

## And The Heart Beats On

What astounds me about life is that it simply continues to live on. Not that life is a bad concept or not worth the struggle, I personally enjoy being, well, alive. However, so many things could have stopped and can still stop my life, literally and figuratively speaking. Yet through the bumps, scrapes, breakups, break-outs, lost assignments, ill fitting prom dresses, car accidents, economic downturns, and even deaths there is one thing that in my humble opinion has been proven to pull our fragile human race through: Faith in God alone. This existence that God has given me has affronted me with many struggles, but I know that through my faith I can prevail through it, zits and all. The way I choose to live is by Christ, and I reflect this belief through my attitude and actions towards others.

When I was growing up I was constantly surrounded by images and words of faith. It wasn't a surprise that I soon learned the Ten Commandments and decided for my "selfish five year old" self which ones I wanted to keep holy. But to this day I still pay special attention to one instruction in particular. It reads, "Love your neighbor as yourself"(New International Version, Matthew 22:39). This is a difficult commandment to follow. As humans I think it is natural to try to find ways to differentiate our selves from our peers, and choose which differences to favor and which to slight. This is not how God wants us to live, for he himself loves each and every one of us more than he loves himself. I choose to follow in his example. Whenever I meet anyone new at the frightening abyss one could call "high school", I make a point of finding out their name, making them feel comfortable, and finding out if they could use an extra friend. People notice this about me, and while they might not necessarily be thinking about my faith, they respect me as a genuine person. By loving my "peers" as I would love myself I create a more relaxed, friendly atmosphere that a follower of Christ Jesus would admire.

Like I said before life is difficult. You never know what will happen to you when you step out your front door or when you step back in. Peter said to the masses, "Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble"(New International Version, 1 Peter 3:8). When Peter spoke these words he was referring to the suffering one has to endure to do good in this world. This is applicable to our daily lives as Disciples of Christ. At work there are always those certain people that can always find ways to push and in some cases tear off your buttons. In my part time occupation, this is an everyday occurrence. Whenever I encounter someone that wishes to be unkind to me or is simply not a happy camper in my presence, although it takes some effort on my part, I show

compassion and understanding to the person. By acting on the principals of my faith, I know that I am becoming more like the person I wish to be.

Lastly, the bible lesson I remember most is from the chapter of John when the Pharisees try to publically stone a woman that committed adultery. Jesus breaks the tension and states "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her" (New International Version, John 8:7). As a read this story I am reminded of my childhood arguments with my brother. What I am reminded of is not the adultery per-say, nor the stoning, but the sins that both parties (or in my case both siblings) carried. Who was I to get mad at my brother for how he wronged me when I wrong him and others constantly. Whenever I get into an argument I am reminded of this story and I apologize for my behavior later.

In conclusion, life is one crazy ride but I am safely seat-belted by my faith. Although my existence will be forever uncertain I know that God has a plan for me. To answer the question "how does the way I live every day reflect my Christian faith to others", I'd say that I live as Christ as much as I possibly can. Humans are fallible, the Lord knows that quite well. He died for our sins knowing that we are creatures of sin. However, what is important is being the best Christian that one can possibly be. In my case I guess I'll stop fighting with my brother. And my heart beats on. Amen!

**Word Count: 800**