

JOHN 14: 6

JESUS, THE GREAT I AM: I AM THE LIFE

“Jesus said ... ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life.’”¹

Many exist; few live. Even among the churches of our Lord, this statement holds true. Reflecting as we do, the society within which we are immersed, we Christians have become almost indistinguishable from the inhabitants of this dying world. The most of mankind confuses existence with life; and among the churches, the situation is not much better. Existence means that one has presence in the world; life means that one rises above existence. Living is more than breathing, taking nourishment, reproducing—living speaks of vital interaction with the Author of Life.

Jesus spoke by faith when He said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.” The Master said, “I am the Way,” when soon He would hang impotent on a cross. “I am the Truth,” He testified, when the lies of evil people were soon to prevail against Him. “I am the Life,” was spoken by one whose corpse within mere hours would lie wrapped in grave clothes in a dark tomb. How the faith of His disciples would be shaken; how our puny faith is often shaken in the face of wickedness that appears to always prevail and triumph.

Perhaps you recall the words that the Master spoke to a grieving sister when death had taken her brother. Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live” [JOHN 11:25]. Soon after speaking the words recorded in our text, the Master comforted His disciples, saying, “Because I live, you also will live” [JOHN 14:19]. Whenever Jesus spoke, He exuded life—not mere existence, but life.

Those who knew Him were alive in a way that they had never known previously. After He had risen from the dead, Jesus encountered two disciples walking to the village of Emmaus. After correcting their theology, the Master was taken from their sight as He blessed bread in their presence. Listen to these two men after they realised Who had been with them. “Did not our hearts burn within us when He talked to us on the road, while He opened to us the Scriptures” [LUKE 24:32]?

My prayer is that all who hear the message this day will be able to say with conviction, “In Christ Jesus, I am alive.” I pray that all who listen will cease existing and begin to live. Examine the Word with me, praying that together we may discover in a fresh way what it means for us that Jesus is the life.

THE LIFE IS EXCLUSIVE — “I am ... *the* life. No one comes to the Father except through me” [JOHN 14:6]. From His words, we know that Jesus claimed that the life He offered is exclusive. Though people sometimes say, “There are many ways to God,” there are really only two ways conceivable for man to approach God. Either some action can compel God to accept people into His presence, or an individual must cast himself on the mercy of God, trusting that grace will be extended to permit him to enter into His presence. It is “do” or “done.”

Among Jesus’ hard sayings is that which reminds disciples, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in My Name, He may give it to you” [JOHN 15:16].

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Though the language commonly employed implies that we chose Christ, in reality, no one can say, “I chose Christ.” Each Christian is compelled by truth to confess, “Christ chose me.” Peter reminded believers of the Diaspora that they “are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father by being set apart by the Spirit for obedience and for sprinkling with Jesus Christ’s blood” [1 PETER 1:2].² Chosen by God, set apart by the Spirit and cleansed by Christ’s sacrifice—this is the felicitous situation that applies to each believer.

While many people attempt to do something to make themselves acceptable to God, we are taught in His Word that atonement for sin has already been provided. The price for salvation has been paid by Christ Jesus the Lord who gave His life as atonement for sin. Therefore, no individual can do anything to make himself or herself acceptable to God. Each one must receive the life that is offered in Christ Jesus the Lord—there is no other way to life.

Our world is readily and deeply offended by the exclusivity of God’s Good News. Ours is a relativistic world in which no one wants to appear so arrogant as to claim that there is but one way to God. However, we cannot deny the sobering warning which the Lord spoke when He informed His disciples, “No one comes to the Father except through me.”

As He delivered the message we know as “The Sermon on the Mount,” the Master said, “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few” [MATTHEW 7:13, 14].

There is a broad road, and it is startlingly easy to traverse that road; however, that easy road leads assuredly to destruction. One need do nothing in order to travel this road; all that is necessary is that an individual follow the crowd. Contrasted to that easy road is one that is narrow and which promises, not ease, but hardship; however, this latter road leads to life. Simply wishing to be on the road that leads to life is insufficient to ensure that you are actually on the road. Focus on Jesus’ final statement, for it is sobering in the extreme; and though it is rejected by many who wish to call themselves by the Name of the Risen Son of God, His words hold true to this day. Jesus warned that few find the road to life. Many who seek ease of life delude themselves by imagining that reciting a prayer, or saying that they love Jesus, or performing religious duties will somehow suffice to please the True and Living God.

