

## I'll Live For Him Who Died For Me

Good morning Osaka International Church from Boston, Massachusetts in America! It is now three weeks since we celebrated the New Year. It is celebrated all around the earth with television glimpses as it occurs to those who don't need any sleep, I would say. New Years Day also has many people making New Years' Resolutions. Historians tell us that the Babylonians started this tradition about 4,000 years ago. Sources give varying rates of success; but most report about 16% complete the discipline of a resolution for the whole year. Today at three weeks, statisticians expect that 11% have already given up on their exciting New Year's plan for improving their life. Now this might seem sad, but most people make these resolutions in a jovial, not a sombre mood.

I read in my Google search that here in Japan, New Year's resolutions are called *shinnen no houfu*. When someone decides to share their resolution, it is called *kakizome*. A beautiful calligraphy is made to declare this to your friends. I wish I had the skill for that...but this would be my *kakizome*. Yes, yellow sticky notes have invaded my study like cockroaches ! If not for resolutions, but reminders important to me. My wife Dorothy has made me record this video hiding **my great plans for life**...many sticky notes, behind this Japanese screen.

Now, let's read the Scriptures that I will refer to in this message.

The top three resolutions worldwide that kept appearing in my Google search were **diet, exercise and weight loss**. This is no surprise in our modern world which sometimes is obsessed with health, especially since the COVID 19 plague. Everyone desires to be healthy to enjoy life to its fullest. But it is easy for us Christians to confuse feeling the abundant life from our activities with the abundance produced by close fellowship with our Lord, the Author of Life. I am sure that the fear of death has much to do with societies around the world striving for good health.

Therefore resolutions can be serious to many people, and failure may be depressing to some as it reminds one of his mortality in a world full of danger and death. I am not declaring Christians must not make New Year's Resolutions. Many of us had to *put our will to the test by way of a New Year's resolution* in order to read through the entire Bible in a year. That is something that I recommend all Christians to do at least once, with or without a New Year's resolution as such. The point is **New Year's resolutions are caught**

**up in that BIG WORD “I!”** I will improve my life by this resolved discipline. I will be motivated...**I, I, ah I...as my Spanish neighbors exclaim!** We Christians really are challenged dealing with “self.” When does “self” become “selfish?”

Christianity is not a *gnostic religion*. Gnostic heresies which started to show up in the Church about A.D. 90 as evident in the apostle John's letters. In ( 1 John 1:1 ) *that which we beheld and our hands touched concerning the Word of Life*. The message of Jesus cannot be separated from the person of Jesus. We Christians may have to buffet our bodies to accomplish God's will but we must never forget how precious we, our bodies and souls, are to Jesus. Gnostics believe that the material body is evil.

The Greatest Commandment in the Law as spoken by Jesus: *Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and with all your mind.* ( Matthew 22: 38) ... *The next is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself* (:39) *All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commandments* ( Matt 22:40). And regarding a husband's love for his wife , Holy Spirit moved the Apostle Paul to write in ( Ephesians 5: 28 -30): *This is how husbands should love their wives, like their own bodies. A man who loves his wife is loving himself. No one ever hated his own body. Everyone feeds it and treats it tenderly, as Christ does the Church , because we are parts of His Body.*”

We might conclude that this tension between a Biblical self-love and putting “self on the throne in our heart” is always answered by trusting that He loves us more than we can really understand.

God is always more interested in WHY we do what we do, than simply DOING. If the WHY is correct, the activity will strengthen our relationship with God's Son, Jesus, for example, loving our wives in a manner that pleases Jesus. Thus it is something motivated **for Him who died for me, Jesus.**

In 2 Corinthians 5 we will see how living to be more like our Lord Jesus finds it's powerful motivation in *living for Him*. Here the Apostle Paul presents a much different approach to life on planet earth than our self- motivated successes proposed by the world. This is the true every Day of the Year resolution for life..both abundant and eternal: *I'll Live For Him Who Died For Me.*

Holy Spirit has breathed these Scriptures in Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> Letter to the Corinthians to help Christians know how to live, what to focus on, as they follow Jesus through these few years on this planet.

