



Read the passage.

Have you ever... or have you watched someone fall asleep at a church gathering?

I once watched a good friend of mine fall asleep as he sat on the stage at the church where he worked. He didn't fall out of a window, but he almost fell out of his chair.

You and I need to appreciate that when the believers of the early church met for worship on the first day of the week... the day Jesus rose from the dead... that for them... it was a normal working day. They would either meet early in the morning... before work or in the evening ...after work.

Why do you think Eutychus chose to sit in a window? Maybe he arrived late and that was the only place left to sit. Or maybe he chose to do so because he was tired, and he thought that having fresh air blow over him would help to keep him alert.

Whatever the reason, perched on a window.... Eutychus sank into a deep sleep.

We are not told if someone saw him fall or whether he made some noise as he fell, or if people simply heard the noise of him hitting the ground. However, it happened, the church service was interrupted, when people in the room, including Paul, ran down three flights of stairs and out onto the street where he lay.

The Scripture says, v.9, that Eutychus **"...was picked up dead."** But when Paul threw himself on the young man and enveloped him in his arms, he assured the rest of the believers, **"He's alive!"**

In that time, the name Eutychus was a fairly common name, that meant...



Is this why Eutychus lived?... because he was lucky?

In the Bible... God reveals that it is he who is in control...of all things...large and small...on a global scale and in our lives.

Jesus said in Matthew 10:29...



Matthew 10:29

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny?
Yet not one of them will fall to the ground
outside your Father's care [will].

What is true for sparrows was true for Eutychus.

If you were here last week, you'll remember that in the time period described in verses 1 and 2 of this chapter, Paul wrote 2 Corinthians.

Let me remind you again of what he said in the first chapter of that letter.



2 Corinthians 1:8-10

⁸ We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia.

We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure...



2 Corinthians 1:8-10

...so that we despaired of life itself.

⁹ Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death.

But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.



2 Corinthians 1:8-10

¹⁰ **He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again.**

On him we have set our hope that **he will continue to deliver us...**

This experience of God rescuing him.... would have been the theme of Paul's conversation and teaching as he travelled... to and then through Macedonia... down to Corinth and over to Troas.

all-powerful **ever-present**
CREATOR
Savior **all-knowing**
the One who never changes

We often speak of God as our Creator.... who is all powerful; all knowing; ever-present.

Many of our songs praise Jesus our Savior... as the One who never changes, who is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow.

We speak and sing of the love of God; the grace of God; the kindness of God; the justice of God.

But how often do we speak of; appeal to; and interact with God... as the One who raises the dead?



The God who raises **the dead**

Our Creator and Savior is the God of the impossible.

He was in times past; and he still is.

Listen to what God promised... in the days of the prophet Micah.

Listen to how God described himself...and what he said he would do for his people.

The One who breaks open the way will go up before them; they will break through...and go out. Their King will pass through before them, the LORD at their head.

Micah 2:13



God breaks through dead ends.

He is a way-maker.

What this means for you and I is that the phrase “too late,” “not enough,” “there is no way,” “this is impossible,” never applies to our God.

John Piper says the One who holds us fast can do anything.

He is never helpless, never frustrated, never at a loss.

His promises settle our nerves, and make us stable, wise and courageous.

In addition to Paul's testimony in 2 Corinthians, there are numerous stories told in the Bible, of people who trusted in God and experienced him doing impossible things...in their life and in their circumstances.

In the days of the Babylonian empire, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to worship a ninety-foot image of gold which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.



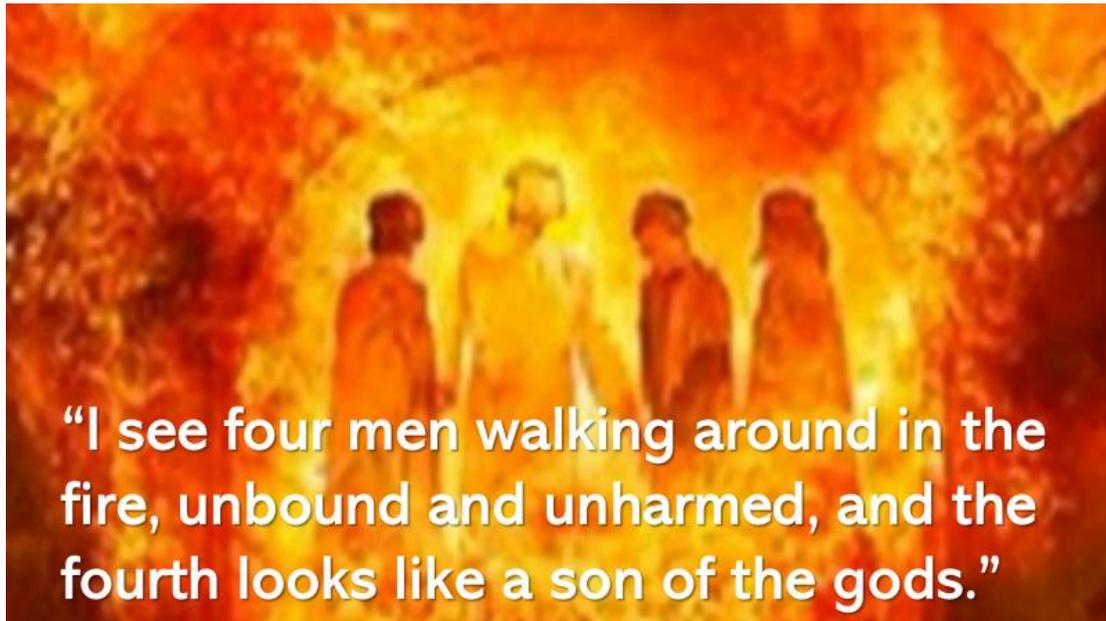
Their refusal to do so, resulted in them being brought before the king. When he threatened to burn them to death unless they complied with his demand, they said to him...



