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Daily Living

With Jesus



Egerton Long is an ordained Baptist Minister and has served in churches in both the USA & Australia. He and his wife Betty also served among the Indigenous people in Australia for over 25 years. Other booklets are available in this series as well as Daily Devotional material.

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I acknowledge myself to be a sinner in God's sight.

I accept Jesus Christ now as my Saviour.

I thank Him for saving me.

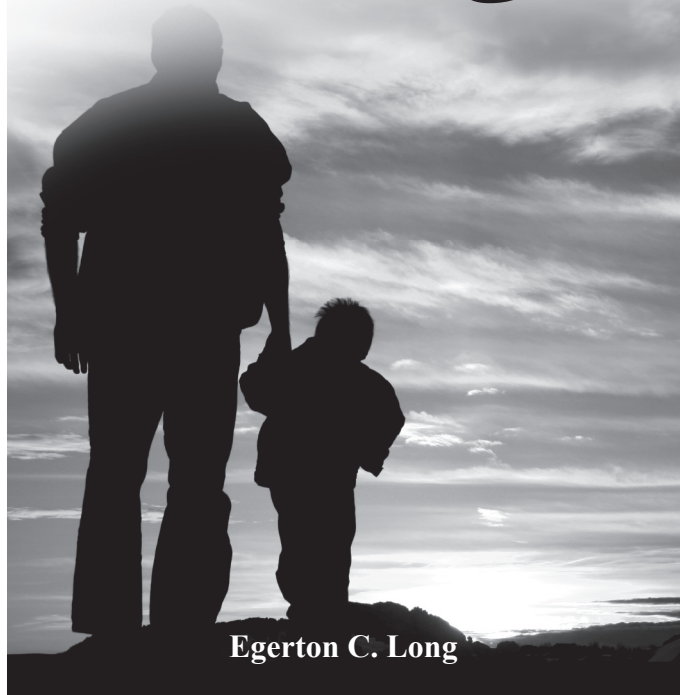
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Daily Living

With Jesus



WHAT IS JESUS CHRIST DOING FOR US TODAY?

As a believer in Jesus Christ, what continuing help, what repeated encouragement do we have as we face the world and its varied temptation day by day? Are we afraid we might fail when we are tested? What happens if we do fail? What kind of help is available for us as God's children day by day?

Here is the good news, the most important good news, the encouraging good news – as believers in Jesus Christ we have the loving care of God, our Heavenly Father, who is constantly watching over us and is always planning only our good. We also have the constant help of the Holy Spirit who came into our lives when we accepted Jesus Christ and who continues to live within us, guiding, helping, strengthening us in so many ways.

That brings us to our question: Well then what is Jesus Christ doing for us in heaven now? We know He lives within us as believers and we therefore have His presence with us continuously. But the Bible tells us He also lives in Heaven and is working there on our behalf. Romans 5:10 tells us this so positively: 'It is much more certain now that we have been reconciled, that we shall be saved (daily delivered from sin's dominion) through Christ's resurrection life.' (Amplified Bible)

HOW TO RECEIVE CHRIST AS YOUR SAVIOUR

If God has been speaking to you as you have read this booklet and if you are willing now to take Jesus Christ as your Saviour, here is what you should do:

1. **Confess** – tell God in your own simple words that you are a sinner needing a Saviour (Read Romans 3:23) Tell God you are sorry for your sin – the Bible Word is 'repent'.
2. **Accept** – tell God that you see Jesus Christ as your only Saviour and that you accept him now (Read Romans 6:23)
3. **Believe** – that Jesus Christ has saved you because you asked him to do so (Read Romans 10:13) His Word is the assurance that God has done what you asked Him to do.

If you have made this decision today then sign your name here and tell someone else what you have done. Join a church where you can hear God's Word preached and have fellowship with other believers.

to God without going through Jesus Christ!" When I would say 'No, there is no other way', he would again use his hands as if to go around another way. As he did so, I would repeat: 'No man comes to the Father except through Jesus Christ'. We talked for quite a long time but finally we had to leave it there. I have often thought of him and prayed for him. I asked a pastor to continue talking with him and I can hope that God opened his eyes to see Jesus Christ as the only way to salvation, to heaven and all that God has planned for those who come to him through Christ.

