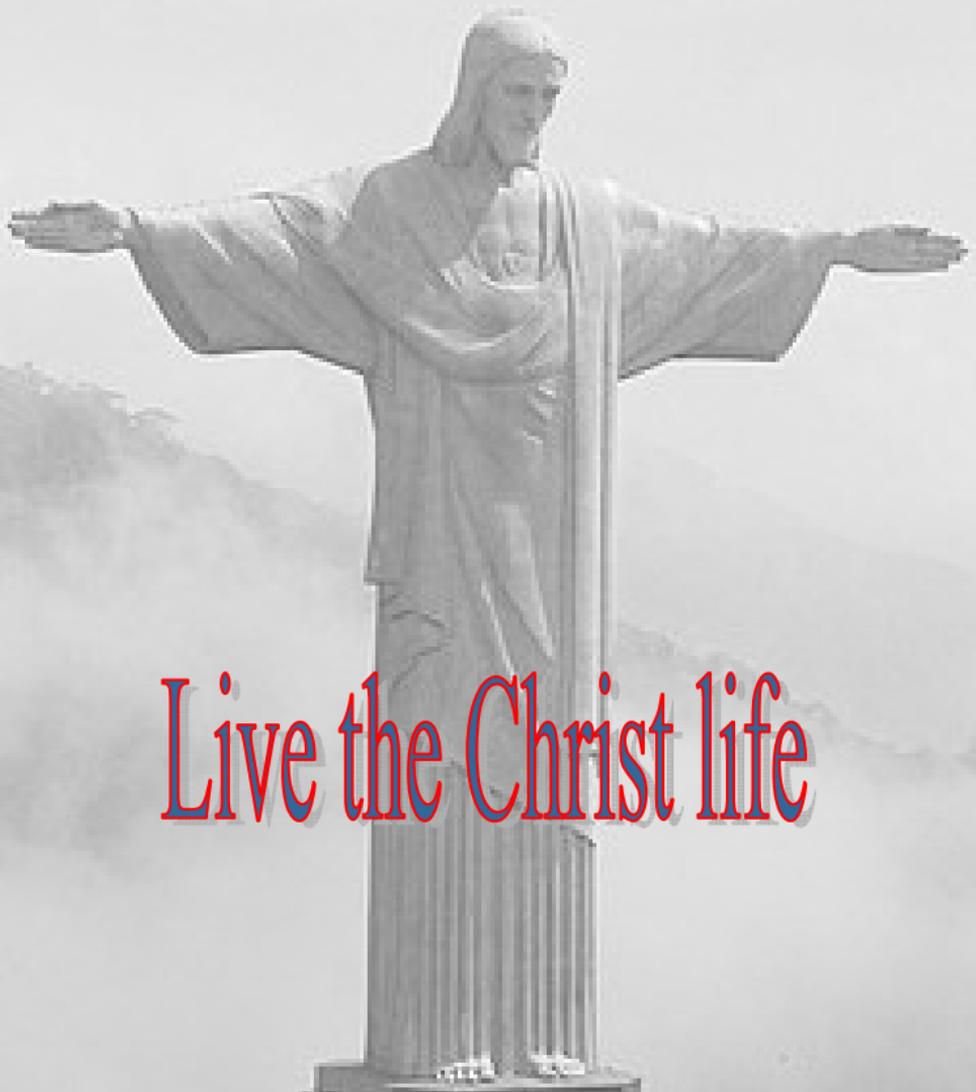


Don't be Disappointed!



Live the Christ life

## *Live the Christ life*

*'I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.'*

Gal 2:20

Becoming a Christian for many means we are forgiven our sins, we are blessed with love from God, and we do our best to follow the teaching of the Church.

The vast majority who claim to be Christians believe that after they have chosen to join the church they do the best they can to be good believers so they can go to heaven. This means attending Church and getting involved in the ministries of the Church.

However there are many who see no need for Church attendance because they believe they are already saved by Christ. Those who are too focused on the world make a lot about things of the world we can see, when the life of the Spirit is interested in what we cannot see, for we live by faith in what we can't see as we walk by the Spirit. We walk by faith and not by sight.

