


JAMES 2:14-17

REAL FAITH IS NEVER PASSIVE

“What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”¹

 On the basis of the text before us, the great reformer Martin Luther pronounced James a “right strawy epistle.” Without doubt, Luther was instrumental in advancing the Faith of Christ our Lord; for this, we can each give thanks. In the case of his assessment of the Epistle of James, however, Luther was wrong. James is anything but a right strawy epistle; James is an in-your-face letter insisting that faith must be real. If it is not, he is suggesting quite strongly that you need to reassess what you believe and the value of your faith.

This raises the question of how we can recognise genuine faith—real faith. James, ever practical in applying the Faith of Christ the Lord to daily life, says that faith is observable. Saving faith energises those holding that Faith. And faith in Christ the Lord is transformational. Explore the text with me to discover that real faith is never passive.

FAITH IN CHRIST THE LORD IS OBSERVABLE — Calvin, the Swiss Reformer, recaptured a great truth when he testified, “Faith alone justifies; but the faith that justifies is never alone.” This essential truth is frequently forgotten in this day late in the Dispensation of the Church. Today, it is distressingly easy to discover churchgoers who aver faith in faith and even urge faith in the Faith. However, it is faith in the Risen Son of God that saves.

Those who know me, who have listened to my preaching for some time, will know that I stress the importance of obedience to the command of God to identify with the Saviour for all who have believed. Those who believe are commanded, as was Paul, to “Rise and be baptised” [ACTS 22:16]. This is in keeping with the command of the Master as He prepared His disciples for service following His resurrection: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” [MATTHEW 28:19, 20].

It is doubtful that one who refuses to identify with the Risen Son of God in the way the Master commanded knows Him or knows what it is to call Him Master. Perhaps one can plead ignorance if he is untaught or if she has not read the Word of God, but innately, the newly born child of God desires to proclaim his newfound faith. The pattern for declaring faith in the Lord Jesus presented throughout the Word of God is open confession through baptism.

When Peter had concluded his Pentecostal message and the other disciples had pressed the truth concerning Jesus to the crowd that had gathered, the man of God called on all who heard him, “Repent and be baptised every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ” [ACTS 2:38]. The Word notes, “So those who received his word were baptised” [ACTS 2:41]. Later, Philip conducted a successful evangelistic meeting in Samaria. Doctor Luke observes that when the Samaritans “believed Philip as he preached the Good News about the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ, they were baptised, both men and women” [ACTS 8:12].

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God interrupted Philip's exciting work among the Samaritans because He had yet other work for the evangelist. In the desert, Philip encountered an official of the Ethiopian court, and became God's instrument for turning that man to faith in the Living Christ. The man Philip met was, in fact, the Minister of the Exchequer for Ethiopia. He was returning from Jerusalem where he had gone to worship at the Temple. As he rode in his chariot, he was reading from the scroll of Isaiah. Prompted by the Spirit of God, Philip revealed Jesus in the Scriptures the man had been reading. He understood the Scriptures, believed and sought to identify with the Risen Saviour. Coming upon a wadi in the desert, he asked, "What prevents me from being baptised" [ACTS 8:36]. Philip answered, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." The testimony of the Ethiopian official was, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" [ACTS 8:37, see margin note]. So, Philip baptised this man on his profession of faith in the Son of God [see ACTS 8:39].

Saul of Tarsus, notorious baiter of the early Christians, having met the Risen Son of God, believed and was baptised [ACTS 9:18; 22:16]. Cornelius and those gathered with him to hear the divine emissary who would bring the message of life received the message of life in the Saviour, and immediately these Gentiles, having believed, were baptised [ACTS 10:47, 48]. Doctor Luke continues his account of the advance of the Faith by relating how Lydia, the first convert in Europe, believed and was baptised [ACTS 16:14, 15].

Following Lydia were others who came to faith in Philippi, including the jailer who had watched Paul and Silas during the night of their imprisonment. When God freed His servants, the jailed was brought under conviction by the Holy Spirit. Crying out to the men who had been jailed, he asked, "What must I do to be saved" [ACTS 16:30]? The answer, a classic in evangelistic studies, was, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" [ACTS 16:31]. Having spoken the Word to Him, they baptised Him together with all who had received that Word [ACTS 16:33].

In Corinth, Crispus, the synagogue ruler, together with many other Corinthians who heard Paul preaching the message of life, "believed and were baptised" [ACTS 18:8]. Likewise, when Paul encountered adherents of John, who had a partial Gospel, he pointed them to the Messiah the Baptist had preached. They believed the message Paul declared, and having heard, "they were baptised in the Name of the Lord Jesus" [ACTS 19:1-5].

