that attempts to cure evil rather than holding miscreants accountable for their acts. The old Soviet Union was a nation of laws—they had a constitution and agreed they would abide by the laws they drafted. Consequently, they boasted of their humane treatment of social deviants. The Duma did not outlaw Christianity; it reclassified it as mental illness. Christians were not executed because of belief in the Son of God—they were sent to mental institutions for treatment in order that they might be “cured” of their illness. It seems a trait of cultures and nations that with time they attempt to regulate faith through coercion, attempting to compel uniformity of thought among the citizenry. Christianity, especially, is targeted because it cannot acknowledge anyone as divine except for God.

After the fall of South Viet Nam, the conquerors from the north did not condemn those who differed on issues of policy with the state, they merely sent them to “re-education camps” where they would gain a new perspective and learn to keep their mouths shut. The northern Communists were disappointed that people spoke of them as uncivilised. “We are civilised,” they argued. “We don’t kill those who disagree with us; we re-educate them.” I suggest that efforts to cure evil are not only destructive, they are cruel in the extreme—they reflect the fallen nature of mankind’s ability to reason.

Despite the best efforts of modern societies to cure evil, it must be stated that evil cannot be cured. To speak of a cure is to assume that the one afflicted will be unchanged save for removal of the offending malady. To speak of curing evil is to assume that evil is merely a flaw in human character, a trifling deficit that has no real long-term consequences. However, evil condemns not only the soul of the person ensnared by evil, but it contaminates all who tolerate its presence.

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

Understand that evil is an offence to Holy God. Perhaps that is one of the major difficulties in speaking of evil among our contemporaries—we have defined evil down. Evil should be defined as any act or any thought that offends God's holiness. Because evil is an offence to Him, all evil is wicked. Those who engage in evil are condemned as wicked in the sight of the Lord God. What is required for mankind is not a cure for evil, but a means by which we can put evil away; we require a way to deal with evil.

EVIL IS INVASIVE — The command before us is one of several presented among the Deuteromic laws. To be certain, God's holy law set a high standard for ancient Israel—God demanded that His ancient people were to be holy. Among the faithful gathered as churches in this day, God still calls His people to be holy. Through Peter, God commands those who would follow Him, "Like the Holy One who called you, become holy yourselves in all your conduct, for it is written, 'You shall be holy, because I am holy'" [**1 PETER 1:15, 16 NET BIBLE**]. God's holiness was emphasised in decisive fashion during the days of wilderness wandering. In the Book of Deuteronomy, the LORD says repeatedly, "You shall purge the evil from among you."

Consider the other instances where God demanded that evil be purged through taking the life of the evil doer. False prophets were to be killed [**DEUTERONOMY 13:5**]. Idolaters were to be put to death [**DEUTERONOMY 17:7**], just as disobedience to Levitical decisions was to be punished by death [**DEUTERONOMY 17:12**]. Rebellious children [**DEUTERONOMY 21:21**], immoral people and adulterers were to be put to death [**DEUTERONOMY 22:21, 22, 24**]. Those enslaving fellow members of the community of faith were to be punished by death [**DEUTERONOMY 24:7**]. In each of these cases, the actions of those sentenced were a threat to the existence of the community. God was holy; likewise, His people are to be holy. Each of these laws was given to exalt the holiness of God and to impress upon them the knowledge that they were to be holy in their conduct.

Admittedly, such commands appear extreme, even excessive, to modern sensibilities. However, if these commands seem harsh or drastic, is it because we no longer value holiness? When our society is no longer willing to hold people accountable for their choices, doesn't this speak of an unhealthy self-centredness? Is this not creation of an exalted humanism that denies righteousness? We don't want to "punish" young girls with a child just because they were immoral, so we promote murder of the unborn. By the same rationale, we might execute the wrong person, and so we are prepared to exonerate the murderer, or even worse we incarcerate the convicted murderer for life rather than show that we value the life of the murdered victim.

