

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED FROM SIN

PRESENTED BY

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GREEN LAWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

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FOR SOME 11 WEEKS PRIOR TO THIS ONE, WE HAVE BEEN STUDYING THE DOCTRINE OF SIN. TONIGHT WE ARE STUDYING THE FINAL LESSON DEALING WITH THIS PARTICULAR SUBJECT. WHEN YOU COME TO THE CONCLUSION OF A DISCUSSION OF A SUBJECT WHICH IS SO VITAL TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHILD OF GOD, IT IS QUITE DIFFICULT TO KNOW JUST EXACTLY HOW YOU OUGHT TO PROCEED TO SUMMARIZE. PERHAPS THE VERY BEST THING THAT WE COULD DO IN SUMMARIZING IS TO AT LEAST IMPRESS UPON THOSE PRESENT WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED FROM SIN. QUITE OFTEN WE CONCENTRATE UPON THE PRESENCE OF SIN AND THE REALITY OF SIN AND THE CONDEMNATION WHICH COMES TO THE SINNER. WE CONCENTRATE UPON THESE TO EITHER THE PARTIAL OR THE COMPLETE EXCLUSION OF THE WONDERFUL BLESSINGS ENJOYED BY THOSE FOR WHOM CHRIST HAS DIED, AND WHO HAVE RECEIVED THE BENEFITS OF THAT ATONING DEATH. SO I TRUST THAT IN THE COURSE OF THIS LESSON I SHALL BE ABLE TO HELP YOU TO APPRECIATE THOSE THINGS THAT ARE YOURS BY VIRTUE OF THE FACT THAT YOU ARE, AND WE ASSUME THE WORD "FAITHFUL," A CHILD OF GOD. I WANT TO READ TWO PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE. THE FIRST IS FROM THE 32ND PSALM AND THE FIRST TWO VERSES. "BLESSED IS HE WHOSE TRANSGRESSION IS FORGIVEN, WHOSE SIN IS COVERED. BLESSED IS THE MAN UNTO WHOM THE LORD IMPUTETH NOT INIQUITY, AND IN WHOSE SPIRIT THERE IS NO GUILE." AND THEN TURNING TO I CORINTHIANS 3:21-23, "THEREFORE LET NO MAN GLORY IN MEN; FOR ALL THINGS ARE YOURS; WHETHER PAUL, OR APOLLOS, OR CEPHAS, OR THE WORLD, OR LIFE, OR DEATH, OR THINGS PRESENT, OR THINGS TO COME; ALL ARE YOURS; AND YE ARE CHRIST'S; AND CHRIST IS GOD'S."