The king was furious. He ordered the furnace to be stoked hotter than it had ever been; for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to be tied up; and thrown into the furnace.

And then... the impossible happened...God intervened...and Nebuchadnezzar was left shocked and in awe.

Listen to his words:



The king shouted for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to come out of the furnace.

When they did, all who were there saw that the fire had not harmed them. Their hair was not singed; their clothes were not scorched, and there was no smell of smoke on them.

God chose that day and, in these circumstances, to distinguish himself; to reveal himself as the God of heaven and earth; the One for whom nothing is impossible...the One who raises the dead.

I'm certain all who were there that day were profoundly affected by this miracle.

I'm certain Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego never forgot what God had done for them.

But interestingly enough, the book of Daniel only records the impact upon King Nebuchadnezzar.

This is what he said:

“Praise be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants. They trusted in him and defied the king’s command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God....no other god can save in this way.

Daniel 3:28-29

That day Nebuchadnezzar saw with his own eyes, the power of God to raise the dead.

Romans 4:21 tells us that Abraham and Sarah when promised by God that they would be enabled to give birth to a child, were...

...fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.

Romans 4:21



Initially the promise had been made when Abraham was 75 and Sarah 65. Even at that age, what God had promised them was humanly impossible. However, God chose to wait an additional 25 years before his promise was realized.

It was impossible for Sarah conceive and carry a child when she was 65. It was even more impossible when she was 90.

But I remind you... God is the way-maker.
The Lord who raises the dead...made the dead womb of a 90-year-old woman live.

When their son was born, Abraham and Sarah named him Isaac.
Do you know the meaning of his name?

It means - "laughter."

Sarah said,



There is incredible joy experienced by those who walk with...and who are in relationship with the God who raises the dead.

Not only do his interventions and rescues cause us to be in awe of who he is; they also elicit in us a profound soul satisfaction that can surprisingly be expressed by a laughter that delights in the goodness of God.

I think this is the kind of laughter Sarah experienced.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, when told that she would give birth to the Messiah, asked, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"



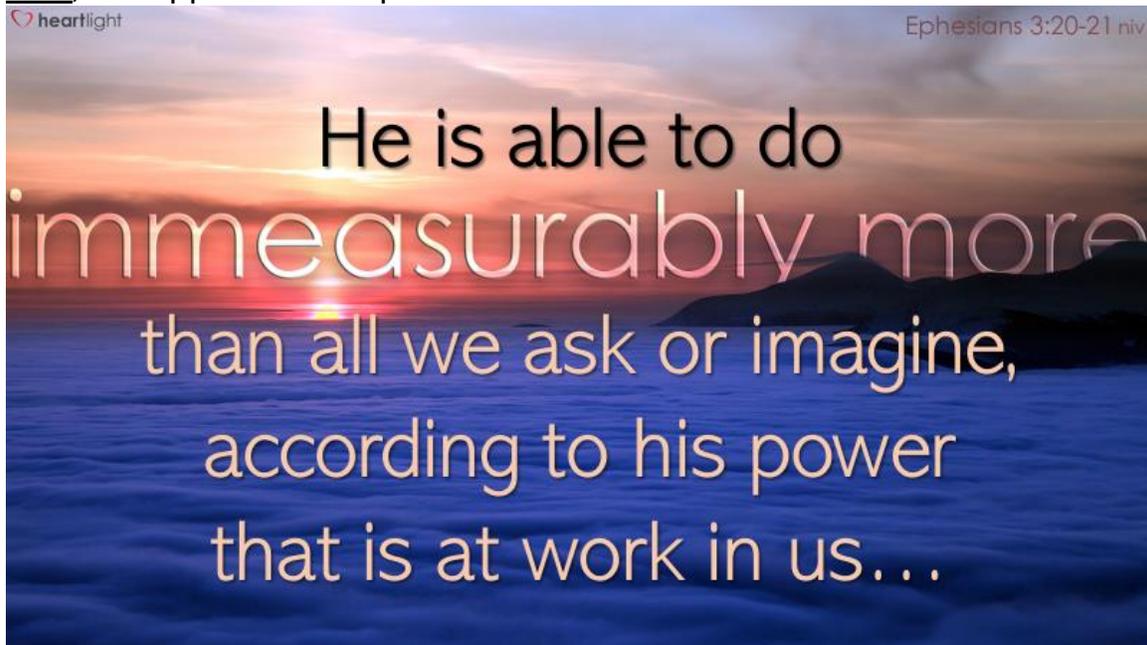
The angel told Mary she would conceive by the power of the Most High...for whom and with whom nothing is impossible.

