

## **Death or Life**

**Contributor: Annie**

### **Scriptures**

Psalm 23

John 15:13

Galatians 2:20

My devotion this week was going to be an exposition on what death means as part of our life in Christ. But the events of today have caused me to abandon that.

The fifteenth day of March 2019 will indeed go down in history as one of New Zealand's darkest days. A day when the evil that stalks the world and seemed so far from our shores, was horrifically and violently made manifest in the city that bears the name of our Saviour – Christchurch, New Zealand's garden city.

With meticulous planning and evil intent born out of hatred for those whose beliefs and culture did not align with theirs', a cell of white supremacists carried out mass murder. Violent death designed to fuel the fire of racial hatred and tear communities apart, perpetrated by minds full of sick depravity. Death, mass murder, is their answer for how to cope with a society that is diverse, multi-cultural and not what they want it to be.

As a follower of Christ, I know that death is the only answer to everything. But not the mindless, brutal murder of men, women and children. The death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as He became sin for the whole world on the cross at Calvary is our only Hope.

Every deed Jesus performed in His life on earth was motivated by love, every single one. He walked among us, mixed with all levels of society, touched the ritually unclean and healed them, gave a Samaritan woman the role of being the first evangelist, thereby flouting the culture of the day in more ways than one. He sat down to eat with publicans and sinners one day, and the religious hierarchy the next. Culture, ethnicity, social standing did not determine who Jesus spoke to, ministered to or mixed with.

Nothing in our world matches up to His Kingdom, but instead of condemning us to eternal death, He went willingly to be mocked, derided, tortured and murdered in our place. He suffered death so that we might live forever, LIFE everlasting, NO MORE DEATH.

The answer to the darkness of this world is not to kill your enemies, or those you perceive as your enemies, but to love them. To be light, the Light of Life, so that they will see and glorify your Father who is in Heaven.

Death engenders fear, but there is no fear in Love. While I fervently believe that the only Way to eternal Life is Jesus Christ, and that outside of Him there is only darkness and eternal separation from God, I know there are other faiths that do not accept this Truth. Death of our body is inevitable, eternal death, that is separation from God, is not. But massacring those whose beliefs do not align with mine is never the answer. Demonstrating the Life and Love of God by willingly laying down my life now, dying to my self in all its depravity and allowing the Life of Christ in me to shine out, is the one and only answer.

I believe that death for followers of Christ is not the instant our physical body ceases to function, it is the daily, ongoing taking up of my cross and drawing ever closer to Christ. It is the constant surrendering of my life so that the words of Paul ring true for me "it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me"

**Prayer:** Precious Father God, bring comfort and peace that passes all understanding to the families of those murdered in the Christchurch mosques, to everyone affected by this senseless slaughter. Rest Your loving Hand on this nation, in the words of the National Anthem "God, defend New Zealand". Strengthen us all to seek You first and to lay down our lives for our friends, each and every day, in the Name of Jesus and by the power of Holy Spirit.