IN THE 32ND PSALM DAVID STATED A UNIVERSAL TRUTH. BUT YET EVEN UNIVERSAL TRUTHS MUST BE DEMONSTRATED. I THINK DAVID MUST HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY AWARE OF THIS UNIVERSAL TRUTH FOR IT FOUND GREAT DEMONSTRATION IN HIS OWN LIFE. DAVID, AS MUCH AS ANY MAN, AND PERHAPS MORE THAN ANY MAN, KNEW WHAT IT MEANT TO HAVE HIS SINS FORGIVEN. DAVID AS MUCH AS ANY MAN, I THINK, KNEW THE BLESSINGS WHICH FLOWED FROM A SENSE OF RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. SO, I THINK, IT IS VERY STRIKING WHEN DAVID, THIS GREAT MAN OF SIN OR A MAN OF GREAT SIN WE MIGHT SAY, YET SPOKE OF THESE BLESSINGS AS A GREAT MAN OF GOD. SURELY HE KNEW WHEREOF HE SPOKE WHEN HE SAID THAT THE FORGIVEN SOUL ENJOYS THE BLESSINGS OF DELIVERANCE. LET YOUR MIND GO BACK TO THOSE DAYS WHICH IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED THAT SIN WHICH, IN OUR SIGHT IS MOST HEINOUS IN THE LIFE OF DAVID, HIS ADULTERY WITH BATHSHEBA AND HIS COMPLICATION IN THE MURDER OF UURIAH. AS WE SEE DAVID IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE COMMISSION OF THESE EVIL DEEDS WE SEE A MAN WHO WAS SORE TROUBLED AND DISTRESSED. WE SEE A MAN WHO KNEW THAT THE WITHERING HAND OF THE CONDEMNATION OF GOD LAY UPON HIM. WE SEE A MAN WHO KNEW THAT HIS GOD HAD NOT FORGIVEN HIM AND WHO WAS CONSCIOUS AT ALL TIMES OF THIS BROKEN RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. BUT AGAIN, WHEN DAVID HAD REACHED THAT POINT IN HIS EXPERIENCE WHERE HE WAS HUMBLE ENOUGH TO SAY, "I HAVE SINNED," WE SEE A TRANSFORMATION. WE SEE A MAN WHO IS NO LONGER CHARACTERIZED BY GUILT AND FEAR, BUT WE SEE A MAN WHO IS CHARACTERIZED BY JOY IN HIS GOD. DAVID COULD SAY BECAUSE DAVID KNEW THAT THE FORGIVEN SOUL IS BLESSED BECAUSE THE WHOLE CHARACTER OF THE INDIVIDUAL IS LIFTED TO A HIGHER PLAIN. DAVID COULD SAY, "HAPPY IS HE WHOSE SINS ARE FORGIVEN," BECAUSE DAVID KNEW THAT NEW RELATIONSHIPS WERE THEREBY ESTABLISHED BETWEEN MAN AND GOD, AND IF THIS IS TRUE IN THE CASE OF DAVID WHO LIVED AND DIED UNDER A SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM CENTERED IN ANIMALS, HOW MUCH MORE IS IT TRUE FOR THOSE OF US WHO LIVE IN A SYSTEM WHICH IS CENTERED IN THE SACRIFICE OF GOD'S OWN DEAR SON. HOW TRUE IS IT FOR THOSE OF US

WHO RECEIVE THE FORGIVENESS OF GOD NOT IN THE SENSE OF A MERE LEGAL ACQUITTAL BUT WHO, WITH THAT FORGIVENESS, RECEIVE AN OUTFLOWING OF PATERNAL LOVE, PATERNAL FORGIVENESS, PATERNAL GRACE, AND PATERNAL TENDERNESS.

WHAT WE ARE SAYING IS SIMPLY THIS, THAT WHEN WE ARE FORGIVEN OF GOD, WE ARE FORGIVEN AS SONS OF GOD. THIS RELATIONSHIP OF SONSHIP TO GOD IS SO VERY IMPORTANT AND THE BLESSINGS WHICH FLOW TO THOSE WHO ARE IN THIS RELATIONSHIP ARE SO GREAT, THAT WHEN THE APOSTLE PAUL CAME BY INSPIRATION TO DESCRIBE IT, HE COULD THINK OF NO GREATER EXPRESSION THAN TO SAY AS HE SAID IN ROMANS 8:17 THAT WE ARE "JOINT-HEIRS WITH CHRIST."

