

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Some things in life are necessary. One of those things is family. Family is the basic building block of any society. Another necessity in life is school. Somehow, in some way, children need to learn, whether it is at home or in a public or private school. They need to learn because one of the necessities is work. Why do we work? We work to support our families. This is the circle of life.

But that's not where the necessities of life stop. In our spiritual lives there are necessities, too. Today, on the basis of our text, we will see what those necessary things are. So

### SOME THINGS IN LIFE ARE NECESSARY

I. The first is Jesus going up to Jerusalem. Our text says: **“Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.”**

Immediately Peter objects. **“Never, Lord! This shall never happen to you.”** Peter was sure that Jesus suffering and dying was not necessary. He probably missed the point about Jesus rising from the dead because his mouth got in the way of his ears.

He gets a very sharp rebuke from Jesus. **“Get behind me, Satan. You are a stumbling block to me.”** It was as if Peter was trying to trip Jesus up. Jesus had to say to him, **“You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”**

Do you and I ever act like Peter, insisting that our way is better than his way? Do we resist God's plan for us, saying, “God we have to do it my way.” Do we ever say, “Why are you letting this happen to me?”

Do we ever get angry with God because something terrible has happened in our lives? Maybe it was a serious disease or possibly the loss of loved one. “What are you doing to me, Lord?” we say. Like Peter, we sin when we question the wisdom of God.

This is why Paul reminds us in Romans 11, **“Who has known the mind of the Lord, who has been his counselor?”** Jesus was outlining God's plan for his life. Peter became a tool of Satan to try to put a stop to God's plan.

God's plan is always the best plan. Why is that so? Look at our world from God's viewpoint. What does he see? Sinful people. None of them has any possible way of meeting God's demand: **“Be holy, because I the Lord your God am holy.”** None of them will qualify for eternal life on their own. This includes you and me.

So what is God's remedy? His plan is to supply perfection where there is none. His plan is to provide a substitute to take care of our sins. His plan is Jesus, Jesus, only Jesus. He becomes our holiness through his perfect obedience. He becomes the substitute for each of us by taking the whipping we deserve.

The plan worked perfectly. Jesus did go up to Jerusalem. He was treated very badly by the leaders of his own people. He was sentenced to death even though he was innocent. Yet on the cross he atones for every sin. On the cross he redeems us from our enemies: from the condemnation we deserve for our sins, from the horror of eternal death in hell, and from the terror that only Satan could pour out on us. Only Jesus could do this because only Jesus is our perfect brother and our eternal God at the same time.

Then he was raised from the dead. That leaves no doubt that your sins are forgiven. In his resurrection he offers us a new life with him right now and an eternal life with him in

heaven. All this was necessary in order for us to be saved. All this had to be done in order for us to be brought to faith in Jesus as our Savior.

II. That brings us to the second necessity in our spiritual lives. As believer in Jesus, you following in his footsteps.

That happens as the Holy Spirit continues to work in our lives. Jesus said, **“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross, and follow me.”** The Holy Spirit, working in us through the Word, helps us to practice self-denial. In other words, it’s not me first, but God first. It is God’s will, not my will that matters. We rejoice that Jesus has saved us. But we also rejoice, as we grow in faith, to do what Jesus wants us to do - to be faithful to his Word.

In that faithfulness, we learn to take up the cross. This is not something we do literally, but figuratively. Since Jesus suffered for you and me, we will expect the same. The servant is not above the master. So just as Jesus suffered in order to save us, so we will expect to face some suffering because he is in our lives.

What is that suffering? Here Jesus is talking about what we will endure because of him. We expect to be mocked for our belief in a dying and rising Savior. We expect that people will shun us because we confess that Jesus is the only way, that Christianity is the only true religion. We are not surprised when we are called close-minded because we oppose abortion, or gay marriage, or the sinful lifestyles that abound in our broken world. We endure these things because we love Jesus and he loves us.

So we follow in his footsteps. We go his way, not the way of the world. Understand that his road is a narrow road. On either side, as we follow Jesus, there are ditches. Those ditches are filled with all the devil’s temptations. He is enticing us to forsake the footsteps of Jesus, and dive into the sinful pleasures of this world.

We have to confess that there are times when we fell into the ditch; times when we willingly jumped in. Thanks be to God that he has pulled us out of the ditch of sin and rebellion time after time. Thanks be to God that he has put us back on his path, rescuing us and forgiving us for our sins.

This is life, real life with Christ. It is so much better than the world’s view of life. **“Whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.”** The contrast is between a life focused on this world, and one focused on the next. Where is your focus? For many it is the big house, the luxurious car, and the huge bank account. But if that’s all we care about in this life, we will lose our eternal souls. After all you can haul all your stuff to the cemetery, but it isn’t going with you.

Our profit in life is always Jesus. **“What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?”** Jesus is our wealth, our life, our pot of gold. There is nothing in this life that is worth more than him. Oh, we may not look like winners as we carry our crosses for Christ. But we are. At the moment we believers die, we have the greatest victory of all - eternal life with our Savior in heaven.

Yes, some things in life are necessary. For us, Jesus coming to earth and going to Jerusalem to save us is most necessary. But also, you and I following in his footsteps through a challenging earthly life, that’s a necessity, too. How grateful we are that he came for us. Spend your life thanking Jesus by following in his footsteps, and living to his glory and honor. Amen.