It is only through believing and accepting that Jesus Christ gave His life for us on the cross that we can be reconciled to God. Have you seen that for yourself? God is waiting for you to come to Him through Jesus Christ and then all the blessing God has planned for you will be yours. Why not come today? Now? Read carefully that last page of this booklet. It will tell you how you can accept Jesus Christ for yourself. Don't put it off. Don't wait. It is the most important decision you will ever make.

Dr. Roy L Laurin wrote: 'If He died for us as sinners, how much more willing is He to keep us, now that we are saved?' Hebrews 1:3 says 'When He had dealt with sin, He sat down on the throne in Heaven' and it is **His work in heaven now** that we will be talking about in this booklet.

Christ's heavenly life is not one of royal idleness. Here on earth Christ had finished one phase of His work for us. At the close of his earthly life, He was able to say to the Father: 'I have finished that work you gave me to do'. (John 17:4) The Message paraphrases that sentence in this way: 'I have completed down to the last detail what you assigned me to do'. Christ repeated similar words on the cross: 'It is finished' – his second last words before his death.

Then after His resurrection and ascension into Heaven, He began a second phase, which is His work on behalf as our Great High Priest. Have you stopped to think of the details of what Christ is doing for us in Heaven today? We would call it His '**continuing ministry**'.

CHRIST'S PRESENT MINISTRY

Christ's present work on our behalf is to represent us and take out part before the throne of god as our High Priest. A priest is one who speaks **to God on behalf of men**. A priest is different to a prophet, although sometimes the same person has filled both offices. A prophet

is one who also is chosen by God to speak **to men on behalf of God**. Christ of course was a prophet to us when He came to earth. He is now speaking to God on our behalf and will continue doing so until we are safely home on Heaven. This is His work today as our great High Priest. It is interesting that the Latin word for priest is 'pontifex', meaning bridge builder. That is exactly what Jesus Christ was in the past and continues to be for us today, **our bridge builder**.

THREE TITLES FOR CHRIST

In the Bible many titles or names are given to Christ. We will look at just three of these, all of them related to His present heavenly ministry on our behalf. Those three titles are **Mediator, Intercessor and Advocate**. Each of those titles makes us think immediately of one particular person speaking on behalf of another person. Although closely allied, each one has a different meaning and describes a separate facet of His present continuing work in Heaven for believers. Before we go further, can we put together a family situation to try and illustrate the separate functions of these three words – **mediator, intercessor, advocate**?

THE FIRST WORD - MEDIATOR

Think of a teenager – let's call him Ted. He is only seventeen but already his family has turned him out because of his unsocial behaviour and the company he runs with. There has been a very real separation.

can be in every place in the universe at any moment of time. Jesus Christ can be in heaven ministering as our High Priest and at the same time living in our hearts.

Secondly the Holy Spirit has been sent by Christ to live in our hearts and to bring about in our lives all that Jesus Christ has made possible. The Holy Spirit is referred to in the New Testament as the 'Spirit of Christ'. Always remember and never doubt for one moment that Jesus Christ is with you always and that the Holy Spirit is living in you to make real to you all that Jesus Christ has won for you and plans to give you.

A further word of encouragement – Jesus Christ knows what it is like to be tested and severely tempted. He was tempted in every way and He knows how strong these experiences can be. He understands our trials because He has been through them and gained victory over them. When you feel you need help, ask him for His help wherever you are. He will hear you and will gladly answer your call.

ONLY THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

Remember where we started – Christ is the one and only way to God. What did He say? 'No one comes to the father but by Me'. When dealing with a man one night after an evangelistic meeting, I had to repeat those words over and over. The man would put his hands together and make like he was going around an obstacle. He would ask: "Isn't there some other way I can come

to the *Father* about us? The relationship is still there – we are still God’s children even though we may have sinned. Christ is there to cover and protect us even when we fail. Our Advocate takes our part and our fellowship is restored. Isn’t that encouraging news?

Remember, **God the Father will never excuse sin, even in a believer**, but He has provided a way by which it can be dealt with and fellowship is restored. Could anything be more complete than that? Paul said it well: ‘I know whom I have believed and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him for that day’. Praise God for the unfinished, continuing present ministry of Jesus Christ as our Great High Priest, **our Mediator our Intercessor and our Advocate**.