BUT SINCE WE ARE HUMAN, WE SOMEHOW HAVE AN ADVERSE REACTION AGAINST LEAVING THINGS UP ABOVE IN SOME KIND OF NEBULOUS SPHERE WHERE WE CANNOT READILY GRASP OR UNDERSTAND. WHEN WE ARE TOLD THAT WE ARE THE RECIPIENTS OF GREAT BLESSINGS, WE IMMEDIATELY WANT THESE BLESSINGS TO BE PARTICULARIZED, AND THIS, I BELIEVE, IS WHAT THE APOSTLE PAUL DID WHEN HE WROTE THOSE WORDS WE READ A MOMENT AGO FROM I CORINTHIANS 3. LISTEN, AS WE READ THOSE WORDS AGAIN. "THEREFORE LET NO MAN GLORY IN MEN: FOR ALL THINGS ARE YOURS; WHETHER PAUL, OR APOLLOS, OR CEPHAS, OR THE WORLD, OR LIFE, OR DEATH, OR THINGS PRESENT, OR THINGS TO COME; ALL ARE YOURS; AND YE ARE CHRIST'S; AND CHRIST IS GOD'S." PAUL SAID TO THE CORINTHIANS THAT AS CORINTHIANS THAT AS CHRISTIANS EVERYTHING BELONGED TO THEM. IF YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE STATE OF THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH, THIS SOUNDS LIKE A RATHER SILLY STATEMENT. I HAVE AN IDEA IF YOU HAD GONE DOWN TO THE MERCHANTS OF THAT DAY TO RUN A CREDIT CHECK UPON THE CORINTHIAN BRETHREN TO DISCOVER WHETHER OR NOT THEY WOULD BE GOOD RISKS AS FAR AS THE BANKERS WERE CONCERNED, AND YOU INQUIRED OF THE MERCHANTS, "WHAT IS THE STANDING OF THESE MEN?" THE REPLY WOULD HAVE BEEN, "THEY HAVE NO STANDING." APPARENTLY, THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH WAS NOT MADE UP OF MANY WELL-TO-DO INDIVIDUALS. IN I CORINTHIANS 1:26 PAUL SAID "YOU KNOW (AND APPARENTLY HE WAS BASING IT UPON THEIR EXPERIENCE) THAT NOT MANY WISE MEN AFTER THE FLESH, NOT MANY MIGHT NOT MANY NOBLE, ARE CALLED." THEREFORE, WE MIGHT CONCLUDE THAT THERE WERE NOT MANY OF THE SO-CALLED "ELITE" IN THE MIDST OF THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH. YET IT WAS TO THIS GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS AND THIS KIND OF PERSONS THAT PAUL, LOOKING AT THEM AS CHRISTIANS, NOT CONSIDERING THEIR LACK OF MATERIAL THINGS, BUT RATHER CONSIDERING THEIR WEALTH OF SPIRITUAL THINGS SAID, "UNTO YOU ALL THINGS BELONG, THEY ARE YOURS."

BUT AS I SUGGESTED A MOMENT AGO, WE LIKE AN ENUMERATION, AND PAUL WAS APPARENTLY AFRAID THAT THESE BRETHREN WOULD NOT UNDERSTAND IF HE SIMPLY CONCLUDED HERE. HE WANTED TO ENUMERATE THE THINGS THAT BELONGED TO THEM AS CHRISTIANS. IN JUST A MOMENT WE WANT TO LOOK AT THAT LIST, BUT LET ME SUGGEST TWO OR THREE THINGS HERE BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION TO THIS LIST AND WHAT PAUL MEANS WHEN HE SAYS "ALL THINGS ARE YOURS." BEFORE WE LOOK AT WHAT IT DOES MEAN, I THINK WE NEED TO LOOK AT THE THING THAT IT DOES NOT MEAN. WHEN PAUL SAID TO THESE CORINTHIAN BRETHREN THAT ALL THINGS WERE THEIRS, HE WAS NOT SAYING TO THEM THAT THEY HAD THEREBY LICENSE TO DO AS THEY WILLED. HE WAS NOT GRANTING THEM LICENSE WHICH IS THE PARODY, WHICH IS THE LIE OF TRUE LIBERTY IN JESUS CHRIST. HE WAS NOT SAYING TO THEM THAT THEY WERE FREE TO DO AS THEY WILLED AND LIVE AS THEY PLEASED, AND THAT GOD WOULD NOT TAKE COGNIZANCE OF THEIR SINS BECAUSE JESUS CHRIST HAD DIED FOR THEM. HE WASN'T RELAXING HERE THE DIVINE RULE OF SELF-SACRIFICE. HE WAS NOT RELAXING HERE THE DIVINE INJUNCTION TO SERVE THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND TO BEAR THE CROSS. HE WAS NOT SAYING THAT WHILE WE MINIMIZE THE NECESSITY OF SERVICE, WE MAY THEN IN TURN MAGNIFY THE EXCUSES WHEREBY WE JUSTIFY OUR INDULGING OURSELVES IN OUR OWN PLEASURES AND OUR OWN DESIRES AND PARTICIPATE IN THINGS WHICH HAVE NO HIGHER TERMINATION THAN THEMSELVES.