We have become so concerned for "rights" that we are prepared to ignore responsibilities. Thus, every sluggard and drudge has a right to receive an income, a right to housing, a right to be fed; but in order to accomplish our newly discovered largess we redistribute the wealth, taking from those who are productive in order to support those who are takers. Thus, we nullify the word of the Apostle, "Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat" [**2 THESSALONIANS 3:6-10**]. Each of these situations to which I've alluded bespeak novel ideals that redefine righteousness and goodness and holiness.

Whenever we speak of evil, of necessity we must define holiness. Evil, likewise, must be defined since the definition is relative. I don't mean that evil can't be defined; I do mean that each culture, each generation, each speaker is tempted to redefine the concept to fit a particular worldview. If the individual is righteous in the eyes of God, he or she will endeavour to know the mind of God, and then strive to do the will of God. Christians appeal to the revealed mind of God whether we speak of evil or holiness. Holiness reflects the character of the Lord God. While our efforts to be holy can never be more than a pale reflection of His perfection, we are commanded to be holy. Similarly, we recognise evil as that which is opposed to God's righteous character; there is no fluidity in defining evil, no pliancy in our definition of wickedness.

Until Christ reigns on earth, wickedness will be with us. Though Christ died because of the sin of fallen mankind, His death will not deter the wicked from pursuing their own evil desires. Until they are quickened by the Spirit of God, they are incapable of turning from their wicked ways to the light of the Living God. Wicked people even seek approval from others! "They not only do [evil things], but even applaud others who practice them" [ROMANS 1:32 HCSB].

Evil will never be content to remain in the shadows; evil must flaunt itself. Evil insinuates itself into society, into our communities and even into our churches. In society, the distortion of Christian charity results in the imposition of socialistic ideas to compel the citizens to honour sloth and to celebrate immorality. Politicians seize more of earned wealth to supply housing and food for "the poor," and the definition of "poor" is constantly revised to include an ever greater number of people unprepared to work. I am dismayed by the sustained push to tolerate immorality as social elites endeavour to silence dissent from the imposition of immorality as a social ideal. Politicians seek to silence those who dare speak out in favour of what was once common morality—marriage before sexual activity, marriage between one man and one woman, courtesy toward all and especially toward women, civility in language.

During the past several decades, homosexual activists grew increasingly vocal as they demanded acceptance of their behaviour and as they demanded normalisation of their lifestyles. As homosexuality gained acceptability within society, I noted with disappointment that those advocating traditional morality were increasingly condemned as intolerant, the charge being led by loud braying from the same activists who once sought tolerance for their deviance. They were joined in these efforts by politicians pandering for votes wherever they could be found.

In similar fashion, modern communities are uncertain how to respond to violence, and we are thus paralysed when thugs intimidate the citizenry through unrestrained violence. We caution citizens that they must not defend themselves or their families when assaulted; rather they are commanded to await the police who will file a report in the aftermath of the assaults. The situation is reminiscent of the days in which Jeremiah prophesied.

"Thus says the LORD of hosts:
'Cut down her trees;
cast up a siege mound against Jerusalem.
This is the city that must be punished;
there is nothing but oppression within her.
As a well keeps its water fresh,
so she keeps fresh her evil;
violence and destruction are heard within her;
sickness and wounds are ever before me.'"

[JEREMIAH 6:6, 7]

The situation became so bad for Jeremiah that he despaired of a fruitful ministry.

“Whenever I speak, I cry out,
I shout, ‘Violence and destruction!’
For the word of the LORD has become for me
a reproach and derision all day long.”

[JEREMIAH 20:8]

In a serious distortion of civility and sound judgement, contemporary society turns a blind eye toward violence in some ethnic communities because to note reality is to open oneself to being branded as racist. Nevertheless, resentment grows and just beneath the surface a toxic brew of rage simmers. Eventually, the noxious broth must boil over to the detriment of all.