Throughout the Book of Acts, the pattern consistently presented is that all who believe are obedient to the command to identify openly through baptism—it is always believe and be baptised, never does baptism precede belief. When churches make baptism optional, and when professed believers delay obedience for the sake of personal convenience or to avoid the stigma of faith, it is doubtful that they know either the Lord Jesus or His Word.

Having identified with the Lord whom they have embraced, believers will be indelibly marked by the stamp of heaven. As we read the New Testament account of the first believers, it is impossible to miss the point that they were a people marked by their lives as belonging to God. Those who were baptised at Pentecost "devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" [ACTS 2:42]. They sought out their brothers and sisters and together grew in grace and in the knowledge of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. As an enclave of Heaven, the Christians worshipped and fellowshiped together.

I am confused by people who avow the Faith, but want nothing to do with the saints. John would have been indignant at such an affront to the Faith he presented. A primary emphasis in the first letter he wrote to the saints is the necessity of loving our fellow believers. He states, "Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. But whoever hates his brother is in darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes" [1 JOHN 2:10, 11].

He becomes quite pointed in his declaration, “By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practise righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother” [1 JOHN 3:10]. This powerful affirmation is iterated when John reminds his readers of the message that was received from the beginning, “We should love one another” [1 JOHN 3:11], and when he applies the identifying mark imprinted on each child of God, “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death” [1 JOHN 3:14]. The theme continues as John asserts, “We ought to lay down our lives for the brothers” [1 JOHN 3:16], and wonders how the love of God can abide in anyone who closes his heart to a brother in need [1 JOHN 3:17]. His summary admonition, worthy of holding in our memory, is, “Let us not love in word or talk, but in deed and in truth” [1 JOHN 3:18].

Let me translate John’s teaching into the modern Canadian milieu. A Church is not an institution which we join and use for our convenience. Neither is a church a mere religious organisation that we attend when it is convenient. The church to which the Spirit of God has joined you is the Body of Christ. You are an integral part of that Body, appointed to serve God through serving His people as you exercise the gifts with which He has entrusted you. I remind you that the gifts you received were given so that you could participate in building up others within the Body and so you could encourage others and console others [see 1 CORINTHIANS 14:3].

To absent yourself from participation in the life of the Body is effectively to deny that you love either the Head of the Body or the Body itself. It is no more possible to convince others that you love your wife or your husband while refusing to live with her or him, than to convince others of love for the church while failing to participate in the life of the assembly.

I am not merely advocating attendance at the services of the church—though receiving the instruction of the Word and sharing in the worship of the people of God is integral to fulfilling your responsibility as a part of the Body of Christ. I am reminding you that the people of God are charged with exercising the gifts God has entrusted to each one in order to build the entire Body of Christ. This means that each of us is responsible to serve one another in love, making every effort to build each other in this most holy Faith.

To love the people of God is to love the Body of Christ. If we love the people of God, we seek the welfare of God’s people. Because we love the Body of Christ, we make every effort to advance the knowledge of Christ through holy living and through choosing to be godly in the face of wickedness in the world. We who love Christ and His people long for the best for each fellow Christian and we invest the several gifts God has entrusted to us for the benefit of others. To fail to live thusly is to reveal that we know little of love. It is my stated opinion that many of the professed saints of God are terminally infected with a deadly virus manifested by debilitating self-interest that enervates practical expressions of love for others.

In the context of the text before us, it should be apparent that faith is observable as the people of God serve one another and as they reveal the presence of Christ among them. Though deeds do not save an individual, deeds do indeed reveal the salvation that the redeemed enjoy. We do not perform good works in order to be saved, but because we are saved we will perform good works. Good works refer not merely to acts of benevolence; rather they speak of doing those things that Jesus did when He walked upon this earth. He showed compassion to the weak and to the vulnerable, even as He spoke the truth in love. He held the religious people accountable for their actions while encouraging sinners to look to Him for salvation. He fed the hungry and arranged to clothe the naked, while He preached the Good News to sinners.

In His home synagogue, following His temptation, He publicly read the words of Isaiah:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”

[LUKE 4:18, 19]

To those in attendance that day He announced that this was His mission as well.

As a Community of the Faith, our mission must be that which has been given by the Saviour—we are appointed to reveal Him to the world in which we live. Our great priority is to make Christ known through proclaiming His Good News to the poor, through proclaiming liberty to the captives, through giving sight to the blind, through setting at liberty those who are oppressed, and through proclaiming the year of the Lord’s favour. I suggest that until we are visiting in the neighbourhoods of the poor of our city, inviting all we meet to Christ, until we are seeking out those held captive to sin, and until we are witnessing the liberating power of the Spirit of God breaking the yoke of bondage for those who are oppressed, we have not fulfilled Christ’s purpose for us as a congregation.