BUT IF IT DOESN'T MEAN THIS, IF HE WASN'T GIVING US LICENSE, IF HE WASN'T EXCUSING US FROM SERVICE, IF HE WASN'T EXCUSING US FROM SELF-SACRIFICE, WHEN HE SAID, "ALL THINGS ARE YOURS," THEN WHAT DID HE MEAN? WE MIGHT SIMPLY SAY THAT THIS LANGUAGE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL IS MEANT TO CARRY TO THE SONS OF GOD A MAGNIFICENT MESSAGE, AND THAT MESSAGE IS SIMPLY THIS--THAT NOW

AS THEN, NOW AS FOREVER, THE MAN WHO BELONGS TO GOD IS INDEED A SON OF GOD, AND THAT AS A SON OF GOD, THE ENTIRE STOREHOUSE OF ALL THE WEALTH THAT BELONGS TO GOD, EVERYTHING IN HEAVEN AND UPON EARTH THAT IS AT THE DISPOSAL OF GOD, IS, THROUGH GOD, AVAILABLE TO THOSE WHO ARE HIS SONS. WHEN PAUL SAID, "ALL THINGS ARE YOURS," HE WAS SAYING TO THOSE WHO ARE SONS OF GOD THAT NOTHING THAT BELONGS TO GOD WILL BE WITHHELD FROM THOSE WHO ARE HIS CHILDREN. NOW CERTAINLY PAUL REALIZED THAT LOVE WILL SORT AND SIFT THOSE THINGS WHICH IT GIVES AND IN THAT SENSE PERHAPS THERE IS, AND CERTAINLY THERE OUGHT TO BE, LIMITATIONS. CERTAINLY I AS A FATHER AM CAREFUL ABOUT WHAT I PUT INTO MY CHILDREN'S HANDS. I CAN SAY TO THEM AS GOD SAYS TO ME THAT EVERYTHING THAT I HAVE BELONGS TO THEM AND EVERYTHING THAT I POSSESS IS AT THEIR DISPOSAL TO ACCOMPLISH FOR THEM THOSE THINGS THAT ARE GOOD. YET IN LOVE I WILL SIFT AND SORT THOSE THINGS WHICH I GIVE AND I WILL NOT GIVE THEM THOSE THINGS WHICH I IN, WE ASSUME, GREATER UNDERSTANDING AND WISDOM, DETERMINE TO BE HURTFUL UNTO THEM. THIS IS THE WAY GOD TREATS US, HIS CHILDREN. EVERYTHING HE HAS BELONGS TO ME, ALL THINGS ARE MINE, BUT YET GOD WILL SIFT AND SORT AND NOT GIVE UNTO ME THOSE THINGS WHICH WOULD BE HURTFUL EVEN THOUGH I MAY DESIRE THEM. THE WHOLE WEALTH OF THE GREAT HEAVENLY HOME BELONGS TO THE SON OF GOD AND IN THAT SENSE THE ONE WHO IS GOD'S CHILD WILL DISCOVER THAT THERE IS NOTHING TOO GREAT FOR GOD TO GIVE UNTO HIM.

BUT NOW WITH THIS UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT PAUL MEANS WHEN HE SAYS THAT "TO THOSE WHO ARE SONS, ALL THINGS ARE YOURS," LET US LOOK AT THIS ENUMERATION WHICH PAUL MADE. PAUL SAYS FIRST OF ALL TO THOSE WHO ARE SONS OF GOD, "THE WORLD IS YOURS." THIS WORD "WORLD" IS ONE OF THE MOST UNIVERSAL OF TERMS. AS PAUL USES THE TERM HERE IT MAY BE HELD TO INCLUDE ALL OF THE ABITABLE EARTH AND ALL OF HUMAN HISTORY, THE ENTIRE HUMAN FAMILY. PAUL SAYS TO THOSE WHO ARE CHRISTIANS, "THESE THINGS ARE YOURS." THAT MAN WHO REMAINED THE MASTER OF THE WORLD IS THE MAN WHO OWNS THE WORLD. PAUL IS NOT SAYING THE WORLD IS YOURS IN THAT YOU HAVE ALL OF THE THINGS THAT THE WORLD HAS TO OFFER, FOR CERTAINLY, AS WE HAVE ALREADY POINTED OUT CONCERNING THE CORINTHIANS, THIS WOULD NOT BE TRUE. I DO NOT THINK THEY UNDERSTOOD IT TO BE SUCH. CERTAINLY THERE ARE THOSE WHO SAY WE POSSESS SO MANY DOLLARS, BUT IT WOULD PERHAPS BE MORE ACCURATE TO SAY THAT SO MANY DOLLARS POSSESS THEM. PAUL IS NOT SAYING YOU POSSESS THE WORLD IN THIS SENSE, BUT PAUL IS SAYING THAT YOU POSSESS THE WORLD IN THE SENSE THAT THESE THINGS WHICH ARE MATERIAL YOU HAVE SUBSERVED TO A HIGHER USE. HE IS SAYING THAT YOU ARE NOT MASTERED BY THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE MATERIAL. HE IS SAYING THAT YOU DO NOT CONSIDER THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE MATERIAL TO BE THAT WHICH IS MOST ESSENTIAL TO LIFE, BUT YOU OWN THE WORLD IN THAT YOU HAVE USED THESE THINGS TO A HIGHER USE AND THAT HIGHER USE IS SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT. TO THOSE WHO ARE CHRISTIANS, IN THIS SENSE THE WORLD DOES INDEED BELONG.

