

God's Love  
#508, Week of 5-5-2019

by Dr. Dennis Prutow

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

The world is a spiritual realm hostile to God. The apostle John says, “All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world” (1 John 2:16). The devil is the “ruler” and “god” of this spiritual realm (John 12:31, 2 Corinthians 4:4).

God loved what was hostile to Him. He sent His own Son into enemy territory. He rescued men and women from bondage to sin and Satan. If we remain in the kingdom of the devil, we perish. If God rescues us from this kingdom, we have the promise of eternal life in heaven.

When God gave His Son, He gave that which was dearest to Him. He sacrificed Himself. “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

Followers of Christ say of God, “He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son” (Colossians 1:13). It gets personal. They exclaim of Christ, He “loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Galatians 2:20).

-----  
Jesus' Success and Ours  
#509, Week of 5-12-2019

by Dr. Dennis Prutow

Imagine, “Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil” (Matthew 4:1). The Holy Spirit actually led Jesus into a desert region so the devil would have ample opportunity to tempt Him and test Him.

This reminds us of ancient Israel. Moses told the people, “You shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not” (Deuteronomy 8:2). The test was designed to show them their hearts. God already knew.

The devil tested Jesus. Would He reveal a heart that loved God? Furthermore, the devil challenged Jesus, “If You are the Son of God...” (Matthew 4:3 and 6). As the Son of God, Jesus Christ represented His people. They failed to show their love for the Father. Jesus succeeded perfectly. He always did what was right.

I also fail to love God. Therefore, I must trust in the right actions of Christ. His right actions bring me to God. I do not gain heaven on the basis of what I do that is right. I have the righteousness “which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith” (Philippians 3:9).

-----

Leaving Room for God  
#510, Week 5-19-2019

by Dr. Dennis Prutow

I’ll get you for that. Sounds like something a kid would say. Could be something a grown-up person might think. A co-worker undercuts your position. All it takes is one well-placed remark. It’s gossip. It’s unfounded rumor. It’s a lie. Now she gets the promotion, the raise, and the new opportunities. I’ll get her for that.

How did Jesus react? “While being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously” (1 Peter 2:23). Jesus was unjustly maligned. The suffering He endured was totally unjustified. He did not return the favor with unkind words. He did not threaten retaliation. He trusted God the Father to render the proper judgment at the proper time.

Jesus remembered the words of the ancient text of Deuteronomy 32:35. God declares, “Vengeance is Mine.” The New Testament also reminds us of this. “Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord” (Romans 12:19).

Don’t take things into your own hands in order to get even. Leave room for God. Remember Jesus. “You have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps” (1 Peter 1:21).

-----

Making Changes  
#511, Week of 5-26-2019

by Dennis Prutow

Sometimes we think there is no way to get there from here, from where we stand. The hurdles seem insurmountable. Old habits stubbornly cling to us. We just don’t seem to be able to shake them. Sin has the upper hand. What’s wrong? Is it supposed to be this way?

First, look at Romans 6:14. “Sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.” People receiving the grace and mercy of God are not attempting to

prove they are able to make the grade. These people know they cannot make it to heaven on their own merit. They are not under law but under grace.

In this status, the Bible declares, sin is not your master. You have a new King. His name is Jesus. "Jesus is Lord" (Romans 10:9). Sin remains. It no longer reigns. Since this is the case, you are able to break old habits and form new ones. It is possible. It takes a lot of persistent practice.

Here is a second word. "Just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification" (Romans 6:19). Practice the things pleasing to God. Do them over and over again. By the grace of God, change will result.