*If the earthly tent we live in is torn down, we know we'll get one from God, not made by*

*human hands but lasting forever.* (2 Corinthians 5:1 AAT ) Paul is telling Christians to really believe Jesus' Promise and apply it to their everyday life attitudes. Jesus said to Martha just prior to raising Lazarus from the grave : *I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in Me will live even if he dies. Yes, anyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.* ( John 11: 25-26) **Then, Jesus says to Martha, what He says to everyone of us who say we are Christians... Do you believe that?** (26) Jesus does not coddle any unbelief in His power over death to go uncorrected in any of His Sheep! Martha's answer, her faith in His being Messiah, is what the British might label as **linsey – woolsey, weak without real conviction.** But this was before Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection from His Grave on Easter Morning. She truly confessed Jesus' Messiahship, much like Peter had. But we Christians , at A.D. 2023, having witnessed in the Bible His Crucifixion and Resurrection, His Ascension and our having received Holy Spirit, the Promise of the Father , should have no other answer than a hearty **YES, LORD I BELIEVE!**

Unlike many in our world who obsessively strive at keeping their body healthy not believing in a new and better model being prepared for them....Paul expresses his dissatisfaction at keeping his current body or tent, *For while we are still in this tent we sigh, feeling distressed because we don't want to put off this body but put on the other and have life swallow up our death.* ( 2 Cor 5: 4) Paul expresses his human nature , which is built in all of us, to hold onto our bodies; yet, his faith and belief in the Word of God had him realize that his old body most likely, before Christ's Return, will die and be planted like a seed into the ground; only then, would his new body be available to him.

Now, you may ask , **as I ask myself**, how can a person with a little faith like me, attain faith like Paul's? Well, we come to the main problem with New Year's, or any other resolution that depends on the *arm of flesh* for success. **My attaining greater faith by my own efforts is simply impossible...**so God gets the glory when He does it as He has promised. This is a **JOB FOR GOD TO DO!** God patiently works in Christians hearts to not only restore our souls but also to create mature faith.

**Our faith must not be in our faith, but in Jesus.** As clearly God puts it on Himself in verse 5: *It is God Who has prepared us for this and given us His Spirit as a guarantee.* The Third Person of the Trinity is not just window dressing for our Faith, but the core influence for our attitude and power in living for Jesus.

Then, if you are either not a Christian, or not yet mature in your faith for what the Bible teaches here, you might call this next statement oxymoronic and ridiculous. For Paul's acceptance of death in order to embrace his new heavenly body leads to - *And so we are always confident.* ( 2 Corinthians 5.6a)

Riddle me this? You may feel. Well, if we are living for One Thing, the person of Jesus , and one thing only, JESUS the Lover of our soul, death is a small river to cross knowing Jesus awaits you with arms wide open on the other side. I remember the first time I sang as a Christian: *Thy Lovingkindness is better than Life*, from ( Psalm 63:3 ) . I felt a deep desire to really mean it..not aware enough of my own heart to know how strongly I agreed with the Psalmist. Please be encouraged, church, **God does give us the desires of our hearts as formed from God's Word.**

I am praying that you will see Jesus' faithfulness in my journey, which often seemed a walk of having *little faith*. I will share my song-prayer to God after being a Believer for about 10 years. I had received glorious spiritual gifts, a Master of Intercultural Ministry degree, a beautiful Christian wife and two beautiful Christian daughters. But, I realized that I was not **always confident, as Paul stated in verse 6a**. This lack of confidence made no sense to my own understanding...so I put it on God! I wrote this little tune and sang- prayed it to God.

Make me confident in Jesus, Confident in the Lord  
Make me confident in Jesus, trusting in His Holy Word  
Make me confident in Jesus, reading and believing what It says....

Knowing what You want for me to know, Dear Lord  
Always ready to go, Dear Lord  
Make me confident in Jesus,  
Confident in the Lord.

Rev. Bruce Allen circa 1982

I hesitate to judge my own confidence now , but I wouldn't be here daring to feed you, His precious sheep, as Jesus's preacher, if I had never written..and often sung, that little song. I strongly believe singing songs as prayers moves God's hand. I can honestly say..very soon after that song ... *God started to show up!*

In 1982 if I had decided to make a New Year's resolution to be more confident in the coming year..well, as sure as *God made little green apples on trees*, I would not be a candidate to be your pastor today!