THE WORLD IS YOURS. LIFE IS YOURS, AND AS WITH THE WORD "WORLD," THE WORD "LIFE" IS AN INCLUSIVE TERM. I THINK WE MAKE A MISTAKE WHEN WE EQUATE THE WORD "LIFE" WITH THE WORD "EXISTENCE." LIFE IS MUCH MORE THAN EXISTENCE. LIFE IS NOT A ONE-DIMENSIONAL BUT A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL THING. LIFE HAS HEIGHT, IT HAS DEPTH, IT HAS LENGTH, AND IT HAS BREADTH. IT MAY BE TRUE, AND I SUPPOSE IT IS TRUE, THAT THE DAYS OF OUR YEARS ARE A ONE-DIMENSIONAL THING WHICH WE MEASURE FROM THE CRADLE TO THE GRAVE. BUT LIFE ITSELF IS MUCH MORE THAN THAT. HOW IS THIS ABUNDANT LIFE OURS? IT IS OURS IN THE SENSE THAT WE KNOW IT AND WE LOVE IT. IT IS OURS IN THE SENSE THAT WE REALIZE THE TRUE PURPOSES AND THE TRUE END OF LIFE AND WE USE THAT LIFE THAT GOD HAD GIVEN TO ACCOMPLISH THIS END. THE COMMON IDEA OF LIFE'S BELONGING TO AN INDIVIDUAL IS EQUATED WITH HOW MUCH POWER AND HOW MUCH MATERIAL WEALTH A MAN MAY AMASS IN A GIVEN PERIOD OF TIME. BUT I THINK HUMAN HISTORY DECRIES THIS CONCEPT AND I BELIEVE HUMAN EXPERIENCE SAYS THAT IT IS NOT SO, FOR WHEN WE LOOK BACK AT THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD AND WE ASK THE QUESTION "TO WHOM DOES LIFE BELONG MORE THAN ANY OTHER PERSON?" THE ANSWER WHICH IS GIVEN IS NOT ALEXANDER THE GREAT WHO CONQUERED THE WORLD OF HIS DAY,

THE ANSWER GIVEN IS NOT NAPOLEAN WHOSE ARMIES WERE THE SCOURGE OF EUROPE, BUT THE ANSWER GIVEN IS THAT LIFE BELONGS MOST OF ALL TO JESUS CHRIST. LIFE BELONGS TO JESUS CHRIST NOT BECAUSE HE CONQUERED NATIONS, BUT LIFE BELONGS TO JESUS CHRIST BECAUSE HE CONQUERED MEN, BECAUSE HE KNEW THE TRUE PURPOSE OF LIFE AND, KNOWING THE TRUE PURPOSE OF LIFE, HE GAVE HIMSELF IN LOVE FOR OTHERS.