All who seek to follow the Master need to hear the stern words spoken when He cautioned believers against assuming that the Christian life would be easy. The Christian life is not an easy life—not if it is real. Listen to a warning that Jesus gave His disciples immediately before His Passion. “If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. However, because you do not belong to the world, but I chose you out of the world, for this reason the world hates you. Remember what I told you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they obeyed my word, they will obey yours too. But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know the one who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. But they no longer have any excuse for their sin. The one who hates me hates my Father too. If I had not performed among them the miraculous deeds that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen the deeds and have hated both me and my Father. Now this happened to fulfill the word that is written in their law, ‘They hated me without reason.’ When the Advocate comes, whom I will send you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father – he will testify about me, and you also will testify, because you have been with me from the beginning.

² The NET Bible First Edition (Biblical Studies Press, 1996-2006)

“I have told you all these things so that you will not fall away. They will put you out of the synagogue, yet a time is coming when the one who kills you will think he is offering service to God. They will do these things because they have not known the Father or me. But I have told you these things so that when their time comes, you will remember that I told you about them” [**JOHN 15:18-16:4a**].³

Vibrant Christianity is increasingly marginalised in this day. Wickedness strides pompously through the land and the saints of the Most High God are silenced through official threats and intimidation to keep our faith private. I admit that I am concerned when I see church buildings filled to capacity and yet see no evidence of transformation in the lives of those professing to follow the Son of God. Where are the followers of the Risen Son of God who live with radical abandon in the midst of this pagan world? Where are those disciples who love God supremely, bearing the imprimatur of holiness on their lives? Where are those followers of the Lamb who eschew sinful conduct, seeking instead to honour God?

When marital infidelity among professed Christians is indistinguishable from the population at large, where is the evidence that these have been born from above? When integrity of Christians is comparable to the world in which they live, when those who say they are following the Son of God practise deception and speak deceitfully, where is the evidence of the indwelling Spirit who changes those who are redeemed into the image of God’s dear Son? When Christians spend pursue the tawdry rewards of this dying world while ignoring what pleases the Father, how can they say they are walking on the narrow road? When attendance at the House of the Lord is treated as optional rather than being seized as an opportunity for growth in grace and power, how can the professed Bride of Christ claim to long for Him?

The issue is far more serious than most people realise. Remember Jesus’ dark warning! “If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire” [**MATTHEW 18:8, 9**].

The Master spoke these words to people who indicated that they wished to be His disciples. Therefore, if ease of life means more to you that fidelity to the will of the Master, know the danger in which you stand! If the accolades of inhabitants of this dying world are of greater importance to you than standing true to the Word of the Master, know that your soul is in eternal jeopardy. If the censure of those who do not know the Master dissuade you from choosing to honour Him, you must know the peril in which you now stand.

When John and Peter were hailed before the Sanhedrin to answer for their crime of healing a crippled man, Peter testified, “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” [**ACTS 4:12**]. He testified that the life offered in Christ the Lord is exclusive. Salvation is found in no one else—not in Buddha, not in Allah, not in your inner self, not in your church—salvation is found only in Christ Jesus. No one can please God except through faith in Christ Jesus the Son of God.

Paul sought to shame the Corinthians when he asked, “Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptised in the name of Paul” [**1 CORINTHIANS 1:13**]. Their Christianity had grown sectarian, and as a consequence they were beginning to live as though mere mortals were of greater importance than was the Master. There is no higher Name given than that of Jesus the Lord of Glory. Either it is true that Christ is Lord of all, or He is not Lord at all. Remember the word of the Apostle to people who needed to be reminded of the pre-eminence of the Saviour.

³ The NET Bible

"Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" [PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11].

The life revealed by and presented in the Saviour is undoubtedly and assuredly exclusive. Therefore, the Apostle to the Gentiles would testify, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" [GALATIANS 2:20]. Just as Jesus is "the life," so the believer now lives "the life" of Christ by faith in the Son of God.

Of Jesus, it is written, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men" [JOHN 1:4]. The Master Himself testified to Jewish interlocutors of the life that was found only in Him when He said, "As the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself" [JOHN 5:26]. Thus, John would write of Jesus those comforting words that open his first letter: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us" [1 JOHN 1:1, 2].