*We know that as long as we are living in this body we are living away from the Lord.* ( 2 Corinthians 5.6b AAT). Nearness to Jesus on earth is pale compared to what we will all experience in His Presence in Heaven. Even an awesome Presence of God lasts a short time here. I recall a fine Bible Preacher saying that our physical bodies cannot survive God's strong personal Revelations for very long. It's vital for our *confidence* that we

remember any such personal experiences with Jesus' Spirit. He also knows the balance between any sensory experience and the faith that we need. The next verse shows this point well: *For we go through life by faith, and not by sight.* ( 2 Corinthians 5:7 ). Paul's life included; 1) seeing the Risen and Glorified Jesus on the Road to Emmaus, 2) miraculous healing of his eyes, and filling with Holy Spirit, 3) Supernaturally still alive after being *stoned by the Jews*. 4) visits by God's Angels...and many more. Paul had many visual spiritual experiences including meeting the Resurrected Christ, which created his faith. Later revelations from God encouraged that faith. But he also knew he needed to walk by the faith God already gave him and not demand more visual experiences.

I like a brief attitude summary regarding this : **The Word and The Spirit.**

Therefore, let me encourage us all to REMEMBER -  
The Word – **Bible verses of His Precious Promises** and  
The Spirit – **Times you sensed God's showing up**...even answering your prayer for a parking space in downtown Osaka. Anything God does in our lives is important. **The Word and The Spirit** are both vital to remember that God is with you and working out your salvation with you.

The Amplified Bible translation expresses ( 2 Corinthians 5:8 -10 )  
*[Yes] we have confident and hopeful courage and are pleased rather to be away from home out of the body and be at home with the Lord.*

*Therefore, whether we are at home [on earth away from Him] or away from home [and with Him], we are constantly ambitious and strive earnestly to be pleasing to Him. For we must all appear and be revealed as we are before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive [his pay] according to what he has done in the body, whether good or evil [considering [a]what his purpose and motive have been, and what he has [b]achieved, been busy with, and given himself and his attention to accomplishing].*

The Amplified Bible reveals the meaning of this verse quite clearly. The “Judgement seat of Christ” is only for Christians. What we have given ourself to on earth will be judged by our Lord Jesus after we leave our bodies. This translation emphasizes that **our motivation for what we did seems more important than the volume of achievements.** Was our motivation good or evil? How can a Christian be judged as evil? We tend to imagine a Christian practicing some Satanic religion in secret to judge him as evil. Jesus' little brother James, the pastor of the Church in Jerusalem , explained how Christians without realizing what they are doing, can allow evil motivations to pollute their ministry

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( James 3: 13-18 ) says:

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Dr. Stanley M. Horton wrote a book called *The Ultimate Victory: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation*. In his discussion of Jesus' "Coming with Reward" ( Revelation 22: 12-13) he said:

“ The judgement will be based , not on the amount of the works, but on the spirit, motivation, and love a person showed while doing them.” This stands as a strong supportive teaching on the Judgement Seat of Christ in the Amplified Bible in ( 2 Corinthians 5: 8-10 ).

In (2 Corinthians 5: 11-12 AMP)

*We know what it means to respect the Lord, and we encourage everyone to turn to Him. God himself knows what we are like, and I hope you also know what kind of people we are. We are not trying once more to brag about ourselves. But we want you to be proud of us, when you are with those who are not sincere and brag about what others think of them.*

Some translations of ( 2 Corinthians 5:11 ) transate the word *respect* as *terror*, or as *fear-knowing therefore the terror of the Lord* ( KJV, AAT ) , *fear of the Lord* ( NIV)...*we persuade men*. This might tend to have us interpret this verse to mean having a fear for the lost if they reject Jesus. However true that fact is, Paul's motivation he is sharing

here with the Corinthians is made clear by the context, that is, the preceding verse, v. 10, which is about a Christian's rewards at the Judgement Seat of Christ, not a sinner's Final Judgement. The Amplified version, *respect rather than fear or terror*, fits the context. Christians will be judged not in regards to condemnation but only rewards for their service to Jesus.