It must become the aspiration of each member of this church to win souls to life in Christ. To do this, we must surrender the idea of seeking respectability in the eyes of the society in which we are immersed. Visiting among the poorest neighbourhoods of our cities, we must there evangelise, telling the residents of the power of Christ the Lord to save. Opening our hearts to people that are held in thralldom to alcohol and drugs, people who have bought into the lie of this age that sexual gratification is the highest aspiration and are therefore enslaved by sexual addiction, people who are riding the merry-go-round of materialism trying to seize the brass ring, we must tell all that freedom is found in Christ as Lord of life. And we must live as free people ourselves, not content merely to speak of liberty but daring to live as free people.

FAITH IN CHRIST THE LORD IS ENERGISING — Those who are born from above are energised by the presence of the Spirit of God. When a person is saved, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in that individual’s life. Being a Christian requires divine empowerment; we must have the energising presence of God’s Spirit to be godly and to do the deeds of which James speaks.

Most people, reading this portion of the Word, assume that they will immediately begin to show the compassion required. However, too many evangelical Christians act as though the Christian life were a sprint—they exert great effort momentarily and then zeal grows quiescence and they enter a form of religious somnolence. However, the Christian life is a marathon. Continuous exertion and constant training is required if we will finish well.

Paul encouraged the Corinthian Christians to exert themselves in the race of life, living in such a way as to win the prize. “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it” [1 CORINTHIANS 9:24]. Clearly, the Apostle’s desire was for Christians to stretch themselves, reaching beyond themselves and refusing to be content with the routine of life as others know it. That final encouragement is precisely what we need if we will reach beyond ourselves and honour Christ. The Living Christ does not wish us to be content with mere existence, but rather He longs for us to excel at life.

The author of the Letter to Hebrew Christians reminded those who read his words, “You have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised” [**HEBREWS 10:36**]. This writer would have contended that energy must be supplied if the child of God is to honour the Lord and if the Christian is to accomplish anything of lasting significance. He was urging these Jewish believers to find the untapped strength supplied by God’s Spirit allowing them to stand firm when the winds of adversity blew. In the same way, you and I need to discover the inner resource that comes from the presence of God’s Spirit if we will stand firm, much less to excel in the call to honour the Lord Jesus.

That same writer to the Hebrew Christians wrote of the work required to finish life well. “Therefore, 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.

Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,
nor be weary when reproved by him.
For the Lord disciplines the one he loves,
and chastises every son whom he receives.”

It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears” [**HEBREWS 12:1-17**].

Poised on the edge of eternity, Paul reviewed his life and wrote of the price he had paid to arrive where he then stood. Peering into the future, he wrote of what he anticipated after this life was complete. “I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing” [**2 TIMOTHY 4:6-8**].

We may continue as we always have, living for ourselves and for our own interests. Or, we can live in such a way that it is evident that we intend to compete to win. We can be just another religious organisation; or we can be an enclave of Heaven, living for the glory of Christ our Lord. The former requires no special energy or preparation; we just need to exist. However, if we choose the latter, we need the energy that is supplied by the Spirit of God.

Paul declared, “I toil, struggling with all His energy that He powerfully works within me” [COLOSSIANS 1:29]. He was speaking of the power that is supplied by the Spirit of God. Christians have a great and mighty promise that God’s energy is working powerfully within. We should ask what that energy accomplishes. Why has God supplied us with this magnificent spiritual energy? Paul writes of “the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the **working** of his great might” [EPHESIANS 1:19]. Therefore, that energy is supplied to display the greatness of His might. Ultimately, we will be successful in our labours because God is energising our labour.

As an aside, that Greek word is the term *enérgeia*, which sounds amazingly similar to our English word **energy**. It speaks of power, especially focusing on the concept of that which energises an activity. Consider several instances of the use of that word. Concerning the Gospel, Paul declares that he was made a “minister according to the gift of God’s grace, which was given me by the **working** of his power” [EPHESIANS 3:7]. I take from this that the gifts we each receive are also guaranteed to work effectively because God is energising those gifts.

Again, the Apostle says of the Body of Christ that “when each part is **working** properly,” the body grows because “it builds itself up in love” [EPHESIANS 4:16]. Where the Spirit of God works effectively, harmony reigns and the congregation seeks to build one another in this Most Holy Faith. The Spirit’s energy ensures that the Body works.

