

Hymns: 12 I'll Fly Away 34 When We All Get to Heaven

Psalm: 46

Good morning.

How many here grew up (as I did) up north. Those of you who did, are familiar with lots of snow. It's been a very long time since I attended high school. Yet, I can still remember seeing many students suddenly hobbling around on crutches. When I saw that, I knew that intramural skiing season had begun.

Snow can be slippery and dangerous. Accident statistics confirm this. I remember traveling in blinding snow at night on the Pennsylvania Turnpike and up steep, winding back-roads. Sometimes Dad would be lucky enough to drive behind a snowplow. At times though, I wondered if we would make it home, but we always did.

Despite these dangers, in those innocent days of my youth, the word *snowflakes* brought to mind glistening, pure white, perfect, delicate, unique forms of God's creative hand. They tickled my outstretched tongue and kissed my cheeks and chin with cool delight. They drifted softly and silently from above to form a white blanket of solitude below -- creating a calm and beauty like no other.

Like so many words these days, something of great beauty and purity has been hijacked to describe the pathetic, perverted, and profane. (We highlighted this specifically with the *rainbow* and *marriage* itself.) The term *snowflakes* today marks intellectual paupers who flee to *safe spaces* to shield their indefensible ideas from challenge and to stroke their fragile egos. They cannot cope with anything to disturb their fanciful reality.

All too often, this happens in colleges and universities charged to educate, broaden thought processes, and espouse excellence. Today, these incubators of idiots seek to indoctrinate students, stifle creativity, and affirm **the student** rather than outstanding individual academic achievement.

When circumstances of life throw them a curve, snowflakes have no recourse. They either vent in profane temper tantrums or **wither and melt** with diversions like coloring books or play dough. Sad indeed is the lot of these emotional children.

What do you do when life throws you a curve? Do you turn to social media and display to the world your lack of vocabulary and your immaturity? As Christians, we need never descend into the pit of despair despite our circumstances. Today, we want to identify the answer to this dilemma and more.

Now, one important aspect of dealing with life's problems is recognizing exactly who we are. Who has heard of ALF? Perhaps some of you remember the TV sitcom by that name starring a wise-cracking, dog-like, highly intelligent puppet from outer space with child-like reasoning.

Does anyone know what that acronym means? The three letters *A-L-F* stand for:

Alien Life Form

You may have heard, just a week ago today, Carrie Fisher, a.k.a. Princess Leia of *Star Wars*' fame, passed away. Oddly, her mother, Debbie Reynolds, joined her in eternity one day later. This has ramped up the interest in and talk of *Star Wars*.

Of course, Star Wars contained many alien characters including Chewbacca and Yoda. Famous alien characters from other movies include Spock and of course ET. One thing we can say about each of these *aliens* is that they are fictional. They're not real.

For a few minutes, let's explore some of what the Bible says about aliens--who they are and some things they need to do to survive.

What exactly is an alien?

outsider

non-citizen

or perhaps even a creature from outer space

Henry, did you know that I am an alien? Many of the people in this room with us are also aliens. There's a passage in the Bible where Jesus was praying for you and me and all of His children who are born again (John 17:20). In that prayer, He calls His children and even Himself **aliens** (v. 16).

Let's look at these interesting few verses:

John 17

*[14] I have **given** them thy **word**;*

Who is Jesus talking to? He's praying to His Heavenly Father.

And who is the *them* He talking about? His followers – Christians.

What does "thy word" mean? That's the Bible, the Word of God.

and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Did you catch that? Jesus just said that both He and we who know Him are **aliens**.

*[15] I pray **not** that thou shouldst take them out of the world,*

but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.

He's praying to God to protect us from evil.

[16] They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

There, He said it again!

*[17] Sanctify them through thy truth: thy **word is truth**.*

In verse 14 Jesus said that He has given us God's Word.

Now in this verse He said not only is it true, but God uses it to make us pure.

Wouldn't you like to have and keep a pure mind? Jesus has given us **the secret** to cleaning up any trash that got in there and how to keep it out.

Can you name some evil things that people bring into their lives?

- jealousy

- cheating

- lying

- filthy language
- evil shows on TV and in movies
- lusts of various kinds
- love of money
- pride
- disobedience
- harmful habits
 - smoking
 - drinking
 - drugs
 - overeating

The Bible **has** a word for these kinds of things. It's called **sin**.

We know that Jesus died to take the penalty for our sin so we can go to be with Him some day, but while we're still living here we need to really watch out for this **sin** thing.

Why?

- sin hurts us
- sin hurts others
- sin displeases God

Okay, we've learned about aliens, about sin, and about **how** the **Word of God** helps us **aliens** become clean and stay that way. Let's look at an example.

Back when I was a boy, there was a television show called "Watch Mr. Wizard." Who remembers that show? It was very interesting to me because Mr. Wizard would show how things worked by doing demonstrations or experiments. Despite the word *wizard* in his name, he was just a science teacher and not someone who was involved with witchcraft--which God says is evil.

Today we're going to do a little experiment.

We have two empty glasses and two liquids. One liquid is clean, clear water. We will use that to represent the **Word of God**. The other liquid is a **mystery fluid**. It is **dark and dirty**. It represents sin. Can anyone guess what this black liquid might be?

We also have two glasses. They represent two people. One will be a person who **has not** accepted Jesus as Savior. The other will represent a person who **has** accepted the Lord. Notice how both are empty. (Really they have air inside of them, but nothing that that they are made to hold.)

Let's review:

What does the water represent? The Word of God

What does the black fluid represent? Sin

Who are the two glasses? A Christian and a non-Christian

Everyone will fill his life with **either**

the things of this world or

the things from God.

You cannot stay empty.