2 Cor 5:7

But the real issues is that all of these who walk by sight only really understand themselves to be reconditioned human beings who will receive a life in heaven when they die.

Any idea that we are completely new people who have been reborn by God, who have abandoned our former life in the world to live the life of Christ by the power of the Spirit is completely missed.

Some would suggest that following such a path may be admirable but surely not necessary for all.

This mistaken way of identifying as being 'Christian' comes from many preconceived ideas about Christianity. It may have come from being born into a Christian family, it may be because of being baptised, and passing confirmation classes as a traditional process, it may have come from making a decision to accept Christ as saviour. For these, being a believer is what they have done for God.

Seldom is the name Christian understood to mean we reckon ourselves to have died by faith to our past life and are now made alive by God by faith to live the Christ life.

The general mindset of most is occupied with earthly concerns in which we seek help from God to get us what we want and deliver us from suffering and discomfort.

To suggest that we can now embrace suffering by following the example of Christ is not seen to be very logical, and just a little extreme.

There is no understanding that in our union with Christ we are always secure as we live in the presence of God's kingly reign, otherwise known as the sovereignty of God. God's sovereignty means God always has the final say as to what occurs anywhere in the world.

Therefore, for those who lack saving faith, denying self is not a high priority, in fact, in seeking to satisfy our self, we fail to see the only way to God is by the work of Christ Jesus, and the cross He calls us to take up to follow Him is the only key we have to heavens.

If Christ lives in us as we take up our cross to follow His example, we should have the attitude that He has; which means we can say we live for Jesus Christ. Christ is our life. The life He gives is His life made alive in us.

The truth which is His truth is now our truth. The way He lived is our way. This is the abundant life promised by God.

This is the only way to real peace. This is the only way to find true security. Everything else in life is secondary to being faithful to Christ who lives in us.

This sad state of spiritual ignorance in many who claim to be Christian has developed because the Church has not followed the terms of admission that Jesus taught are necessary.

We have made it far too easy to be able to claim to be a Christian because we have not made it clear there is a cost to enter heaven. We can't take earthly way with us. And then there are some who want to be seen as leaders in the church want people to fill their chairs so these so called converts can fill their bank accounts.

While many have made it too easy to be in the Church, Jesus has declared: *“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.”* (Matt 7:13) The narrow gate is the way of the cross. Then *“If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny*

*himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it."* Luke 9:23-24

In a way of quickly adding people to the Church, the Church has been saying all people have to do is say they believe Jesus died for their sins. However the Bible says "*He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.*" John 3:36

Following the correct process is to believe what Jesus taught, and what is believed must be obeyed, or the belief is in vein and accounts for nothing.

Accordingly, the Church has failed to carry out Christ' command to "*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you.*" Matt 28:19-20

If we had obeyed the Lord Jesus and done as He commanded, we wouldn't have people in the Church who know little or nothing about what

He taught and how He has provided for us so we can live His life on earth.

### **What more does the Bible say?**

From the beginning we can see what God intends in not what many have decided Christianity is about. And since the Bible does not contradict itself, the whole Bible will confirm what is written in one part.

Therefore let us examine these things from what is written mainly in the book of Galatians for a true picture of what God has planned for us who are saved by the Grace of God through the sacrifice of the Son of God.

While Paul's letter to the Galatians deals mainly with false teachers who insisted we need the gospel plus circumcision to make it complete, there are many variations of stuff being added today. But a plus ends up being something added to the gospel to please the weakness of the flesh in sinful men.

Paul confronts the non biblical ideas by pointing out what God has already done through Jesus Christ. Nobody can add to or improve what is already perfect. What God has done stands alone, add to it and you lose, and take away

from it by not teaching the whole truth means you have nothing.

## **God gives us a revelation of Christ**

*'But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles.'*

Gal 1:15-16

In the first place Jesus came to reveal the Father to a world lost in darkness because it lacked a true understanding of God. Jesus revealed what the Father was like and preached about the good news of God's deliverance being available to all on earth who would believe and obey Christ.