And just as he opened that letter with the testimony that Jesus was "the life," so he maintained this identical witness even when concluding that letter. Listen to what he wrote. "This is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" [1 JOHN 5:11]. John also wrote in that final chapter, "We know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life" [1 JOHN 5:20].

This unique life of access into the presence of and intimacy with the Living God is what man was created to enjoy. Man was created to know God and to enjoy Him forever. Yet, our first parents fell from their position of intimacy with the Creator, and ruined the creation. Moreover, through their rebellion the entire race was plunged into death and the creation was marred. This is evident from even a casual reading of the Letter the Apostle wrote to the Christians of Rome. One passage in particular stands out to express the horror of what happened after the sin of our first parents.

"Sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

"But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

"Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" [ROMANS 5:12-21].

This introduces the next truth concerning Jesus as the Life, and that is that the Life which is presented in Him exclusively is also eternal. Though the life is exclusive, the reward for possessing that life is great, for that life is also eternal.

THE LIFE IS ETERNAL — The life that is offered in the Son of God is identified as "eternal life." When Jesus states that He is the Life, we understand that He is speaking of a quality of life that is difficult to describe, though it can be readily experienced. This eternal life that is presented shall never end because the One offering it lives forever. Moreover, all who look to Him in faith possess that life. Thus, we are confident that the life we receive in the Master is unending, but if all we see is length of days, we have missed one of the incredible and transformative aspects of the life offered—it is meant to be the present possession of those who are born from above and into the Family of God. Believers enter into eternal life now. The life that is offered in Jesus the Lord is a new quality of life for which none need wait; it is meant to be possessed now.

One of the sweetest verses in the Word of God must surely be one that is recorded in the Letter to Hebrew Christians. Listen as I read **HEBREWS 7:25**. We are taught that Christ the Lord "is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them." To "save to the uttermost" speaks of "spirit and soul and body" kept blameless at the coming of Christ the Lord [see **1 THESSALONIANS 5:23**]. Eternal life is nothing less than salvation that touches every facet of an individual's existence so that he or she is made fully alive. For those who are saved, the spirit is in fellowship with God, the soul is redeemed and delivered from condemnation, and the body will be transformed when Christ returns to receive His own people. The saved individual wants to do what is pleasing to the Father, finds sin distasteful and longs to live righteously in the presence of the Risen Son of God.

Let me direct your attention to the implications of this salvation for just a brief moment. Before He spoke the words of our text, Jesus had promised a most wonderful event for those who look to Him in faith. He said, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also" [JOHN 14:1-3].

The Lord our God has given us His Spirit and saved our souls, but we cannot say that we have received the salvation of our bodies. These bodies are ageing, under sentence of death, just as we are taught. "We know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" [ROMANS 8:22, 23].

The salvation of which I speak may be seen in three dimensions. Christians already have been saved from the penalty of sin. We are being saved from the power of sin. However, we anticipate the day when we are saved from the presence of sin. Thus, eternal life is not an event which awaits us far out in the future (though it ensures us a future with the Saviour); rather, eternal life describes the condition of the redeemed individual. Listen to the Word of the Lord.

Jesus testified, "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life" [JOHN 5:24]. The Master speaks of eternal life as a present possession, though acknowledging that it ensures that the one possessing that life need never fear judgement. The reason for this confidence is that a transition has already been effected. The redeemed child of God has been delivered from darkness into the glorious light of the True and Living God. The saved individual has been removed from the curse of death under which he previously lived and has been made alive together with the Risen Son of God.

So, the Word teaches that "Whoever believes in [the Son of Man shall] have eternal life" [JOHN 3:15]. I should imagine that you are familiar with that comforting promise that informs us, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" [JOHN 3:16]. This is echoed in a few short verses when we are told, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him" [JOHN 3:36]. Eternal life is the present possession of those who believe.

Jesus was engaged in one of the constant exchanges with the religious leaders of His day when he cautioned, "Do not labour for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal" [JOHN 6:27]. These religious leaders imagined that religion would make them pleasing to God; but Jesus cautioned them against seeking to please the Father without looking to the Son. Soon after this He would testify, "This is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day" [JOHN 6:40]. We also read, "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life" [JOHN 6:47].

Take note of the verb. The one who believes now possesses eternal life. The same truth is iterated when the Master spoke during another exchange with the religious leaders. He said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one" [JOHN 10:27-30].