What do you think the person who does **not** know the Lord will have in his life? We know that Satan is the prince of this world. Let's fill that glass with the things of this world.

Now, this second glass has a choice. He could fill his life with this dirty stuff too, but he knows that is not good for him or others, and that it displeases God. He probably has Christians in his life to teach him how to live the **best** life. Let's fill this glass with the pure, clean water.

What does the pure water represent? The Word of God

Now we have two people.

- One whose life is filled with things of the world
- One whose life is clean.

Let's pretend that the glass that knows the Lord tells the other glass that Jesus died for his sins on the cross, and if he will only accept Jesus as his Savior, he too can be a child of God. Then, he accepts Jesus as his Savior. God will get him all cleaned up when he goes to heaven, but he still has all of that dirty stuff cluttering up his life.

How can he get it out?

What did Jesus say?

John 17:17 *Make them **pure** through your truth: **your word** is truth.*

Here is where we can help this new Christian. Let's pour a little water in his glass and watch what happens.

Now let's go over to the one that's clean. What would happen if sin comes his way? Let's see.

The dirty stuff tried to get in, but the **Word of God** was there to push it out!

As Christians, we need to keep our lives **filled** with **God's Word** to protect us. How can we do that?

We can:

read the Bible,

memorize Bible verses,

go to church,

listen to the Bible and Bible teaching on our smart phone.

When Satan tempted Jesus, Jesus answered him with three verses from the Bible.

We need to be just like Him.

Now let's give these two glasses a chance to settle down. We will see what's inside of them in a few minutes.

While we wait, here are some more Bible verses that tell us of the cleansing power of **God's Word**:

Psalm

19:8a The **statutes** of the LORD are **right, rejoicing the heart**:

19:8b the **commandment** of the LORD is **pure**, enlightening the eyes.

119:9 How shall a young man **cleanse** his way? by taking heed to **Your word**.

119:11 **Thy word** have I hid in mine **heart**, that I might not **sin** against thee.

119:105 **Thy word** is a **lamp** unto my feet, and a **light** unto my path.

Matthew

4:4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by **every word** that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Luke

11:28b ...**happy** are they that **hear the word of God**, and **keep it**.

John

1:1 In the beginning was **the Word**, and **the Word** was with God, and **the Word** was God.

6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the **bread of life**: he that comes to me shall **never hunger**; and he that believes on me shall **never thirst**.

Romans

10:17 So then faith comes by **hearing**, and hearing by the **word of God**.

Ephesians

5:25b ...Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

5:26 That he might **sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word**,

6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the **word of God**:

Colossians

3:16 Let the **word of Christ** dwell in you richly in all wisdom;...

Hebrews

4:12 For the **word of God** is **living and powerful**, and **sharper** than any two-edged sword...and is able to **judge** the thoughts and intents of the heart.

I Peter

1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the **word of God**, which

lives and abides for ever.

From the verses that we just heard, let's review some things about God's word:

true

clean

cleans us

protects us from evil

shows us the way to go

food

makes us happy

a name for Jesus

brings life

powerful

eternal

So we see two glasses, both now Christians, but both living in a dirty world. If any of you have seen Dilbert in the funny papers, there's a place called *Elbonia*. That's because the people there are standing in mud up to their elbows. Sometimes that's the way it feels to be a Christian. Just like those glasses, we're standing in a pretty dirty place. That's what makes it so nice to come here where things are much cleaner.

And that's what's so nice about God's word. I'm pretty much like that second glass. I accepted the Lord when I was young, and God's Word has protected me from much of that dirty stuff **and** cleans out trash that gets in. It works just as God says it does. Let's see how our glasses made out.

While sin has left its mark on the outside, God's Word has done its job on the inside. Let me encourage you to use these verses that we studied and that you have to take home to help you live a clean, pure life.

Now let's wrap up this first key to living with one more passage from God's Word to encourage you and help you remember what we learned about life:

I John 2

[14] ...I have written unto you, young men,

because ye are strong, and

the word of God *abideth in you, and*

ye have overcome the wicked one.

[15] Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

*[16] For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is **not** of the Father, but is of the world.*

[17] And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of

God

Abideth

[Living]

For ever.

Before we close, let's quickly pick up a **second** key to Christian living – how to win in spite of troubles. That is, how to beat the snowflake syndrome. The Apostle Paul, suffered greatly -- sustaining beatings, imprisonment, and shipwreck. Despite these challenges, he **gave thanks** to God and said that “whatsoever state I am in, therewith to be content.”

But how can we thank God for evil or even loss in our lives? There is a way. Job knew it as he thanked God in the face of losing nearly everything. The key is to keep our eye on eternity and God's higher purposes. Our stay in this mortal body is fleeting:

*For our light affliction, which is **but for a moment**, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)*

With **right perspective** and the **power of God's Spirit** within us, we can **win the victory** over **any** hardship. Soon, we who know the Lord will live with Him in glory. We will see His hair and clothing -- **white and radiant**. We will see the **brilliant white light** of His **glory** filling heaven. We will witness a **purity** far greater than a **new-fallen snow**.

The truth is, we need never be held captive by circumstances. Our loving heavenly Father knows our every struggle and sorrow. He is with us **always**. He goes with us through each **storm**. And He loves us with a love **far greater** than we can fathom.

*For God so **loved** the world that He **gave** His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).*

What a gift, and what a promise! While we may not be able always to give thanks for difficult times, we can always give thanks for our God, His great Gift to us, and the cleansing power of His Word.

Benediction

*Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling,
and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory
with exceeding joy,
To the only wise God our Saviour,
be glory and majesty,
dominion and power,
both now and ever. Amen. (Jude 24-25)*

© Ron Harrod, 2017.

This document may be reproduced for noncommercial use only.