

Hello Orange Cove Church Family & Friends of Orange Cove,

Pastor's Weekly Letter: March 10, 2016 – "Eternal Life"

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Happy Thursday, March 10, 2016. Once again, God showed up at church this passed Sabbath. When we invited Him to be amongst us, He always accepts the invitation. Thank you to all those who worshipped with us.

This Week's Devotional – "Eternal Life"

What is every person's greatest fear? Isn't it the fear of death? The degree of fear may vary, depending how a person dies, but the foundational fear is still the fear of death. Was man every meant to die? No, absolutely not! He was created to live forever. Living and never dying is thus part of every man's natural instinct and desire. So let's take a look at where death entered our world and why it entered. In Genesis chapter 2:15-17, we read: *"Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to tend and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."*

So here is the first mention of dying and it is connected to a condition—eating or not eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Interesting, huh? Let's go on. The next mention of dying or not dying is found in Geneses chapter 3:1-5: *"Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" ² And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; ³ but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'" ⁴ Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*

So here is the standoff between God and Satan and man has a choice to make. God says if you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you will die, Satan says, you shall not surely die. Who was right? Could God have meant that if man ate of that tree, that He would be acting independently from God and separating himself from God? Could it be that that separation would lead to man's death? Satan knew exactly what God meant, and He capitalized on the fact that once Adam and Eve bit into the fruit, that they wouldn't immediately fall over and die. So what was the death God was talking about?

Could it be that the death God was referring to was two-fold? Firstly, wasn't God referring to the spiritual death that would occur immediately when Adam and Eve acting independently of Him and separated themselves from the Source of all spirituality and righteousness? Secondly, wasn't God referring to a physical death that would result at the end of their lives or as a result of the evil-doing of someone or some event that was attached to sin? So wasn't God speaking about death in the broad and comprehensive sense, while Satan twisted the understanding of death into a narrow, short-term sense?

Now we haven't even spoken about temporal death or eternal death. The physical death God was referring to could either be temporary or eternal, depending on whether or not a person accepted the price Christ paid on their behalf or not. A person who accepts Christ's sacrifice on their behalf, receives eternal life that very moment. Notice what John 5:24, 25 says: *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. ²⁵ Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live."*

Satan lied about everything. He just denied that man would ever die if they ate of the fruit. Because no one had died up to that point, man had no clue what death was and bought into Satan's lies. Today, everyone knows that

Satan lied and they know that there is such a thing as death, but do they realize that Adam and Eve actually died the moment they ate of the fruit? Do they realize that Adam and Eve died spiritually? In addition, do they realize that every person born into the world after Adam and Eve fell into sin, was born dead spiritually? Both Ephesians 2:5 and Colossians 2:13 tell us that before anyone met Christ, they we're *dead in their trespasses and sins.*" So everyone without Christ is actually a dead man or woman walking.

Why is that statement true? Because without Christ, a person is not only dead spiritually in their trespasses and sins, but when they die physically, they will never live again. Conversely, when a person accepts Christ, they are made alive spiritually and if they die physically, they will live again when Christ raises them in the resurrection of the dead. When He raises them, He raises them to eternal life. Jesus' words in John 6:40 verify this to be true: *"And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."*

Isn't it wonderful to know that, in Christ today, everyone can possess the gift of eternal life? *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."* John 3:16.

Orange Cove Church