THE WORLD BELONGS TO YOU, LIFE BELONGS TO YOU, DEATH BELONGS TO YOU. THAT STATEMENT RUNS CONTRARY TO THE ORDINARY CONCEPT OF DEATH. SOMEHOW IT IS HARD FOR US TO BELIEVE THAT DEATH BELONGS TO US. IT IS MUCH EASIER FOR US TO BELIEVE THAT WE BELONG TO DEATH. THE REASON IS THAT WE PERSIST IN WALKING BY SIGHT AND NOT BY FAITH. THE REASON IS THAT WE PERSIST IN CONSIDERING THIS EXISTENCE AS BEING LIFE AND THE END OF THIS EXISTENCE AS BEING DEATH WHEREAS, WHEN WE RIGHTLY VIEWED, THIS EXISTENCE IS BUT A STEP IN WHAT IS CALLED MORTALITY AND DEATH IS BUT A STEP INTO THE FULLER LIFE OR IMMORTALITY. THE TWO CONTRASTS HAVE WELL BEEN STATED I THINK BY A POET WHO WROTE, "AT END OF LIFE,

AT END OF HOPE, AT END OF STRIFE,
AT END OF ALL WE CLING TO SO--
THE SUN IS SETTING--MUST WE GO?

AT DAWN OF LOVE, AT DAWN OF LIFE,
AT DAWN OF PEACE THAT FOLLOWS STRIFE,
AT DAWN OF ALL WE LONG FOR SO--THE SUN IS RISING--LET US GO."

THIS LATTER IS THE BELIEVER'S CONCEPT. TO THE BELIEVER DEATH IS NOT A STEP INTO A REGION OF DARKNESS. TO THE BELIEVER DEATH IS A STEP INTO A REGION WHICH IS LIGHTED BY JESUS CHRIST. DEATH, TO THE BELIEVER, IS NOT AN ENEMY. DEATH TO THE BELIEVER IS NOT A LOSS, IT IS NOT A DEFEAT, IT IS NOT A CALAMITY. TO THE BELIEVER, DEATH IS A POSSESSION. TO THE BELIEVER DEATH IS A WEAPON IN HIS ARMORY. TO THE BELIEVER DEATH IS AN OPPORTUNITY. TO THE BELIEVER DEATH IS A RESOURCE. TO THE BELIEVER DEATH IS NOT A PUTTING OFF, BUT A PUTTING ON. I THINK THIS ATTITUDE HAS BEEN VIVIDLY PORTRAYED IN TWO ENGRAVINGS, ENGRAVINGS BY A RATHER UNKNOWN ARTIST, BUT YET FROM THEIR EXPRESSION, I THINK ONE WHO WAS WELL ACQUAINTED WITH LIFE AND WITH DEATH. THESE TWO COMPANION ENGRAVINGS DEPICT DEATH IN TWO CIRCUMSTANCES. THE FIRST OF THESE ENGRAVINGS DEPICTS DEATH AS IT COMES TO THE UNBELIEVER AND THE UNGODLY. IT PRESENTS A VERY HIDIOUS SCENE. THERE ARE THE FEASTERS, THERE ARE THE BANQUETERS, THERE ARE THE REVELERS. SOME OF THE CORPSES ARE LYING AT THE FEET OF THE COWLED SKELETON WHICH REPRESENTS DEATH, AND OTHERS OF THEM ARE FLEEING, WITH LOOKS OF TERROR AND ANGUISH ON THEIR FACES, FROM HIS OUTREACHING ARMS. THE OTHER ENGRAVING IS THAT WHICH SHOWS THE BELIEVER'S--THE CHRISTIAN'S CONCEPT AND ATTITUDE TOWARD DEATH. HERE DEATH DOES NOT COME INTO THE MIDST OF BANQUETING AND REVELING AND FEASTING AND UNGODLINESS. RATHER DEATH COMES TO A BELFRY, AND SITTING THERE IS AN AGED SAINT. HIS EYES ARE CLOSED, HIS ARMS ARE FOLDED, AND AT HIS RIGHT IS AN OPEN BIBLE. THE WINDOW IS OPEN TO LET IN THE SUNLIGHT AND A BIRD IS PERCHED THERE SINGING. THE WRINKLES OF AGE AND BURDENS UPON THE FACE OF THIS AGED SAINT ARE RELIEVED BY THE COMING OF DEATH AND A LOOK OF ENDLESS PEACE FALLS UPON THE WEARIED FACE. DEATH TO HIM IS REST FOR THE WEARY. DEATH TO HIM IS THE GLAD DAWNING OF NEW LIFE AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO LAY DOWN AS A FRIEND OF JESUS.