Concerning the gifts that you have received, Paul taught that “There are varieties of **activities**, but it is the same God who **empowers** them all in everyone” [1 CORINTHIANS 12:6]. Here, he uses both the noun and the verbal form of the word, emphasising that God is at work in what we might otherwise consider to be mundane aspects of Christian service. The Apostle continues by stating that, “All these are **empowered** by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills” [1 CORINTHIANS 12:11]. You are a living dynamo, capable of amazing feats of service because it is God who is energising you and equipping you to fulfil His will for your life and for the benefit of the Body.

Before I move to the final point, I want to look forward to examine the power that God has promised to exercise on behalf of His people and to look back to the working of that same energy which has been exercised on our behalf. Looking forward, Paul testifies that Christ “will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the **power** that enables him even to subject all things to himself” [PHILIPPIANS 3:21]. The Spirit that now dwells within the Child of God also provides the power to transform us into the image of Christ at the resurrection. That power which is at work now enabling you to perform the will of God is the same power that will raise you from the dead and present you before His throne complete in Christ.

The energy that now works in you to accomplish the will of God for you and for His people is the identical power that gave you the new quality of life that you now enjoy. Paul reminds us that our baptism pictures the new birth when we “were ... raised with [Christ] through faith in the powerful **working** of God, who raised Him from the dead” [COLOSSIANS 2:12]. When James challenges his readers to review the practical application of the Faith they profess, he is actually tying that practical application of service to the new birth they have received and to the resurrection they anticipate. God is energising His people to perform His will.

FAITH IN CHRIST THE LORD IS TRANSFORMATIONAL — Faith in Christ the Lord is observable, as we have seen. That same faith also energises—both enabling Christians to perform all that God wills and encouraging all within the Body to excel as they work together. There is yet another truth that I want you to see—Faith in Christ the Lord is transformational. Christians can be identified by their lives. Changes take place involuntarily, automatically, in the lives of those who are born from above, though outward adjustments in lifestyle will likely still be required as the Spirit of God works out God's purposes in the life of the believer. To be born from above implies that a process is initiated that will ultimately lead to maturity.

What does this say about faith? Among other truths, your faith is not about how you feel. Neither is faith solely concerned with what is believed, though the content of faith is vital; rather, the faith that saves must be centred on One who is able to save. Who is believed is essential. Believing the wrong person will certainly condemn a person. Having believed Christ the Lord, and certainly accepting the truth of what He says, we will of necessity be changed. Faith is not passive; faith is active and alive. Faith is not senescent; faith is virile. Faith is always at work changing the one who believes from the earthly image to the heavenly image. As you walk by faith, and not by sight, you are being transformed into the image of God's beloved Son.

Let me state bluntly that if your faith has not changed you, you need to change your faith. Saving faith sets in motion transformation of the life of the one believing; moreover, it is a transformation that will assuredly continue until we are at last changed into the image of God's Son. This is the meaning of the comforting words the Apostle John wrote, "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" [1 JOHN 3:2]. Indeed, all who have believed are "predestined to be conformed to the image of [God's] Son" [ROMANS 8:29]. When He returns, the Lord Jesus Christ "will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself [PHILIPPIANS 3:21].

There are several important points to consider in light of this knowledge that faith transforms those who believe. A transformed person is *obedient to the will of God*. This means that the child of God not only wants to obey Christ the Lord, but that he or she *does* obey Christ the Lord. The redeemed search the Scriptures to know the will of the Master, and they are sensitive to do all that He commands. I do not mean to imply that the child of God never disobeys, but the desire of saved people is to fulfil the will of the Father. The lifelong tendency is to discover the will of God and to do what He has commanded. Those who are disobedient are disciplined if they have a true relationship to the Father.

Individuals who are disobedient to the will of the Master and yet who are not disciplined reveal through the absence of discipline that they have no vital relationship to the Father. We saw this earlier when we read that extended portion from the Hebrew Letter. There, we read, "If you do not experience discipline, something all sons have shared in, then you are illegitimate and not sons" [HEBREWS 12:8, NET BIBLE].

One who is transformed by the presence of the Spirit of Christ is *a builder*. Transformed individuals want to build the Body of Christ and they invest the gifts with which God has entrusted them to accomplish this noble purpose. I know the churches of this community need revival. The primary reason I am so confident of this need is that the professed Christian community is populated with people who "go to church," though they have no concept of "being the church." Church, in the estimate of the most of confessing Christendom, speaks of an organisation rather than speaking of the Community of Faith, the Body of Christ.