When an individual believes Jesus, she has faith in Him, but her faith is not in isolation; because He is the Son of God, she believes the Father. On one occasion Jesus is recorded as saying, "Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me" [JOHN 12:44-50]. If God lives forever and ever, then the Son, as a member of the Triune Godhead, also lives forever.

Jesus says He is the life; but sin has brought death. To exist in this world is to be aware of death. I know that people sometimes seek to dissuade preachers from speaking of death. However, we live in a world that is marked by death, and we are under sentence of death. The Apostle darkly observed that, "The wages of sin is death." However, he did not quit speaking at that point, for he quickly continued by stating that "the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" [ROMANS 6:23]. We are under sentence of death; but life is offered in Christ.

As inhabitants of this fallen world, each of us lived under condemnation, just as we read: "You were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind" [EPHESIANS 2:1-3]. Though this assuredly includes all who are outside of Christ, it points each Christian back to the dark days before they were born from above.

When we were in darkness, the Spirit of God lightened our eyes, permitting us to see the life that is offered through Christ Jesus our Master. We still live in a world of death, though we have been delivered from that world. This dying world need no longer hold sway over us, for the life that we have received in Christ is now operative in us. We are responsible to express that life in the way in which we live. The Apostle, reviewing his own life, writes for each Christian, "We have this treasure [the ministry of life, the Gospel and "the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" [2 CORINTHIANS 4:1-6]] in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh" [2 CORINTHIANS 4:7-11]. What he observed of his life is true for every follower of the Master who is our life.

Therefore, though we live in a world of death, we have received the life of Christ, and thus we are no longer as we once were. Without effort on our part, we who are Christians are even now being transformed. The Word of God informs us, "We all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit" [2 CORINTHIANS 3:18].

Though we are being changed, we are still responsible to be fellow workers with God. Therefore, we are commanded, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" [ROMANS 12:2]. As we permit the Spirit of God to work in our lives—reading the Word of God, meditating on what God has provided in that Word, and seeking the face of the Master through prayer—we are being changed.

This is because, "Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Saviour, 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" [PHILIPPIANS 3:21]. Though we who are Christians now struggle to be righteous, because we have the life of the Living Saviour we know that we shall be transformed into His image, just as is promised: "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 3:1-3].

Jesus prayed, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" [JOHN 17:1-5]. This is eternal life, to know the Only True God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Do you know Him?

THE LIFE IS EXPENSIVE — The life of Christ is freely offered, just as is written in the Word, “the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” [ROMANS 6:23]. That which we have received from God has been freely given. Thus, the Apostle writes, “We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God” [1 CORINTHIANS 2:12]. Because we have the Spirit of God, we have a measure of understanding of that which God offers freely. Though this life is offered without cost, it does not mean that it was not costly. Though we cannot purchase this salvation, the price that was paid is infinite, for it required the death of God’s own Son as a ransom for sinful humanity.

We know that we have life, because we know Him who is life. Christ proves that He is the life, because He reveals God, with whom “is the fountain of life” [PSALM 36:9]. In fact, Jesus attests that “No one comes to the Father except through [Him]” [JOHN 14:6b]. This expresses a truth that is both precious and repelling. It is precious because the Infinite God has demonstrated to love us with such perfect love that He willingly sacrifices Himself for us, even though we are rebels to grace. This statement repels the human mind because it excludes all our effort.

Intuitively, we know that we are under sentence of death. Every funeral home is testimony to our condition. Every graveyard testifies to our dying condition. Every hospital, every doctor’s office, every pension fund, testifies that we are under sentence of death. Therefore, we instinctively attempt to seize immortality. Quite naturally, man turns to various efforts to somehow defeat the death that even now is inexorably consuming our existence on this earth. So, we rub potions and creams on our skin to smooth the wrinkles that testify to our ageing. We take pills and alter our diet to ensure good health and to fight the signs of ageing. We get annual physicals, and compel ourselves to exercise to stay as fit as possible. However, as I have often noted, the statistics on death are still pretty impressive—one out of one dies.

Knowing that we are dying, we seek ways that will avoid confrontation with our Creator. Our minds become positively ingenious, even if errant. Some seize on *natural theology*. They say, “I worship God in nature.” Perhaps they argue that they worship God in a golf cart, or in a boat, or tramping through a mountain meadow. If you argue thusly, isn’t it true that you don’t really worship God in nature? When you are truthful, you are worshipping nature itself; you are using nature as an excuse for avoiding God. You do not want to be under the preaching of the Word and you do not want to be with Christian people. The preaching of the Word is disturbing and the presence of God’s people condemns you. Thus, you are an idolator.

