

## Christ's Message of Redemption



## Remaining Faithful

Randolph Dunn



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## Remaining Faithful

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved if you hold fast to the word I preached to you— unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. (1 Cor 15:14 ESV)

Once someone has:

A. Heard the Gospel Message that Jesus

1. was God who came to earth in the flesh
2. was crucified on the cross for our sins – the atoning sacrifice
3. was buried rising again on the third day
4. was seen by many who knew him best

B. Responds to that message by:

1. believing He is the Son of God
2. repenting of all unrighteousness
3. changing one's way of life to one of godliness
4. dying to sin, leaving the sinful body in the grave of baptism

B. Once someone hears and responds to the gospel, they are resurrected from the water of baptism, by the power of God, as a new creation. They become a child of God.

In Galatians 5:19-21 Paul identifies some things not to do or become "The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God."

Rest assured the Devil will use everything at his disposal to get you to return to your former way of life. Peter wrote "If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them." (2 Peter 2:20-21)

The apostle John also provided some insight when he wrote, "Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness." (1 John 2:9)

"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world - the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the

boasting of what he has and does - comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever." (1 John 2:15-17)

"Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him." (1 John 3:15)

"But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars-their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death." (Revelation 21:8)

"Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood." (Revelation 22:15)

When a Christian returns and remains in their former way of life, they are not better off, but worse. "They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity-for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him. If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. Of them the proverbs are true: 'A dog returns to its vomit,' and, 'A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud'." (2 Peter 2:19-22)

The Hebrew writer makes it clear that God has no pleasure in those who turn back. "So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, 'He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.' But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved." (Hebrews 10:35-39)

It is not enough to just begin in the way of righteousness. One can turn back from a life in Christ to their former way, a life of sin. Look at the message given to seven Asian churches most of which were established a few years earlier by Paul:

**Ephesus** "...Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place." (Revelation 2:4-5)

**Smyrna** "... Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you; the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life." (Revelation 2:10)

**Pergamum** "... I know where you live-where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, ... Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: ... Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." (Revelation 2:13, 14, 16)

**Thyatira** "... Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols." (Revelation 2:20)

**Sardis** "... These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God." (Revelation 3:1-2)

**Philadelphia** "... Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth." (Revelation 3: 10)

**Laodicea** "... I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm- neither hot nor cold- I am about to spit you out of my mouth." (Revelation 3: 15-16)

Paul's advice is very timely: "So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall"! (1 Corinthians 10:12)

#### Questions

1. Peter tells us a Christian can become worse off than before one knew the way of righteousness.

☐ True ☐ False

1. Paul warned the Galatian Christians that if they returned to the works of the flesh they would not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.

☐ True ☐ False

2. John explains that a Christian can still be in darkness.

☐ True ☐ False

3. To whom is the wrath of God revealed?

☐ Ungodly men ☐ Wicked men

☐ Men who suppress the truth

☐ All the above

4. The world and the lust for it will pass away but the will of God lives forever.

☐ True ☐ False

#### Answers to Questions

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3. True

4. All the above

5. True

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