HOW TRUE THIS IS AND HOW THIS OUGHT TO AFFECT OUR CONCEPT OF DEATH. I OFTEN WONDER HOW DIFFERENT THE SCENE OF DEATH MUST BE AS IT IS SEEN UPON THE EARTH AND THEN AS IT IS SEEN IN HEAVEN. THINK OF AN AGED SAINT OF GOD ABOUT TO DIE AND LOOK AT THAT SCENE OF DEATH AS IT TRANSPIRES UPON THE EARTH. THE SHUTTERS ARE DRAWN. WE TALK IN WHISPERS. WE WALK QUIETLY. HERE IS AN AGED SAINT, AN IMMORTAL SOUL FIXING TO PASS INTO ETERNITY. HIS HAS BEEN A COMMON-PLACE LIFE, BUT YET HE HAS BEEN A FAITHFUL SERVANT UNTO THE LORD. NOW THE SUNSET HAS COME, THE SHADOWS ARE LENGTHENING AND THERE STANDS A VEIL WHICH SEPERATES TIME FROM ETERNITY. ON

ON THE EARTHLY SIDE OF THAT VEIL THERE IS THE SHEDDING OF MANY TEARS. ON THE EARTHLY SIDE OF THAT VEIL THERE ARE HEART BROKEN SOBS AND SAD GOOD-BYES. BUT HOW DIFFERENT, HOW DIFFERENT IT MUST BE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT VEIL WHERE INSTEAD OF BEING AN HOUR OF SORROW IT IS AN HOUR OF CORONATION. IN THAT MOMENT, I AM PERSUADED, THERE ARE NO TEARS. THERE IS NO SOBBING GRIEF. THERE ARE NO HEART-BROKEN PRAYERS. INSTEAD THERE IS THE CHANT OF VICTORY AND ALL OF THE POMP AND ALL OF THE CIRCUMSTANCE OF HEAVEN ARE CENTERED THERE BECAUSE A SOLDIER OF THE CROSS IS COMING HOME. HOW GREAT MUST BE THE REJOICING OF GOD AND OF THE ANGELS AND YEA, OF THE REDEEMER, AS THEY STAND READY TO RECEIVE THIS ONE AND TO PLACE THE CROWN OF VICTORY UPON HIS BROW. THE APOSTLE PAUL SAID TO THESE CORINTHIAN BRETHREN, "YOU DON'T NEED TO FEAR, BECAUSE AS A SON OF GOD, DEATH BELONGS TO YOU. YOU DO NOT BELONG TO DEATH. IT IS NOT YOUR MASTER. DEATH BELONGS TO YOU. IT HAS BEEN MASTERED FOR YOU THROUGH THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST."

THEN, AS IS SO OFTEN THE CASE WITH THE APOSTLE PAUL, HIS SOUL SWELLS UP AND OVERFLOWS IN MAGNIFICATION OF THE THINGS THAT BELONGED TO GOD'S CHILDREN AND IN MAGNIFICATION OF THE GREAT GOD WHO MAKES IT ALL POSSIBLE. HE CAN NO LONGER CONFINE HIMSELF TO JUST MENTIONING ONE ITEM AT A TIME. HE SHOUTS FORTH IN GRAND LANGUAGE, "THINGS PRESENT OR THINGS TO COME." ALL THINGS THAT ARE PRESENT ARE YOURS. THAT CERTAINLY INCLUDES EVERYTHING THAT HAS PRECEDED FOR THEY ARE THE PROPERTY OF THE PRESENT THROUGH THE FACULTY OF MEMORY. PAUL IS SAYING UNTO THOSE WHO ARE CHRISTIANS THAT SINCE THE PRESENT, INCLUDING THINGS PAST, BELONGS TO YOU, YOU, AS A SON OF GOD, ARE NOT MASTERED BY CIRCUMSTANCES—YOU ARE THE MASTER OF CIRCUMSTANCES. PAUL IS NOT SAYING THAT WE CAN ALWAYS CONTROL THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH WE FIND OURSELVES, BUT PAUL IS SAYING THAT THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, WHATEVER THEY ARE, BELONG UNTO US AND THOUGH WE MAY NOT CONTROL THEIR COMING, WE CAN CONTROL THE DISPOSITION. WE CAN CONTROL THE USE TO WHICH WE PUT THESE THINGS. THEN FROM THE PRESENT, PAUL LOOKS INTO THE ILLIMITABLE FUTURE AND HE INCLUDES EVERYTHING THAT HOPE CAN ANTICIPATE AND EVERYTHING THAT FEAR CAN APPREHEND AND HE SAYS, "ALL THINGS THAT ARE YET TO COME BELONG UNTO YOU." EVERYTHING BELONGS TO THAT ONE WHO IS A SON OF GOD AND WE CAN SAFELY LEAVE OURS AND OURSELVES IN THE HANDS OF THIS GOD. PAUL DOES NOT DENY THAT THERE ARE SOME TREASURES WHICH BELONG TO THE CHRISTIAN HERE, BUT HE IS SAYING TO THAT ONE WHO IS A SON OF GOD, HE IS SAYING TO THAT ONE WHO HAS BEEN CLEANSED BY THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF JESUS, HE IS SAYING TO THAT ONE WHO HAS BEEN SAVED FROM SIN, THAT HE WILL NEVER KNOW HOW REALLY RICH HE IS UNTIL HE IS ADMITTED INTO THE HOME OF THE FATHER AT LAST.

THEN, PAUL CANNOT BUT CONCLUDE WITH THAT WHICH HE BEGAN. HE SUMMARIZES AND SAYS, "ALL THINGS ARE YOURS." EVERYTHING BELONGS TO THE CHILD OF GOD, BUT WHY? WHY? "ALL THINGS ARE YOURS, YE ARE CHRIST'S." YOU SEE, PAUL HAS SAID THAT EVERYTHING BELONGS TO YOU BUT ONE THING. PAUL SAID EVERYTHING BELONGS TO YOU BUT YOURSELF. "ALL THINGS ARE YOURS, BUT YE ARE CHRIST'S." SURELY THE CHRISTIAN REALIZES THAT IT IS IN BELONGING TO CHRIST THAT ONE CAN TRULY BELONG TO HIMSELF, THAT WE ARE TRULY OURS WHEN WE ARE TRULY CHRIST'S. THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS THAT WE NEVER TRULY POSSESS UNTIL WE GIVE THEM UP. IT IS ONLY WHEN WE RELINQUISH THE WORLD THAT WE POSSESS IT. IT IS ONLY WHEN WE LET PLEASURE GO THAT WE OBTAIN IT. IT IS ONLY WHEN WE GIVE MONEY THAT WE ENJOY IT. IT IS ONLY WHEN, IF WE MAY SUMMARIZE IN THE LANGUAGE OF CHRIST, THAT WE LOSE OUR LIFE THAT WE MAY FIND IT. THE REASON THAT THESE THINGS ARE SO IS BECAUSE WE HAVE BECOME CHRIST'S THAT WE MIGHT BECOME OUR OWN.

BUT YET THERE IS A BASIS OF ASSURANCE EVEN BEYOND THIS. PAUL SAID, "CHRISTIANS, ALL THINGS ARE YOURS, FOR YE ARE CHRIST'S AND CHRIST IS GOD'S." IF JESUS CHRIST, OUR CRUCIFIED, OUR BURIED, OUR RESURRECTED AND OUR ASCENDED LORD SITS EVEN NOW AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, THEN SURELY THE WORLD BELONGS TO US, AND THIS WORLD WHICH BELONGS TO US IS TRANSFORMED FROM A PRISON INTO A HOME. THIS LIFE OF WHICH WE SPEAK IS TRANSFORMED FROM A DREAM, INTO A REALITY. IT IS OURS BECAUSE WE ARE CHRIST'S, AND CHRIST IS GOD'S. THIS IS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED FROM SIN, TO HAVE ALL OF THE ASSURANCES, TO HAVE AT OUR DISPOSAL ALL OF THE RICHES OF HEAVEN, AND IF YOU ARE NOT SAVED FROM SIN, IT MEANS THAT YOU ARE CUT AWAY FROM THE RICHNESS OF THIS LIFE AND THE STOREHOUSE OF THESE BLESSINGS. HOW FOOLISH, HOW FOOLISH, FOR ONE TO REMAIN IN SIN WHEN DWELLING IN JESUS CHRIST ALL THINGS ARE HIS. WOULD YOU BE SAVED FROM SIN? WOULD YOU COME?