THE EVER-PRESENT CHRIST

One further very important point: Let’s go back: When we speak about Christ and his present ministry in Heaven, someone may immediately say: ‘But I thought Jesus Christ is living in my heart. I was told He would always be there. Isn’t that what He said Himself?’ How can He do all that work in Heaven and still be here with me?’

There are several answers to that question. As human beings, we ourselves can only be in one place at a time. But God the father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are ‘omni-present’ – everywhere present. Each member of the Trinity

His Uncle Ron lives nearby and wants to help Ted. He visits both the family and Ted with the hope of bringing about a permanent reconciliation. He convinces the family that Ted genuinely wants another opportunity to restore the relationship. Uncle Ron finally brings the family and Ted together. He has acted as a true middle man, a **true mediator**, between the two parties.

SECOND WORD – INTERCESSOR

But the way ahead for Ted and the family is not easy. Uncle Ron tries to continue helping the family stay together. He talks with them over problems as they arise and then talks with Ted as to how he could do his part to help strengthen the relationship and avoid further division. Again it could be said he is **‘talking between’** the family and Ted, showing how they can have victory over the various situations and live happily together. In line with our three titles for Christ, Uncle Ron has been **‘interceding’** – talking between the two parties concerned.

But then something happened. A person outside the family accused Ted of dishonesty. The family was very upset and Ted felt this very keenly. Again Uncle Ron spoke up in Ted’s favour and proved the accusation false. Uncle Ron was his **‘advocate’** – speaking directly in Ted’s defence.

Do you see how this family situation and the intervention of Uncle Ron, illustrates our three titles for Christ? He is first our **mediator**, then

our **intercessor** and when necessary our **advocate**. Let's look at each of these separately and we will see more clearly what Christ is doing for us in Heaven today.

CHRIST OUR MEDIATOR

What have we said? A mediator is one who intervenes when two or more parties are in dispute and who does so with the hope of producing agreement or reconciliation. The office was well known in Paul's day. It was often used in connection with an 'arranged marriage'. But the word is also in common usage today in our courtrooms, in labour relations and in international disputes. In our case, Christ is the one, and the only one, who can bring about reconciliation between us and God. In 1 Timothy 2:5 the Apostle Paul stated unequivocally that 'there is one **mediator** between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus'. Or to use the words of Christ Himself: 'No man comes to the father but by me'. John 14:6.

We all need this 'go-between', between us and God. J.O. Sanders wrote: 'There seems to be a universal sense that there is a God somewhere who has been offended and needs to be appeased'. Job cried out 'Oh that I knew where I could find Him. Oh that there was someone between us'. The living Christ is the answer, the one and only answer. He is the only **mediator** and He fills all the space between God and man. He is high enough to reach God because he is

Christ has done and is doing, we fail and fall into sin? There is provision for this also, as part of the present, continuing ministry of our Great High Priest. John says it so plainly in his first Epistle: 'If anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence, Jesus Christ, the righteous One'. (1 John 2:1) The word '**Advocate**' is familiar to us. Christ used it concerning the Holy Spirit whom He called 'another comforter', meaning one coming alongside to help us. In a courtroom, when the opposing counsel makes a strong accusation or asks an intimidating question, the defence counsel can say to the judge: 'Objection' and will explain why the question is out of order. The judge will often say 'Objection sustained' and the opposing counsel has to withdraw the remark or the insinuation.

When a believer sins, our adversary Satan will try to slander us before the Father. In Revelation 12:10, Satan is called the accuser of the brethren. When a believer sins, it seems as though Satan steps forward and says: 'There, look at your child, your so-called believer. Look at what he/she has done'. But then the Saviour steps forward as our **Advocate** saying: 'Father, that one belongs to us. I bought him/her at Calvary. He/she is covered by my blood'. Satan is defeated and we are forgiven! Isn't that wonderful?

