

## FACE TO FACE WITH REALITY

*The fear of death is the most common motivating factor for bringing people to the knowledge of the Gospel. Death is blunt and final... it has no manners, no compassion, no benefit, no end. It is an absolute, that demands our total devotion if we wish to avoid it. The Gospel of Jesus Christ opened our eyes to a way of escape... revealing that death can be permanently avoided. When we first came to the church, we had a very keen focus on the differences between life and death... this resulted in us getting baptised and being filled with the Holy Spirit. The door was opened to overcoming death... we were given an opportunity to live a life filled with God's blessing and of life giving resources... God gave us the powers to ensure our survival.*

*The following words of Christ were spoken to ensure that we continue to maintain the focus that first brought us to salvation...*

**JOH 15:1** I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman (*the permanent caretaker/gardener... the one who looks after the vine*).

**2** Every branch in me that beareth not fruit **he taketh away**: and every branch that beareth fruit, **he purgeth it**, that it may bring forth **more fruit**. *When the topic is life and death.... there is not much room for tact or pleasantries. Jesus gets straight to the point... produce fruit or die. We need to frequently remind ourselves of this reality.*

**3** Now ye are **clean** (*purified*) through the word which I have spoken unto you. *The problems of sin and weakness, unworthiness and human doubts are able to be perfectly managed. There is no reason to not make an effort... every person can be successfully catered for through the power of the Holy Spirit... every day.*

**4** Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch **cannot bear fruit of itself**, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, **except ye abide in me**. *To understand what God's fruit is, we need to understand the nature of God himself.... God is love, therefore all his directions are based on developing acts of service to others. The following points are the God inspired practices that bear the most fruit.*

*Prayer... Reading... Witnessing/evangelism... Hospitality/follow up... Financial support... Fellowship... using the voice gifts. These practices take time to develop and master... they bear the fruit that keeps the blessings alive and your personal development heading upwards. These are the practices which God blesses and refines... making you more effective each day... they should all be acts of faithful love, not habit, nor necessity. Without God's fruit you are of no use to the Lord or the church.*

**5** I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that **abideth** (*endures*) in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. *Lack of spiritual growth is the result of lessening spiritual input.*

**6** If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned. *This is what happens when we get distracted by the natural events of life and the things of the world. We become the centre of our own lives, we fall back to a self absorbed life, rather than expanding into a selfless Christ like state. The death we wish to avoid looms unmercifully upon us... we are rejected and ultimately destroyed.*

**7** If ye **abide** (*endure*) in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. *God offers you personal gain as well as spiritual gain... this removes the need to fall back into a selfish lifestyle. God will give you more than the world can give you... spiritual or natural!*

**8** Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. *This is the testimony which wins souls and builds the church. This is what gives you the fulfilment of all your dreams.*

**9** As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. *Jesus Christ offers to give us everything that God gave him.*

**10** If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. *Some think that the Lord is too tough or too demanding, but this is not the case. God only expects us to perform to our capacity...* **MAT 25:15** And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; **to every man according to his several ability**;

**11** These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that your joy might be full. The very essence and happiness, the joy of life and faithful confidence that Christ enjoyed... is being offered to us by Christ himself.*

**12** This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. *This is the same principle that Christ offered when challenged to summarise the bible. He kept repeating it on every opportunity, because it is also the summary of Christian life.*

*This is the only way to escape death. You cannot serve anyone as Christ served them unless you have the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Death results when God's love is ignored or loses its appeal. There is no substitute for enthusiastic saints... over these people, death has no power!!*

*There is no substitute for Godly enthusiasm... pray for wisdom and energise you life... live forever... and more importantly, show others how to live forever by your example.*