As we consider the Letter to the Galatians, we can be sure it carries principles and truths which are not just for them, but include all those who follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Not only has the Son of God being revealed to Paul, the Son has been revealed to the whole world so that we are without excuse. The gospel of God is about the substitutionary death of Christ on a cross for all sinners, with His resurrection from the dead vindicating His claim to be God with all of God's authority. His death

has made it possible for us to have eternal life if we die to our life in the world.

### **To be in Christ, we willingly died**

*'I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.'*

Gal 2:20

Believers need to be crucified with Christ for a new life in Christ. (Rom 6:4-6) Identifying with the death of Christ on His cross means by faith we reckon ourselves to have died with Him so we can be raised up with a new life by the Spirit of God.

Identifying with Christ in this way means we are given all the aspects of His life to make them alive as our life, to be lived in the authority of His name and according to His character. This life of the Son that is now ours to live is lived by faith in the Son of God.

We live by faith. Faith is necessary to live the Christian life after we first believe, because we continue to live our lives in the physical bodies we were born into, and we live in a world that has physical reality.

Without faith in Christ to live His life, we would naturally fall back to a life without faith and only accept what we can see and feel with our hands.

I no longer live but Christ lives in me is no religious Cliché, it is supposed to be a reality. It is not simply a phrase or opinion that is overused and betrays a lack of original thought. Jesus said "*whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.*" Luke 9:24

Christ is to be my life, with my personality, but it is still His life and all He stands for, it is all His life represents.

### **As sons we are heirs with Christ**

*'For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.'* Gal 3:26-27, 29

In order to be true to our new status in the Family of God, we are baptised into Christ to give up the lives we had before Christ as if dead, in order that we can put on Christ.

Being baptised into Christ is achieved by our spiritual crucifixion with Christ. As a result we receive a new life in Christ, so we are to grow up into Christ so that Christ now lives in us. Clothing ourselves with Christ is like putting on a new suit so that Christ covers all of our life by the working of the Spirit.

The only way God's purpose can become a reality is that the Spirit of God must have first place in us as far as we are concerned, as we believe He has indwelt us as our true life as far as Christ is concerned.

Our baptism by the Spirit is a physical sign we are really joined with Christ, therefore Christ is the Christian, and the Christian is Christ. In baptism we are baptised into the name of Jesus and in this way we are incorporated into Christ to live His Christ life. Acts 2:38

Being in Christ means we are adopted into the family of God, and the adopted children receive a full share in the family inheritance, with all the rights and privileges of being a child of God.

If we are in Christ we are God's offspring, sons and daughters of Abraham. This sonship means we inherit all God has promised to give his

children, forgiveness of sin, a new life in the Spirit, heaven and every blessing in heaven. *'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.'* Eph 1:3

### **As sons we have responsibilities**

The Spirit of God reveals Christ to us and in us as He lives in us, so that we live His life and serve Christ to fulfil His purpose in the world He came to save from sin.

The sons and daughters of God are to reflect the character and the will of the Father. They are to participate in the work of the Father.

At no time is the son to do his own thing or act on his own initiative. The son is always to do the will of the Father. Jesus said, *"Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner."(John 5:19) "For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent*

*Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak."* John 12:49

The privilege of sons and daughters of God means having the luxury of belonging to the family of God, even though the world is against us. This privilege allows we are so secured it is possible to be a servant even to our enemies.

### **We receive the indwelling Spirit**

*'Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"'* Gal 4:6-7

The Spirit dwells in us to reveal Christ to us so we can follow His example by taking up our cross in obedience to Christ in service to Almighty God. God's children are not left to make their own way in the world, for to be a son of God is to be blessed with the enabling of God so that we can reflect the life of God our Father.

This work of God results in the giving of the Spirit of God to all who believe and obey Him. (Acts 5:32) The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Life in Christ who is given to bring spiritual life to the believer and to live in all those who have given up all things to claim Christ as saviour.

The life of Christ is implanted in us by the Spirit. Because of this we learn that to be born of God's spirit means a new beginning, so our whole existence is for the sake of Christ, to live His life in us, to reveal His plan to redeem sinners, and promote His salvation work for the kingdom of God on earth.

It is only then we begin a new life with God, and we follow the example of Christ in service to our God. This is not living according to our own ability, instead being in Christ is to have Christ in us by the powerful working of His Spirit, this means His character and purpose are now the only reason we have for living.

