

## ***EASTER - A TIME FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION***

There is no greater celebration for Christians than the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This side of the tomb brings victory over death, hope for the future, yet, great responsibility. Last week, our thoughts were on John 3:16. This week, consider focusing on 2 Cor. 5:21, *that we might become the righteousness of God.*

I came across a quote by A.W. Tozer that makes me happy and sad. He said, “*Every man is as close to God as he wants to be.*” I am encouraged when I think that God wants me close to Him and I am part of the process. It saddens me when God seems distant and that it is because of me, not Him.

Of course, my relationship to God is all of Him. God wants me close to Him, so much so, that the Son of God took on the form of man and made penalty for my sins. He justified me fully through Jesus Christ. Yet, my developing fellowship with God is a cooperative effort of the Holy Spirit and me. Sanctification requires my participation. How close do I want to be? I pray I will be so close to Him that I become fully conformed to His image.

How can that happen? First and foremost, it is a choice. Matthew 6:33 declares that we must seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. We must remember that this process of sanctification is progressive. According to 1 Corinthians 13:12, we now see only in part but one day we shall see face to face.

Second, we must not only choose to seek Him but we must also choose to obey Him, *...if you love Me, you will keep My commandments*, John 14:15. My progress toward conformity to Christ can be evaluated by personal questions. How do I feel about a person who offended me and I offered forgiveness? How do I spend free time when nobody knows what I choose to do? Where do I focus my thoughts when I attend a worship service? It can be painful to think that maybe my conformity to Christ is more superficial than I am willing to admit. Maybe this is the season I will choose obedience.

Third, the process of drawing closer to God is nurtured as we serve others. I base this on the stated purpose for which Jesus Christ came to earth, *... to serve and to give His life a ransom*, Matthew 20:28. Serving is wonderful way to draw closer to others and in the process, draw closer to God.

Easter is certainly a time of rejoicing but it should be a time of reflection, as well. Do I want to be closer to God? Is His righteousness the goal for my life? Christian maturity is a choice. Nothing is holding us back. It is a choice.