Among the churches, congregants are told that they must maintain a strange unity that is based on maintenance of denominational institutions rather than being based on doctrine. Therefore, modern congregations depreciate doctrine even as they exalt timidity in the pulpit. Then, as the churches are progressively emptied because the pulpit has no authoritative word, the few remaining survivors bemoan the dearth of attendees. As denominations race to outdo one another in demonstrating the breadth of tolerance for that which is opposed to righteousness,

I recall one Fundamentalist preacher from years past who frequently warned his listeners, “Evil grins in the face of Holy God.” He was correct! Because evil is invasive, the wicked exult in what appears for the moment to be their triumph. However, I read the end of the Book—evil does not succeed. James Russell Lowell was undoubtedly correct when he wrote:

“Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne—
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own.”²

EVIL IS INSIDIOUS — Evil does not present itself as evil; only in light of God’s perfect law is evil seen as sinful. We are incapable of recognising what is wicked as dishonourable apart from the law of God. After testifying that the Law condemned him despite attesting that the Law is good, Paul explains, “Moses’ Teachings are holy, and the commandment is holy, right and good. Now, did something good cause my death? That’s unthinkable! Rather, my death was caused by sin so that sin would be recognised for what it is. Through a commandment sin became more sinful than ever” [ROMANS 7:12, 13 GOD’S WORD]. Therefore, evil is insidious, deceitful, treacherous; evil promises the unwary so much, but in the end it delivers death.

The Apostles abhorred evil, and so should we. Polycarp, a disciple of John, reported to Irenaeus that on one occasion when the Apostle entered the baths at Ephesus and saw the Gnostic leader, Cerinthus, inside, he immediately left the baths, shouting, “Let us flee, lest also the baths fall in, since Cerinthus is inside, the enemy of the truth.” Marcion on meeting Polycarp demanded, “Recognise us,” to which Polycarp replied, “I recognise the first-born of Satan.”³

² James Russell Lowell, “The Present Crisis,” **Poems of James Russell Lowell**, Great Literature Online (<http://www.classicauthors.net/Lowell/PoemsOfJamesRussellLowell/>) accessed 22 November 2013

³ Eusebius, **The Ecclesiastical History, Vols. 1 and 2: English Translation**, T. E. Page, E. Capps, W. H. D. Rouse, L. A. Post and E. H. Warmington (ed.), Kirsopp Lake and J. E. L. Oulton (trans.), The Loeb Classical Library (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 1926-1932) 337-9

The abhorrence of evil was because it is insidious, insinuating itself into the fabric of daily life until it is ready to destroy the righteous. When evil has insinuated itself into the fabric of congregational life, the connection with the Head of the Church will be severed and the Body will die. Such happened early in the life of the churches, necessitating the several warnings that are recorded in the New Testament. For instance, recall the necessity that prompted Jude to write. “Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

“Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgement of the great day—just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire” [JUDE 3-7].

Paul would speak of “false brothers” who slipped in unnoticed among the churches in Galatia. They were present to spy out the freedom that the Galatians enjoyed; their purpose, unstated but nevertheless a threat, was to enslave the believers [see GALATIANS 2:1-5]. In similar fashion, Paul warned the Corinthians against “false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.” He continued by ripping away the masks of these evil doers. “And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness” [2 CORINTHIANS 11:14, 15].

I have often referred to the final admonition Paul delivered to the elders of Ephesus when he met them at Miletus. “I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears” [ACTS 20:29-31].

