

# 'LIFE' WITH CHRIST

## Articles of Comfort and Blessings Offered to the Reader

*Father Matta here gives a profound understanding of some of the doctrines of the spiritual life; like faith and obeying the commandments of God. Again and again he concentrates on the writings of St John in his epistles. Enjoy! Note: All quotations are taken from the New King James Version, if not otherwise mentioned.*

Volume Three

Chapter 68

"Now by this we know that we know Him (as the sons of God), if we keep His commandments. He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him."

(1John 2:3-5).

THE APOSTLE JOHN puts it down as keeping the commandments of Jesus, which He then calls the word of God. Whoever keeps it, is indeed a son of God and in him is perfected the love of God. The negative question is: do we keep the word of God or do we hate His word? The latter (to hate His word) is very difficult, in fact almost impossible, because when we truly love any man, we repeat his words without any effort. The same thing would apply to Christ, if we truly loved Him, we would compete with each other in keeping His words. Indeed we say that His words are sweet and which if we keep, will keep us. In fact, it adds to our stature among people because the preacher of the word has as much reverence as Christ, upon whose name he calls. No one has any excuse. When we were school children, we were given thirty line long poems to memorize, which we would memorize and recite gladly because to memorize was to pass the exam and who did not want to pass the exam?

We go back to faith in Christ and ask: Does the one who does not believe in Christ expect to pass on the terrible Day of Judgment? But since the lazy one always

postpones, a lifelong postponement in vanity becomes a catastrophe for man. Man ultimately cannot lie to God, as lazy students do when they find flimsy excuses for their failure.

Now the question: Why don't we believe in Christ, read and understand the Scripture? Is it possible for you to lie to God and find flimsy or untrue excuses and in effect tell God: Excuse me, with your permission, I am going to the movies and am spending the night with the gang? My son, God is not to be lied to; whoever takes God lightly, will lose his life both here and in the hereafter.

Now "is the accepted time."<sup>1</sup> Christ is ready to embrace you and therefore, you will be under His love, care, and protection. Receive His love with a sincere heart and a strong will. Give yourself to Christ, and He will take care of you and show you the way. He will reveal the truth to you, give you a happy and settled life and bring joy to your heart. Faith is the safeguard, the safeguard at work, for the ministry, at home and on the street. It is the safeguard in sleep and during the day. The one who believes in Christ gives his life to Christ. He opens his eyes and ears to the dispensations of the Lord, and opens his heart in fatherly, compassionate, and merciful love to man.

It is true, whoever loves the Lord, is loved back by the Lord, because He says "he who loves Me ... I will love him and manifest Myself to him."<sup>2</sup> What is meant by manifest Myself to him? When Christ wants to reveal Himself to someone who believed in Him and loved Him, then that person will see Christ in trials. Even more, he can almost hold the hand of the Lord stretched out to support, help and touch the one broken by the trial. He will see Him when he is persecuted for His name, He will see Him when he is, justly or unjustly, deprived of all his money. He will see Him when he is humiliated, mocked at, or is unjustly treated. Here would be seen the work of God and His outstretched hand, for you to tell, throughout your life, what God has done for you.

To believe sincerely is a very important factor for one who lives in this world—a world without mercy and compassion and one which does not give man either laud or honor. Take faith as your support, as the protector, and defender of your rights, the rights which you will receive from the hand of the Lord in double measure.

**November 8, 2005**

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor 6:2.

<sup>2</sup> John 14:21.

## Chapter 69

"And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."

THE APOSTLE JOHN emphasizes the fact that God has given us eternal life and that this life is in His Son. Who has the Son has life, and who does not have the Son of God, does not have life. It is quite clear that this statement carries the essence of faith in Christ, for Christ is life and whoever does not have Christ, does not have life.

As we see, it is through faith in Christ, right here, while we are still in the world, that we receive eternal life. It stays with us; with it we pass through death, and through it life is manifested through our resurrection from the dead. Thus life here extends beyond death, where life will be manifested since we will live, in complete knowledge, with the Son and the Father, and thus we will be in real fellowship with the Son and the Father. The starting point is very crucial—right here, to have life in faith in Christ. Christ Himself is life; He is the one who openly said about Himself “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”<sup>1</sup> Whoever believes in Christ here has life, both here and hereafter, which is the non-ending life above, with the Son and the Father.

Life is the focal point, and here it is snatched through faith. We use the word “snatched” because we take it without work and without reward. Here through faith, we take life for free, by confessing with both our tongues and hearts—from the depth of our conscience, our life and being—that, “Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”<sup>2</sup> The one who believes in God and Christ here, and in this world, is counted happy because the reward is that he is counted worthy of eternal life above.

It is said that a teacher of religion stood in front of his students and raised his expensive gold watch saying, “Who wants this watch?” The students stared in astonishment and remained silent because they did not believe the teacher. A daring student walked up to the teacher and said, “Me, Sir.” The teacher then gave him the watch, which the student took and then went back to his seat. The other students started grumbling and said, “Did you really give him the watch?” To which the teacher retorted, “Yes, and it is now his.” The students were amazed, but the teacher told them, “This is faith, because he believed that what I say is true, he took the watch and it has become his.” This is faith in Christ, for Christ promised eternal life to whoever believes in Him. Thus whoever believes immediately receives eternal life, and it becomes his because he believed.

Faith indeed requires boldness and conviction. Whoever believes in Christ instantly receives eternal life right here, while the rest is above, where life extends forever. Here the life of faith is both work and deed. The believer in Christ lives a spiritual life which transcends the mind because faith has immeasurable work and consequences, which those who have trusted, believed, and received know all about.

Stretch out your hand my friend, and take the gold watch, without payment, without work or effort. Carry it for the rest of your life here. Even more amazing is that faith,

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<sup>1</sup> John 14:6.

<sup>2</sup> Phil 2:11.

which is not only more precious than the watch, and even gold, is to be snatched by the boldness of the believer, to be with him not only here, but forever.

Faith is not like the law of the Old Testament, which turned the commandments into commands. There were hundreds of exhausting commands dealing with food, drink, walking down roads, visiting homes, saluting. It was endless and there was nobody, not even one, who could fulfill the law.<sup>3</sup> But faith came especially to cancel the burdens of the Law,<sup>4</sup> as well as remove from man the burden of the commandments and commands. The Bible says, “Freely you have received, freely give.”<sup>5</sup> Christ described how when the host of the banquet invited the people, some declined, while some others felt it was a tedious invitation, and so the host ordered his servants to go outside the walls of the city and invite those who were without, i.e. the poor, the orphans and widows. So the servants said that they had let in those who were without, but there was still room. The host then told them to invite the blind, the lame and the handicapped, that his house might be full. As for those who declined, the host swore that “that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.”<sup>6</sup> This is faith in Christ from the mouth of Christ Himself.

Brethren, do not decline because it is a real invitation, so believe it.

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<sup>3</sup> See Acts 15:10.

<sup>4</sup> “Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away” (Heb 8:13).

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 10:8.

<sup>6</sup> Luke 14:24.

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Father Matta El-Meskeen

***“When you pray, say: Our Father In Heaven”*** (Luke 11: 2-4).

The words of the “Lord’s prayer” are words that came to us directly from the mouth of the Lord, words full of strength and power, effective words. They are not mere vocabulary, but when you pray “Our Father” you utter what God spoke, and his words, in your mouth, become as sharp as a sword.

The words of our Lord “Say (thus)” are a Divine command that has its strength, efficiency and power, so that the one who prays “Our Father” is obeying a Divine commandment, one that has within itself God’s power. The words come out of your mouth like arrows into the darkness to light your way with the light of God. You must utter the “Lord’s prayer” with the tongue of a person who obeys God’s commandment saying His words as a commandment with God’s power.

Christ, having instructed His disciples to “say...” then gave them the words of the prayer. Do not, therefore, deviate from it even by a letter because the words are God’s words, and God’s words are effective when correctly uttered.

[An excerpt from: “When you pray say: Our Father” (*St Mark Monthly Review*, Sept 2009, p 1).

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