Look at the verse from 1 John 2:1 again. Did you notice that John said we have one who speaks

The word Christ used for 'prayed' when he said: 'I have prayed for you', also has a root meaning which includes the thought of a guarantee – it could be paraphrased 'I have said I would stand surety for you'. Here is Satan seeking to destroy the faith of the disciples and here is Christ pledging Himself to strengthen and help them. He does this by prayer, by **intercession**. When had Christ done this? No doubt one night when He was alone with the Father. The important point is this – before the temptation came to Peter and the others to desert Christ, He had prayed for each of them. Without a doubt He is still doing that for us today and always will until we are safely home in glory.

The keeping power of Christ is emphasised over and over again in the Epistles. Paul speaks of this in Romans 8 – when he asks the question – 'Who can separate us from the love of Christ?'. The answer is *no one or no thing*. Jude concluded his brief powerful Epistle with the well known doxology and benediction; 'Now unto Him who is able to keep us from falling...' Christ is and always will be, our **Intercessor**, praying that we might be kept safe day by day in any hour of temptation. He is our great High priest, speaking to God the Father on our behalf, now and until we see Him face to face.

CHRIST OUR ADVOCATE

This is the third title Christ bears on our behalf. What happens if, in spite of all that

God. He became low enough to take your hand and mine and introduce us to the Father.

Often in reconciliation negotiations there is a price that must be paid if the negotiation are to success. Again, Christ Himself paid the price of our reconciliation through His death and the cross.

Remember, we will always need Him as our **Mediator** and it is thrilling to realise that He will always be there for us. He is in the position of our **Mediator** on a permanent basis. We needed Him at conversion, we need Him today and we will need Him at the gate of Heaven.

At my mother's funeral, the pastor reminded us of this truth. He said it well: 'Mrs Long served God as perhaps few have served Him. But she would be the first to acknowledge, at the end of her long life, that she needed Christ as much at the end of her life as much as she did at the beginning. No act of hers, no faithful ministry could ever do away with her need of Christ. He is the one and only **Mediator**. He is eternally the Way by which we come to God, first for salvation and then continually thereafter. We are only accepted in Christ'. That is the first part of His work as our great High Priest; He is our **Mediator**.

CHRIST OUR INTERCESSOR

The second title covering Christ's work for us in Heaven today is '**Intercessor**'. Hebrews 7:25

says it so well – ‘He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them’. What is an intercessor? Again the word means to pray or plead on behalf of another person. Petition is usually praying for ourselves. Intercession is praying for others. ‘Inter’ means between, and ‘cess’ is to speak. What does Christ do for us in this way? How is this different from His work as our **Mediator**? Christ’s intercession for us is to cover us before we are tempted, and while we are being tempted.

But the exact nature of our High Priest’s intercession for us is not as fully revealed as perhaps other doctrines. However there are a few examples given to us in the New Testament which are extremely helpful. For instance, we are told that it was His intercessory work that secured for us the presence of the Holy Spirit within us. ‘I will ask the Father and He will give you another Counsellor, to be with you forever, the Spirit of truth’. (John 14:16). We know from Hebrews 7:25 (already quoted above) that He maintains us in our salvation through His intercession. Remember, His present ministry for us is not to die for us over and over again but it is a **ministry of prayer on our behalf**. Through intercession He claims for us all that he bought on Calvary. Never forget that the one He is talking with, is none other than our loving heavenly Father.

Two brief but very encouraging glimpses are given to us of Christ’s praying for others. In John 17 you can hear the love of His heart as He prays for His disciples: ‘**Keep them from evil that is in the world**’. The Message puts it well: ‘Holy Father, guard them as they pursue this life’. Every verse in this prayer shows the longing of the saviour for His followers to be maintained in their faith and witness. He is still praying for us in the same way day to day. This is His work as our **Intercessor**.

The second example of His prayers for other is in Luke 22:31. He was warning His disciples about what was ahead, including their own coming desertion of Himself. Peter remonstrated with Christ, but Christ replied: ‘Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat, but **I have prayed for you** that your faith may not fail’.

In the original Greek, Christ’s first use of the work ‘you’ is in the plural, meaning that Satan has wanted *all* of the disciples so that he could break them down and keep them from trusting in Christ. The second use of the work ‘you’ is in the singular – meaning that Christ has prayed first for Peter, but surely for each of the others also. Christ knew that Peter would very soon need more help than he realised and would ultimately be tempted to deny that he knew Christ or was one of His followers. Jesus was seeking to protect Peter, knowing what was ahead of him.