Note the term “fierce wolves”; this is a translation of the Greek phrase, *lúkoî bareîs*. The word that is translated “fierce” is far more suggestive than the casual reader might imagine. The term did indeed speak of that which was fierce; and thus, the translation is appropriate. Undoubtedly, one connotation of the word speaks of suffering. However, the word *barús* could just as readily connote “importance.” The word referred to persons weighed down with dignity, noted as people of influence, power or presence.⁴ Paul uses this word to describe Christian anticipation when contrasting present trials with the glory that shall shortly be revealed. “This light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison” [2 CORINTHIANS 4:17]. The phrase “weight of glory” reflects this concept honour and power. Thus, it is reasonable to suggest that the elders would have understood that the “fierce wolves” of whom the Apostle warned and who would be entering in among the flocks of God will be individuals weighed down with honours conferred by this dying world, bedecked with degrees and influence, possessing power and exuding faux authority. In short, the Apostle is warning against powerful religious leaders who are inwardly savage, vicious and wolfish. Their reputations and standing in the eyes of the faithful would make their insinuation among the churches that much easier. They would infiltrate surreptitiously to wreak havoc on the churches.

⁴ Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich (eds.), **Theological Dictionary of the New Testament** (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI 1964–) 554

This insidious nature of evil ensures its destructive nature. The unwary are insensible of the danger until suddenly the evil destroys the work that has been accomplished and halts all advance in the Faith. Elders are to be watchful for evil that is always insinuating itself into the fabric of church life. However, no less is it the responsibility of each believer to be alert to the danger of tolerating just a little bit of error.

EVIL IS INFECTIOUS — Evil contaminates the whole assembly. Paul cautions believers that, “A little leaven leavens the whole lump” [1 CORINTHIANS 5:6]. Do you recall the account of Achan’s sin that brought trouble to Israel [see JOSHUA 7:1-26]? If the effects of evil impacted only the one caught in its foul grip, it would be tragic enough. However, evil contaminates all mankind. Tolerating that which is wicked can only lead to destruction. Reading the account of Achan, it is easy to argue that he alone should have been held accountable for his sin. However, his greed had already brought deep sorrow to thirty-six families and shame to the entire nation.

It is significant to note the manner in which the chapter begins. Listen to the divine text: “But the people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things” [JOSHUA 7:1]. Though it is apparent that Achan disobeyed, and that he did so without the knowledge of anyone else in the camp, the entire camp is accountable before God. Therefore, when God confronts Joshua, He says, “Israel has sinned; they have transgressed my covenant that I commanded them; they have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen and lied and put them among their own belongings. Therefore the people of Israel cannot stand before their enemies. They turn their backs before their enemies, because they have become devoted for destruction. I will be with you no more, unless you destroy the devoted things from among you” [JOSHUA 7:11, 12].

While I am very much aware that modern nations and even communities are not theocracies, it is nevertheless true that a little bit of evil contaminates the entire community in time. Assuredly, I am correct in stating that we *can* make the application from this information to a congregation. Still, the Wise Man has written words that are ignored to our own peril.

“Righteousness exalts a nation,
but sin is a reproach to any people.”

[PROVERBS 14:34]

The principle is that when sin goes unchecked within a congregation, all alike pay when God judges. Evil caused God to withhold His blessing when the people went out to battle; the consequence of unchecked sin was the death of about thirty-six men. In thirty-six tents, widows and mothers and children mourned because of the evil perpetuated by one man. Evil is infectious. This is why it is so dangerous. Evil is invasive—constantly seeking entrance into the life of any congregation. Evil is insidious—it surreptitiously insinuates itself into the fabric even of the Faith. And evil is infectious—it contaminates every facet of life ultimately.

One of the greatest sources of spiritual weakness among the churches of this day must assuredly be the failure of the churches to hold members accountable to biblical standards, the failure of the churches to apply congregational discipline on the members. Though boards, notorious tyrants that run (or ruin) the churches, almost always exercise authority over pastors, they haven’t sufficient courage to apply biblical discipline to preachers when such *is* required—they just fire them and hire another preacher that will do the bidding of the board. Since these boards seldom meet biblical standards either for eldership or for a diaconate, perhaps this deficit should not be surprising.

