

Jesus says, “I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. (John 14:18-19)

In this text Jesus promises the Holy Spirit to walk with us in life. This might seem rather simple but the concept of life is complicated especially when we glorify heaven. There have been several situations in my ministry that I have run into people who misunderstand the purpose of the cross and miss the importance of Jesus’ atonement completely!

Heaven. Someone once said, *“The word conjures up a plentitude of images, too many sugary sweet or woefully shallow. Too often, we think of it as somewhere “up there”, an amusement park riding on a cloud, or angels out of a Christmas pageant with cardboard harps.”*

What I mean is that Jesus died for us so that we could LIVE our lives without the guilt and burdens that come with the results of sin... in this world and the next. Yes, this means also in our deaths, the end of this life, we will be given the grace to live with our heavenly creator in God’s kingdom. However, this does NOT mean we should glorify death. Death is final - for this world. The abundant life Jesus wants us to have is a life of holiness, goodness, blessing, love, sharing, friendship, peace, joy, grace and the promise of eternal life.

Christ wants us to live here, today... as long as we can. It is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. God is the one who has brought about our longing for the resurrection, since He is the one who “has given the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.”

The reason I share this is that I have run into a number of people who yearn for this glory in heaven, where it is said there will be no more suffering or pain. I hear this especially from those who get depressed or those who are chronically sick. This does not mean we should yearn to die... today.... To be with God. This is NOT living as Jesus wants us to.

There is a story told of an evangelist who was preaching away during a gospel meeting. He paused and asked the congregation a question – How many of you want to go to heaven? “If you want to go to heaven, then, please raise your hand,” he said. Everyone in the audience raised their hand, except for one man sitting near the front.

The preacher pointed his finger at the man and said, “Sir, do you mean to tell me that you don’t want to go to heaven?” The man replied, “Sure I want to go to heaven, but the way you asked the question, it sounded like you were getting up a busload to leave immediately.” No - we don’t want to jump on that bus today.

Yes, we all want to go to Heaven, but we are to live first. Jesus did not die on the cross for us to all to end our own lives so that we can be with God and the others who have died before us and are there with God. Jesus wants us to **live within** God’s unconditional grace and forgiveness. Jesus wants us to persevere even when we are tired, suffering and emotionally burned out because He empowers us. Yes, we need to live as if tomorrow might never come too.... Which means we LIVE by following Jesus way.... By loving the neighbor. Thank God the Holy Spirit is here to guide us through every step!

Are you living ?