Mary's response to the angel expressed her belief in the God who raises the dead. She said....



Hers was a quiet confidence and trust of God who does all things right; whose grace would be more than sufficient for the implications that would fall upon her because of what God chose to do in her.

Look at this promise which the Holy Spirit gave to the believers in Ephesus, [3:20](#); it is applicable and pertinent to all who follow Jesus.



The God who raises the dead does what?

He does...immeasurably more... than we could ever ask or imagine. This was the experience of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego; of Abraham and Sarah; of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Our God is the way-maker; the One for whom nothing is impossible.

It is interesting to me that Luke only wrote six verses about this incident.
Why do you think that was?

You know what I think?

Without question it was an extraordinary event.
And one... that is not regularly repeated.

But I believe Luke wanted his readers to understand... that to follow Jesus is
to walk with the God who raises the dead.

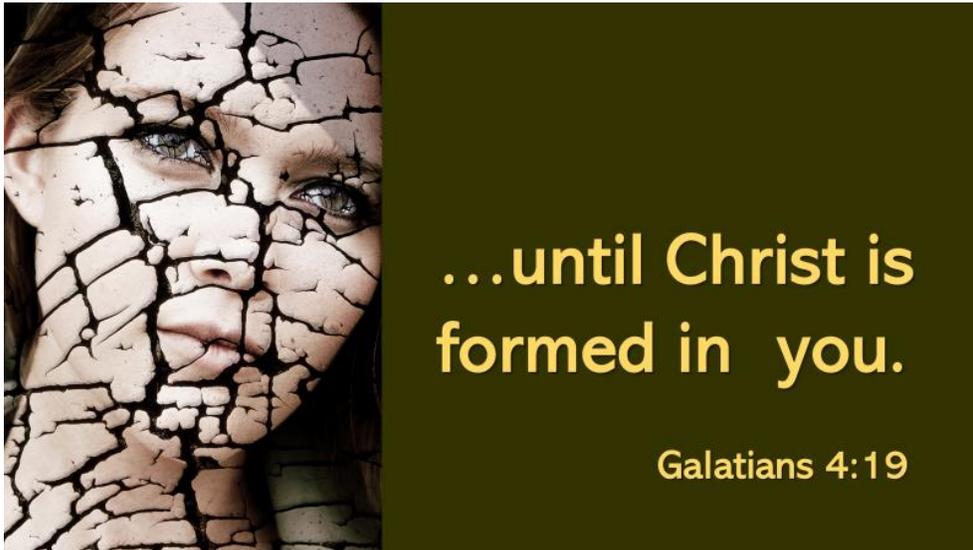
That had been the experience of Paul and team in Asia.
And it is the experience of all the followers of Jesus who live in the Spirit,
who are led by the Spirit and who keep in step with the Spirit.

Having been reminded in a fresh way by this passage, who our Lord is,
where do you and I need to respond to him?
In what areas of our life; in what situations; with what people.... do we
need his help and grace, his resurrecting power?

I don't think the point of the passage is for us to hold 'raise the dead'
services...that is up to God if and when he chooses to do so.
I believe the passage does encourage us that until we have served God's
purposes in our generation he will do with our lives as he pleases...and all
things will be used for his glory.

There is only one thing I want us to focus on as we apply this reality of God
to who we are and how we live.

The work of the Holy Spirit in this present time... within the follower of
Jesus... is to form Christ in you.



Can the Spirit really do this?

The fruit of the Spirit, which Galatians 5 speaks of... is actually the character of Jesus being reproduced in our character.