On the other hand, honesty compels me to observe that neither are pastors especially noted for their willingness to apply biblical discipline to errant members of the assembly. Because of these deficiencies, the evil that infiltrates the churches spreads like a bad flu until nearly all within the several congregations are infected and the work falters. Those that are not directly participating in the wicked action, become tolerant of the evil doer, thus killing the work.

There is no antidote to evil; once it is established in a congregation, it contaminates the entire fabric of the assembly. We are unable to construct, much less perform, a liturgy that will placate Holy God. How much greater the wickedness of our effort when we are contaminated by ignoring the evil that saturates our lives? The Psalmist is undoubtedly correct in his assessment:

“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]

Clean hands and a pure heart are required to receive God’s blessing. Verity and honour are necessary for God’s blessing. There is no cleanliness, no purity, no verity, no honour until evil is judged. You and I are incapable of judging evil, though we are responsible to ensure that evil is adjudged. For sin to be seen as sinful beyond measure [see ROMANS 7:13], it is necessary for us to appeal to the Holy One.

EVIL JUDGED — When God commanded His ancient people to purge the evil from their midst, He made this observation, “The rest shall hear and fear, and shall never again commit any such evil among you” [DEUTERONOMY 19:20]. God’s people are required to exercise judgement. We are responsible to walk sufficiently close to the Master that we learn to abhor all that is evil. We are responsible to walk sufficiently close to the Master that we learn to discern good from evil.

Peter writes, “All of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. For

“Whoever desires to love life
and see good days,
let him keep his tongue from evil
and his lips from speaking deceit;
let him turn away from evil and do good;
let him seek peace and pursue it.
For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,
and his ears are open to their prayer.
But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

[1 PETER 3:8-12]

To be certain, the text calls for precisely such judgement exercised by God's people. Each time we observe the Lord's Table, we read the cautionary words Paul penned to the saints in Corinth. "Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world" [1 CORINTHIANS 11:27-32]. Take responsibility for your own life. Before God, hold yourself accountable to refuse to surrender to the desires of the flesh.

This is nothing less than a narrow application of the delightful promise that has been written by the Apostle of Love. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" [1 JOHN 1:9].

What we do as individuals must likewise be imposed on us as a congregation. We are responsible for one another; we are responsible to hold one another accountable for our actions. The gold standard for congregations is to build one another, to encourage one another and to console one another [cf. 1 CORINTHIANS 14:3]. The concept flows out of the ideal of the congregation as the Body of Christ. This is the basis for the apostolic admonition, "By the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

"Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality" [ROMANS 12:3-13].

However, we must submit ourselves to divine judgement first. God judged sin at the Cross of Calvary. Sin was demonstrated to be abhorrent to Holy God when the Son of God presented His life as a sacrifice. How powerful is the divine statement included in the Letter to the Christians of Colossae! "You, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross" [COLOSSIANS 2:13, 14].

One of the more meaningful passages pointing to the wickedness that has touched each of us, and detailing what God has done about that contamination, is found in Paul's First Letter to the Corinthian Christians. The Apostle writes, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" [1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-11].

God has already judged evil as wicked. We need to agree with God's assessment, receiving the cleansing He provides so that we may be free of the contamination. As an assembly, we are responsible to reject that which dishonours Him. That which does not lie within the will of the Father must be seen for what it is—evil. And evil cannot be cured; it must be purged. We must be cleansed of sin, removing the evil from our lives.

The philosophies of this dying world must not hold sway over our lives. Rather, we must be ruled by the Spirit of God. He does not seek to make us better people—He is appointed to make us new people. It is necessary for us to be born from above. Then, as twice-born people, we will have the capacity to please Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. What a comforting promise is given to all who will receive the life offered in Christ the Lord. Writing in the Letter to Roman Christians, Paul states in [ROMANS 8:1-11]: “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

“You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.”

My prayer is that you are thus purified, that you are thus saved, that you thus alive in Christ the Lord. Faith in Him, the Risen Son of God, secures life for each person who will receive Him. Amen.