

Four Pillars of Eternal Life

Hymns from "Favorite Hymns of Grace."

Greeting and Opening Prayer

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Devotional Summary: "Four Pillars 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 NKJV)

1. God's Love! God IS love. God is the embodiment of love. The source, the motive, the manner of everything God does is love. God always loves. God loves everyone. He is not a "respector of persons." As Paul writes in the Book of Romans: **"For there is no partiality with God"** (Ro 2:11 NKJV). God's plan of salvation is available for all to accept by faith. Your race, your age, your wealth, your gender, your role in life do not matter. Whether talking about the worst sinners or the greatest "saints," God loves them all equally. We are all familiar with sin. And, yes, God hates our sins - but He loves all the sinners! It is very hard for us to relate to how impartial God is with His love - He loves our worst enemy as much as He loves us. It is crucial for us to understand how pervasive and how persistent God's love is, because at some point all of us will fall short in our performance; all of us stand guilty before the rule of God's perfection. We have no hope outside of the love of God.

2. God's Gift! God gives: that is what love does, love is unselfish.

4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never ends. (1Corinthians 13:4-8b NKJV)

This unselfish, unrelenting Loving God gives us the greatest gift - eternal life. This everlasting life is a free gift. We cannot earn it. **"...not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us..."** (Titus 3:5 NKJV). If we had to deserve it before God gave us salvation, none of us would be saved!

3. God's Son. No one but God could ever save us! No one but the Heavenly Father could give up His only begotten Son as a substitute sacrifice for our sins. No one but the only begotten Son of God was perfect enough, unselfish enough, loving enough to take upon Himself all of our sins and bear them for us and accept the punishment of death that we deserved...so that we could live forever!

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2Corinthians 5:21 NKJV).

"...that we might become..." Here is a great truth: salvation is not just a deliverance from

eternal damnation, it is also a journey of deliverance from sin and imperfection. God is the only One who could provide this. And only God's Son could procure this deliverance for us with the price of His own blood.

4. God's Door. "...whosoever believes..." We receive God's free gift of salvation through our uncomplicated faith in the Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ. "Uncomplicated" faith is pictured by the trust and confidence and rest and peace and joy that a little child has in their dad as they sit in his lap listening to him read them their favorite nursery rhyme. The doorway and the path for the child to the Father's loving care is always open. The Father never rejects His child. The Father is forever home to receive His child.

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:8-10 NKJV).

The Bee Sting (Rev. Richard Hardison of Virginia Beach Community Chapel was the first I heard share a version of this story in a sermon.)

A young father was taking his son on a fishing trip. They were riding through the countryside on a pleasant summer day with the windows down. A bee was pulled by the wind into the vehicle. The boy was deathly allergic to bee stings. He almost died the last time he was stung. As the boy hollered out in panic and fear, the dad trapped the bee against the windshield with his hand. Naturally, the bee stung the dad. But the dad did not have the same weakness to the poison of the bee-sting. The dad lifted away his hand from the window and the bee continued to fly around in the car to the little boy's terror. The dad held his stung hand up for his son to see and said, "Do not fear any more, son. I have taken the sting from the bee!"

Even so, God has lovingly delivered us from the curse of death by taking the sting out of it. Even though our natural life remains mortal, He has provided a path of eternal freedom from its power. We are free! We are His children and He loves us! He has given us the greatest gift - His only begotten Son who stands at the door of eternal life to welcome all who would go in!

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1Co 15:55 KJV)

Closing Hymn

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Prayer Requests and Corporate Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Recessional

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