An individual may join the Elks, or the Lions, or the Rotary, or any of a number of service organisations; then, having become a member of the group, the individual may seek to gain new members to advance the various activities of the club. However, a Christian appointed by the Spirit of God to a particular congregation seeks to build those who already share in the life of the Body. Because the believer invests himself or herself in building others, he or she is strengthened and encouraged even as the congregation prospers and grows in numbers.

God is concerned that His people build up one another in this Faith. Paul urges us as Christians to “pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding” [ROMANS 14:19]. He also urges, “Let each of us please his neighbour for his good, to build him up” [ROMANS 15:2]. We need to heed the admonition to “strive to excel in building up the church” [1 CORINTHIANS 14:12], and to “Let all things be done for building up” others and the church [see 1 CORINTHIANS 14:26]. The gifts possessed were entrusted to each Christian “for building up the Body of Christ” [EPHESIANS 4:12]. The thought that should linger in the mind of each person hearing the message is the need to “encourage one another and build one another up” [1 THESSALONIANS 5:11].

My encouragement is for each one to review his or her participation in the life of the Body. Ruthlessly assess the degree to which you are building others. In the realm of the Spirit, you are either building or destroying—you can claim no neutrality. If you are not investing your gifts in others, you are squandering what God has entrusted to you. If you are seeking your own comfort instead of standing firm in the conflict that surrounds the people of God at all times, you cannot say that you are building—you are destroying the work of God.

The transformed individual *seeks the lost*, in keeping with the heart of the Saviour. Jesus came “to seek and to save the lost” [LUKE 19:10]. In the same way, those who follow Him share in His longing for the lost to be saved. They “pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest” [MATTHEW 9:37]. They “go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in” [LUKE 14:23] because they want the House of the Lord to be filled.

The Faith of Christ the Lord impels us to reach out with the message of life. I know that many times people excuse their lack of witness by saying that they cannot tell another how to be saved. However, each of us is able to tell a friend how to drive to the video store or to the grocery store. Each of us is able to relate whether we enjoyed a movie we may have watched or a song we may have heard. If we can do this, we can tell others of the freedom we have found in the Lord Jesus Christ. If we can point someone asking directions how to find a particular street we can tell others how to find their way to Christ. If we have the desire to tell others of Christ—and we have that desire if Christ dwells within—God will give us opportunity to speak. Let each of us ask God to give us opportunity and to equip us to speak at the appropriate time.

Transformed people spend time in the presence of Him who loved them and gave Himself for them. In short, transformed people are *people of prayer and people of the Book*. You who are married, do you enjoy spending time with your spouse? Do you enjoy speaking with him or her, discussing the routine aspects of your day and hearing of the events that transpired in his or her day? Should we not likewise enjoy spending time speaking with Him who sticks closer than a brother? Should we not look forward to opportunities to hear from Him as we will whenever we read the Word of God?

This is the consistent message of the Psalmist, especially in the 119th PSALM. Listen to him. “O how I love Your law” [PSALM 119:97]! “I love Your testimonies” [PSALM 119:119]. “I love Your commandments” [PSALM 119:127]. “I love Your precepts” [PSALM 119:159]. “I hate and abhor falsehood, but I love Your law” [PSALM 119:163]. God has given us His Word so that we can know Him and invites us to pray so that we can commune with Him.

I am not saying that we must memorise vast portions of the Bible to prove anything, but those who love God will long to know the will of God. Those who delight in God will want to please Him by learning what pleases Him and through seeking His presence with them. As we know God more fully, we recognise our own weakness and our dependence upon Him.

My beloved people, I am convinced that we need nothing less than revival if we are to make an indelible mark for the cause of Christ. It is my conviction that we must discover anew the will of God and then courageously do His will if we will survive as a community of faith. It is time for us to discover that real faith is never passive, and to permit the Faith that works among us to have unhindered freedom to be worked out in our lives.

Do you have the faith of which I have spoken? Have you experienced this transformational power? This power inevitably results when the Spirit of God resides in the life of one who is born from above. To be born again and into the Family of God, you need but believe the message of life as declared in the Word of God. We know that Jesus died because of our sin and rose for our justification. Thus, the Bible declares, "If you confess with you mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' believing in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart one believes resulting in justification, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved." The Word of God continues by encouraging all people, "Everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord shall be saved" [**ROMANS 10:9, 10, 13** author's translation].

We call on all who are willing to believe this message, thus receiving the promised life that is freely offered to all through Christ the Lord. Our prayer is that you will be born again and into the Family of God, discovering the freedom and the life that we share. Amen.