Similarly The Expositor's Bible Commentary on(2 Corinthians 5:11) says:

“The fear of the Lord here is not personal piety nor the terror that the omnipotent Lord arouses in the hearts of people, but the reverential awe Paul had for Christ as his divine assessor and future judge. Aware of his personal accountability, Paul strove to persuade other people of the truth of the Gospel....”

God desires His children **to live for Him who died for them**, that is Jesus, with a sense of reverential awe. Living that way produces unwavering faith with good results now such as finding *the good works God has prepared for us to walk in.* ( Ephesians 2.10 ) Living for Him now has our hearts ready to see Jesus' at His return; and of course, after we take our last breath on earth. As the Apostle John encouraged the believers in ( 1 John 2: 28 AMP ) :

*Now, little children (believers, dear ones), remain in Him [with unwavering faith], so that when He appears [at His return], we may have [perfect] confidence and not be ashamed and shrink away from Him at His coming.*

Now Paul reveals some of the complaints and questionings that the church at Corinth gave him. He declares God as his vindication for his ministry and “*what kind of people we are.*” It is clear that there were other preachers trying to compete with Paul for the allegiance of the Corinthians to him as the founder and father. ....*who are not sincere and brag about what others think of them.* ( 2 Corinthians 5:12 AMP).

He will later in this letter address specifically the *false apostles* who claim his privilege as founders of the Corinthian church. ( 2 Corinthians 11:20 )

Paul goes on to explain his heart in ( 2 Corinthians 5:13 AMP):

*If we are out of our mind [just unstable fanatics as some critics say], it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for your benefit.* Apparently Paul's supernatural anointings were being questioned by some of these complainers at Corinth, most likely the *false apostles*. But now Paul gets to the main positive issue:

*The love of Christ compels us because we are convinced One died for all and so all have died. He died for all so that those who live shall no longer live for themselves **but for Him who died and rose for them.*** ( 2 Corinthians 5: 14 -15)

The *love of Christ compels* or exercises a constraining influence on Paul who knew Jesus died for all humanity. All humanity has died spiritually in the death of Christ; that is, all underwent the death deservedly theirs because of sin. The scope of redemption is universal since God's offer of salvation excludes no one, but the application of redemption is limited since not all people appropriate the benefits afforded by this universally offered salvation.

As the Bible says in ( 1 Peter 3:18 AMP ):

*For indeed Christ died for sins once for all, the Just and Righteous for the unjust and unrighteous [the Innocent for the guilty] so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit;*

As Jesus confronted His beloved Martha at the grave of Lazarus, He is asking everyone here today -**Do you believe it?** Not only His power to raise the dead, but His sacrifice on the Cross for your sins for our relationship with God.

Believing this good news appropriates this universally offered salvation for us!

Because Christ died for us, we should always be ready to share our faith, to suffer for our faith, even to die for our faith.

**I'll live for Him Who died for me.** This is great motivation for Christians. The love Jesus showed us by going to the Cross becomes a compelling reason for living – for Him. This Bible verse also tells us He also **rose from the dead for us** as well.

Paul stressed that the Corinthians could have confidence in the bodily resurrection and afterlife. So we too can have confidence in our heavenly bodies prepared for us. This confidence affects every aspect of our life here on earth. We Christians should realize we are still in the midst of a plague, COVID19, sent by God to alert the sinners of their need for a Saviour. It has affected every corner of the world and many aspects of our lives. Confidence in our heavenly bodies makes us stand out in this dark world of fear and death.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ -

Let's live for Him who died for us! Let's call upon God for Holy Spirit power to stand in a world tempting us to forget our faith. And , to have the abundant life He promised and bought for us by His sacrifice. Let's keep asking God for confidence in Jesus, and to be confident in our new heavenly bodies He has prepared for us.

Let us pray:

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In (2 Corinthians 5: 11-12 AMP)

*We know what it means to respect the Lord, and we encourage everyone to turn to Him. God himself knows what we are like, and I hope you also know what kind of people we are. We are not trying once more to brag about ourselves. But we want you to be proud of us, when you are with those who are not sincere and brag about what others think of them.*

Some translations of ( 2 Corinthians 5:11 ) transate the word *respect* as *terror*, or as *fear-knowing therefore the terror of the Lord* ( KJV, AAT ) , *fear of the Lord* ( NIV)...*we persuade men*. This might tend to have us interpret this verse to mean having a fear for the lost if they reject Jesus. However true that fact is, Paul's motivation he is sharing

here with the Corinthians is made clear by the context, that is, the preceding verse, v. 10, which is about a Christian's rewards at the Judgement Seat of Christ, not a sinner's Final Judgement. The Amplified version, *respect rather than fear or terror*, fits the context. Christians will be judged not in regards to condemnation but only rewards for their service to Jesus.