Others imagine that they can assuage the wrath of God through *morality*. They reason, “God likes good people; therefore, I’ll be good. Surely my goodness will be acceptable to God.” Such thinking is foolish, of course. Follow the logic of such thinking and you immediately recognise its folly. How good do you have to be to be acceptable to God? The answer is that you must be perfect. And if you are perfect, you will not die. Of course, that is not the case for any of us, for we are dying. Even if you could somehow achieve perfection through your own effort, how would you atone for the sin that encrusted your life before you reached that state?

What is sad about this effort is that too many churches are complicit in this deception. God has given a message to His people—a message that begins with the warning that people are utterly depraved—contaminated in every facet of our being by sin. Therefore, it is impossible for any of us to please God through our own efforts. However, people are deeply offended by such a message. So, churches back away from making such a strong declaration of mankind’s sinfulness. Preachers fear hurting the feelings of sinners, and so they avoid saying that people are sinners or pointing out the sins that mark and that mar our lives.

"Maybe people will like us," these preachers reason, "if we don't say anything hurtful. Maybe people will join our churches and even make donations to our churches if we don't offend them. Maybe they will come and be Christians." However, the world sees through such hypocrisy. The world is deeply offended by such hypocrisy. People know they are sinners, and though they do not enjoy being exposed as sinners, they nevertheless detest hypocrisy surrounding the religious lies that attempt to avoid confronting their fallen condition.

Finally, people try *religion*—attempting to formally codify what they imagine pleases God. They know that the Bible speaks of baptism, so they decide they will be baptised. Perhaps they will be confirmed and go to Communion. However, they err in this effort as well, for they craft a false conception of God that says he is willing to settle for external acts rather than a transformed and renewed heart. The Word does not call us to be baptised in order to be a Christian; rather we are to be baptised because we have already become a Christian! The Word does not command confirmation, whatever that may be; rather we are taught to be disciplined. The Word does not teach us to take Communion in order to be pleasing to God; rather we who are disciples are invited to share in this act of worship because we know God.

If the life God offers—the life that is provided only through the sacrifice of the Son of God—is to be available, it is necessary that He should provide His life as atonement for sin. Because you have sinned, you must know that all sin is ultimately against the Living God. Because you have sinned against God who is infinite, your sin is infinitely offensive before Him. Therefore, it is necessary that the sacrifice presented because of your sin should be infinite. Thus, only God is capable of presenting such a sacrifice; and He has done so through His Son. This is the reason the Word of God declares that for each one who is a Christian, "You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God" [1 PETER 1:18-21].

How frequently do we read in the Word of the precious nature of Christ's death! John writes, "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him" [1 JOHN 4:9]. Instructing the elders from the Church in Ephesus, Paul is recorded as warning them, "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood" [ACTS 20:28]. The church they pastored was purchased with the blood of God Himself. Just so, each church has been purchased with that same precious blood.

We are taught in the Word of God that Christ "entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God" [HEBREWS 9:12-14].

Christ Jesus the Lord offered His life as a sacrifice because of our helpless condition. Therefore, by the will of the Father "we have been sanctified [made holy] through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" [HEBREWS 10:10]. We no longer need be condemned, for, "Just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him" [HEBREWS 9:23-28].

The sacrifice offered is infinite and shall never be offered again. The atonement that is provided through the sacrifice of Jesus our Lord is sufficient for all mankind, if they are willing. You, also, are included, if you are willing to receive the life that is offered through Christ the Lord, as we read in the Letter to Hebrew Christians: “Every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified” [**HEBREWS 10:11-14**].

The call of this message is for you to receive the life that is offered in Christ the Master. We are taught in the Word, “If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Master,’ believing in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. It is with the heart that one believes and is made right with God, and with the mouth that one confesses and is delivered.” That passage continues by quoting the Prophet Joel, “Everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord shall be saved” [**ROMANS 10:9, 10, 13**].⁴

I pray you are a Christian. I pray that you know the life that is offered in Christ the Lord. May He fill you with His life and send you forth to live for Him. Amen.

⁴ Free translation by the author