Therefore there can be no time in our walk in the darkness of the world when we are separated from the love and peace of a life lived in union with God.

Victory over the flesh is absolutely possible for the faithful, so that we knew we cannot do as we would please according to the flesh.

The flesh may war against the Spirit, but the Spirit of God has the power of God to give us a way out of temptation. \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Cor 10:13

## **God's children are to grow up into Christ**

*'My children, with whom I am again in labour until Christ is formed in you.'* Gal 4:19

We are not saved to remain children; we are saved so that Christ becomes our life, His life is to be formed in us. We are saved by having faith and we are to continue to live and grow by faith in Christ Jesus. Once we are justified we are to be sanctified, because we are to be like Christ; and this is only achieved when the truth changes us to be like Him. Growth comes by being determined to do all things in conformity with His teaching. Consequently we are to share in His obedience, His suffering, and His resurrection as we enjoy a new identity in Christ.

Since Christ is our life we need to: *'Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.'*

Phil 2:5-8

## **All in Christ we will be persecuted**

*'But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also.'*

Gal 4:29

Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by the free woman. But the son by the slave was born according to the flesh and the son by the free woman through the promise of God. (Gen 4:23) Now, in the fullness of time, the child of the promise is the one who is born of the Spirit in Christ.

The flesh means the people of the world who live in rebellion to God as they seek to do all things according to their own understanding and reject the need for obedience to God alone. Those born of the flesh today continue to persecute those born of the Spirit who will inherit the promise by the working of the Spirit of God.

Therefore persecution will come to those in Christ from unbelievers in every sphere of life, including the Church. It will come from those who hold to a religion originating in the mind of men. It will come from some who claim to be

spiritual but will not bow down to absolute obedience and submission to Christ. Persecution will come from worldly minded people who have no real regard for God.

Jesus said, *“In this world you will have tribulation.”* (John 16:33) *‘Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.’* (2 Tim 3:12) Jesus said, *“Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW; and A MAN’S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD.”* — Matt 10:34-36

### **Followers of Christ guard against attempts to modify the gospel of Christ**

A little error can be a fatal dose. *‘A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough. I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will adopt no other view; but the one who is disturbing you will bear his judgment, whoever he is. But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished.’* Gal 5:9-11

Having no other view than that revealed by the word of God means obeying the truth we have received. Holding to the truth of Christ without compromise means we will be persecuted for the sake of Christ.

Where there is any hint of someone preaching a gospel plus of their own addition, we must stand firm to that which we receive from God in the Bible. To do this we need to understand what we read in its proper context, because most additions of a plus come from taking some part of the Bible out of its original context to propose a different opinion other than what God has revealed.

### **Victory is for those who walk by the Spirit**

*'But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.'* Gal 5:16-18

We are at war with the flesh in the world, but also in us. The only way for us to succeed is to walk by the Spirit.

When Paul says, *-you may not do the things that you please* - he is not speaking of the spirit life, he is referring to the desires of the flesh. It is sometimes taken that this verse is saying the good we would do we don't do; aligning the meaning with Rom 7:14ff, but there the inability to do what is right is because the writer is living under the law. What Paul is saying is not speaking of the Christian who are indwelt with the Spirit to fulfil the law. *'so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.'* Rom 8:4

If we are caught in an offence against God by living according to the flesh, that is bad enough, but it also means we have been unfaithful towards the one who loves us enough to die that we may live; and that disloyalty by itself should cause us more grief than we would like to bear, so we walk by the Spirit.

We who walk by the Spirit have crucified the flesh to conform to the life of Christ. Therefore we need to understand what 'flesh' represents.

Paul lists some of the qualities of the flesh here, *'Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which*

*are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.'* Gal 5:19-21

This list is not exhaustive because Paul adds more in his second letter to Timothy. *'For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.'* 2 Tm 3:2-5

It is not the occasional failure to deny these things in us that prohibits entry into the kingdom of God, but the habits where these things are part of the normal mindset exclude the one who practices these things. *'For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are*

*according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.'*

Rom 8:5

The Holy Spirit provides the obedient believer with the qualities needed for the kingdom of God. *'if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.'*

Rom 8:11

*'His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.'*

2 Pet 1:3-4

In this regard God gives us the life of the Spirit which is called the fruit of the Spirit. However we must not see the following list as all there is to the life of the Spirit, for the Spirit has all the qualities and characteristics of God the Father.