Similarly The Expositor's Bible Commentary on(2 Corinthians 5:11) says:

“The fear of the Lord here is not personal piety nor the terror that the omnipotent Lord arouses in the hearts of people, but the reverential awe Paul had for Christ as his divine assessor and future judge. Aware of his personal accountability, Paul strove to persuade other people of the truth of the Gospel....”

God desires His children **to live for Him who died for them**, that is Jesus, with a sense of reverential awe. Living that way produces unwavering faith with good results now such as finding *the good works God has prepared for us to walk in.* ( Ephesians 2.10 ) Living for Him now has our hearts ready to see Jesus' at His return; and of course, after we take our last breath on earth. As the Apostle John encouraged the believers in ( 1 John 2: 28 AMP ) :

*Now, little children (believers, dear ones), remain in Him [with unwavering faith], so that when He appears [at His return], we may have [perfect] confidence and not be ashamed and shrink away from Him at His coming.*

Now Paul reveals some of the complaints and questionings that the church at Corinth gave him. He declares God as his vindication for his ministry and “*what kind of people we are.*” It is clear that there were other preachers trying to compete with Paul for the allegiance of the Corinthians to him as the founder and father. ....*who are not sincere and brag about what others think of them.* ( 2 Corinthians 5:12 AMP).

He will later in this letter address specifically the *false apostles* who claim his privilege as founders of the Corinthian church. ( 2 Corinthians 11:20 )

Paul goes on to explain his heart in ( 2 Corinthians 5:13 AMP):

*If we are out of our mind [just unstable fanatics as some critics say], it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for your benefit.* Apparently Paul's supernatural anointings were being questioned by some of these complainers at Corinth, most likely the *false apostles*. But now Paul gets to the main positive issue:

*The love of Christ compels us because we are convinced One died for all and so all have died. He died for all so that those who live shall no longer live for themselves **but for Him who died and rose for them.*** ( 2 Corinthians 5: 14 -15)

The *love of Christ compels* or exercises a constraining influence on Paul who knew Jesus died for all humanity. All humanity has died spiritually in the death of Christ; that is, all underwent the death deservedly theirs because of sin. The scope of redemption is universal since God's offer of salvation excludes no one, but the application of redemption is limited since not all people appropriate the benefits afforded by this universally offered salvation.

As the Bible says in ( 1 Peter 3:18 AMP ):

*For indeed Christ died for sins once for all, the Just and Righteous for the unjust and unrighteous [the Innocent for the guilty] so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit;*

As Jesus confronted His beloved Martha at the grave of Lazarus, He is asking everyone here today -**Do you believe it?** Not only His power to raise the dead, but His sacrifice on the Cross for your sins for our relationship with God.

Believing this good news appropriates this universally offered salvation for us!

Because Christ died for us, we should always be ready to share our faith, to suffer for our faith, even to die for our faith.

**I'll live for Him Who died for me.** This is great motivation for Christians. The love Jesus showed us by going to the Cross becomes a compelling reason for living – for Him. This Bible verse also tells us He also **rose from the dead for us** as well.

Paul stressed that the Corinthians could have confidence in the bodily resurrection and afterlife. So we too can have confidence in our heavenly bodies prepared for us. This confidence affects every aspect of our life here on earth. We Christians should realize we are still in the midst of a plague, COVID19, sent by God to alert the sinners of their need for a Saviour. It has affected every corner of the world and many aspects of our lives. Confidence in our heavenly bodies makes us stand out in this dark world of fear and death.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ -

Let's live for Him who died for us! Let's call upon God for Holy Spirit power to stand in a world tempting us to forget our faith. And , to have the abundant life He promised and bought for us by His sacrifice. Let's keep asking God for confidence in Jesus, and to be confident in our new heavenly bodies He has prepared for us.

Let us pray: