

LENT DEVOTION

Austin Christian Fellowship of India (ACFI)

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"Surely He took upon Himself our infirmities and carried our sorrows. Yet we considered Him stricken by God, smitten by Him and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought on us peace was upon Him, by His wounds we are healed" (Isaiah 53:4--5). It was on a Friday like this, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was crucified on the Cross in a place called Golgotha (which means a Place of Skull) - on Mount Calvary - between the two criminals. "God made Him who had no sin to be a sin (offering) for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Friends, Jesus Christ, the righteous One, is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only ours but also for sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:20). He was the blameless Lamb of God who turned aside God's wrath on sin, (as an atoning sacrifice), to take away our sin. "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sin, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that He lavished upon us" (Ephesians 1:7). "We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all" (Hebrews 10:10). On the Cross Jesus Christ bore our sins in His body, paid our penalty, and became sin in our place that we might be redeemed, forgiven, and brought back in to right standing and relationship with God. The death of Jesus Christ on the Cross is as amazing as His grace has been! The righteousness imputed into the believer is something precious, costly, and painful (for God) even though it is free. Every believer should cherish it throughout his/her life and be thankful to God for the same.

It is by the blood of Jesus Christ you and I can approach and enter the Most Holy Place (the very presence) of God with confidence (Hebrews 10:19) in prayer. We can draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith (Hebrews 10:22) because we know for sure, Jesus has entered the Most Holy Place once and for all by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption (Hebrews 9:12). We can call on Him at any time, cry unto Him in any situation, praise Him in all circumstances, run to Him to take refuge and draw strength because we know for sure that Jesus went before us, has entered on our behalf, and has become our High Priest in the inner sanctuary interceding for us (Hebrews 6:19--20). This is the greatest privilege and blessing you and I have - that is to approach our Heavenly Father through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. That is why you and I lose hope in spite of the helpless and hopeless situations in life.

God has made each believer to be responsible as "the instruments of righteousness" in this world and to 'maintain' the same as he/she "trains himself/herself" with the help of the Word of God and the Spirit of God. Because such growth in righteousness not only brings in worldly blessings but also eternal rewards. As such the believer is also accountable for his/her acts of righteousness before the Judgment Seat of Christ. "For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that each one (believer) may receive what is due him for the things done while in body, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10). A believer lives a "holy, pure, and blameless life" with that eternal perspective in view. His/her primary purpose is to please and glorify God.