*'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*

*gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.'* Gal 5: 22-25

Practically speaking, the fruit of the Spirit's life enables the believer to fulfil the law of love. To *'Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfil the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. For each one will bear his own load.'* Gal 6:2-5

*'Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.'* Col 3:12-14

## **Living the Christ life requires endurance**

*'Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.'* Gal 6:9-10

We have crucified ourselves to the world, and the world in its relationship to us, so we do not lose heart and stop believing God when faced with the darkness of the world. We are now a completely new creation in Christ, free from reacting negatively to the world. To keep us from losing heart we behold Jesus who lives in us, we look to His example of love in action as we love Him.

In this way we commit ourselves to doing good deeds, so our light will shine in the darkness so the world will give glory to God.

In our perseverance we remember the fullness of the promises of God are not yet for today, because the working of the kingdom of God is progressing to a climax in the coming of Christ to receive those who love Him. Therefore we do not lose heart; instead we boast in nothing less

than Jesus Christ and His righteousness, the one who is our life now and our glory to come.

*'But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.'*

Gal 6:14-15

## **Don't be disappointed**

The condition of our heart decides what we will accept from God. The spiritual condition of the heart will determine how we understand the Bible. The heart decides what is important to us, and will mean we will see only what we are looking for that supports the condition of our heart towards God. The hard heart is indifferent to the prodding of the Spirit we see nothing. The obedient heart welcomes the Spirit of God with gladness.

A dead spiritual heart will only see what is written in the Bible as dead words on a page. The spiritual baby will be attracted to stories which support childish dependence. The spiritual immature or carnal believer will want to find things that seem to allow for worldly

attachment and a life of plenty and comfort. The spiritual adolescents will be full of action but will see far less in the Bible than they think they already understand. The spiritually mature will find the living word of God that will constantly feed them and provide for their sanctification as they grow more each day into the image of Christ. Therefore it's important to grow in grace.

God promises the faithful who look to Him and what He has done and is doing; that He will keep them in perfect peace. Therefore if we are anxious, worried, agitated, and fearful, we are not looking to God but to be flesh and the world. In these ways we live in fear when our Christ has told us not to fear.

We should see disharmony in our hearts as a warning from the Spirit that we are looking in the wrong place. Anxiety is the sign we have to redirect our focus to God. When the Lord was troubled before being horribly crucified He prayed to God the Father. He would thereby have been secured in the knowledge He was God's Son and His death for the sins of the world was the Father's will for Him.

*If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is,*

*seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.'*

Col 3:1-4

As we face the darkness of the world we need to keep our focus on God so we are reminded who we are in Christ, as we live His life believe in what God has done, and is doing according to His will. We look *'to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us.'*

Eph 3:20

The answer to the troubles of the world, whether unbelief, false teachers, persecution, disease, or poverty; is having Christ living in us. If we are in Christ we have God. Look to God, for He has made it possible for us to live the Christ life.

In the church there are always the unfaithful, they are like the tares that grow up with the wheat and the goats that pasture with the sheep. Therefore we need Christ' discernment, we need to remain faithful to the one who now lives in us.

When we purposefully go against His teaching we not only sin, but we are unfaithful to the one who gives us life.

When we consider what the true Christian life is to be, many will have to agree they have been mistaken and need to go back to the beginning and start all over again. Others will be faced with the reality that there is much more that needs to be attended to considering their spiritual maturity.

Regardless of where we are in our faithfulness, we have as much of God as we have been willing to die for in order to be like Christ. God offers all of Himself for those who will give all, so if we are not satisfied with the way things are, there is definitely something we can do to change things. Gal 6:7-8

We will all be called to give an account for the way we have lived; our Father doesn't want any of us to be disappointed; our future is in our hands. Live the Christ life.

*'Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.'* Heb 11:1

Don't be disappointed, put on Christ.

# **Living Water Resources**

## **Come to the River**



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