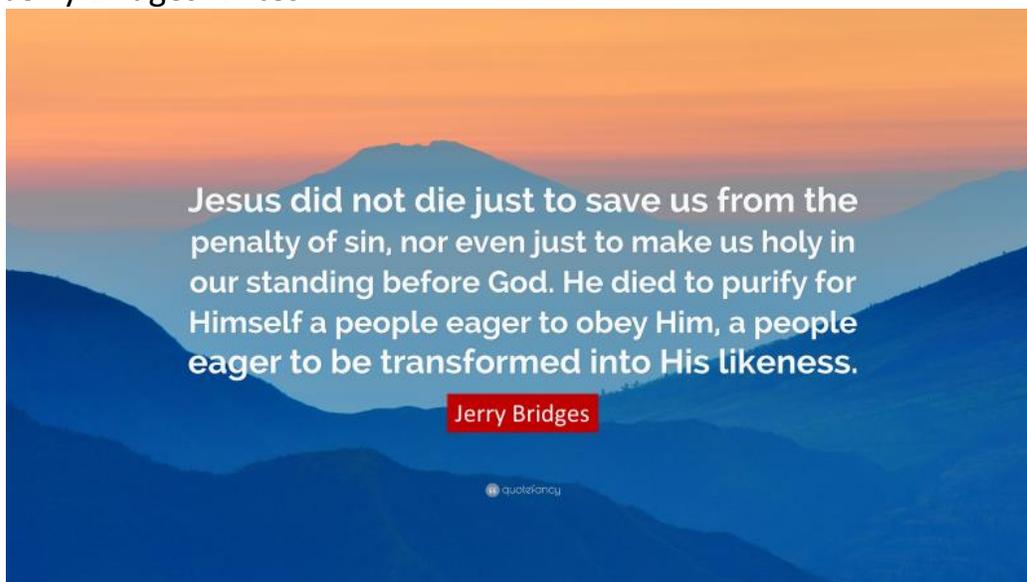
What matters most; what counts for eternity, according to Galatians 6:15 is the new creation, the work of God to make all things new.

In this present time, God's work of making all things new is focused on... it is happening in the lives of his followers – we are being transformed; Christ is being formed in us.

The good news of the gospel is that Jesus saves.

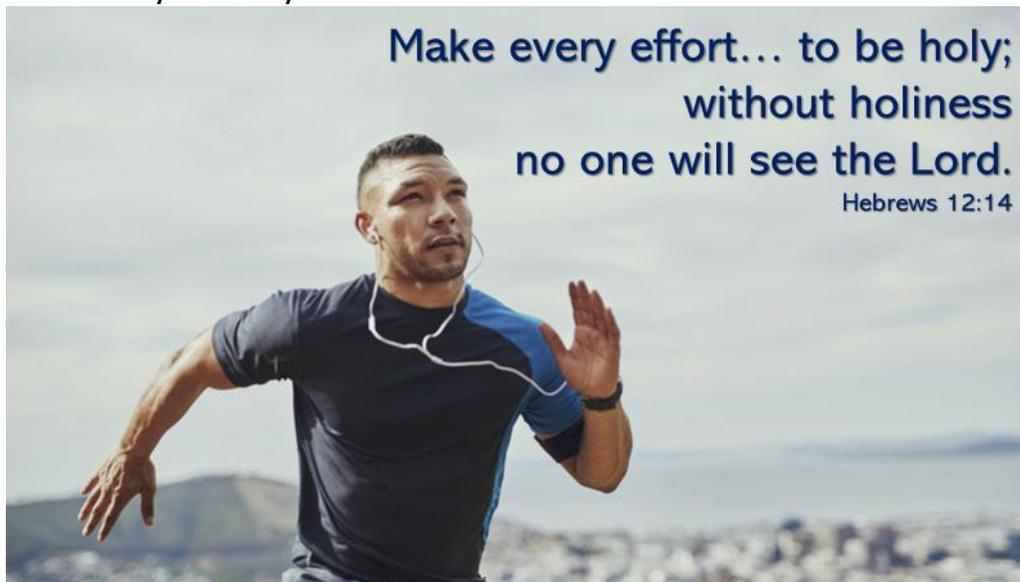
He saves us from our sin....and.... he saves us to be holy.

Jerry Bridges writes:



This is what the God who raises the dead is doing in us!!!!

This is why God says to his followers in Hebrews 12:14...



If we are saved by grace, and we are... God would not, nor does he expect us by our own energies and effort to become holy...because we can't; religion is the proof of that.

But in dependence upon his resurrection power, and in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, we are to make every effort to be holy.

Jl Packer says the battle to do so is lifelong.

**Our sinful inclinations though dethroned
are not yet destroyed.
Anti-God energies remain within us, ever
seeking new outlets appropriate to our
age and disposition.**

J.I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit*

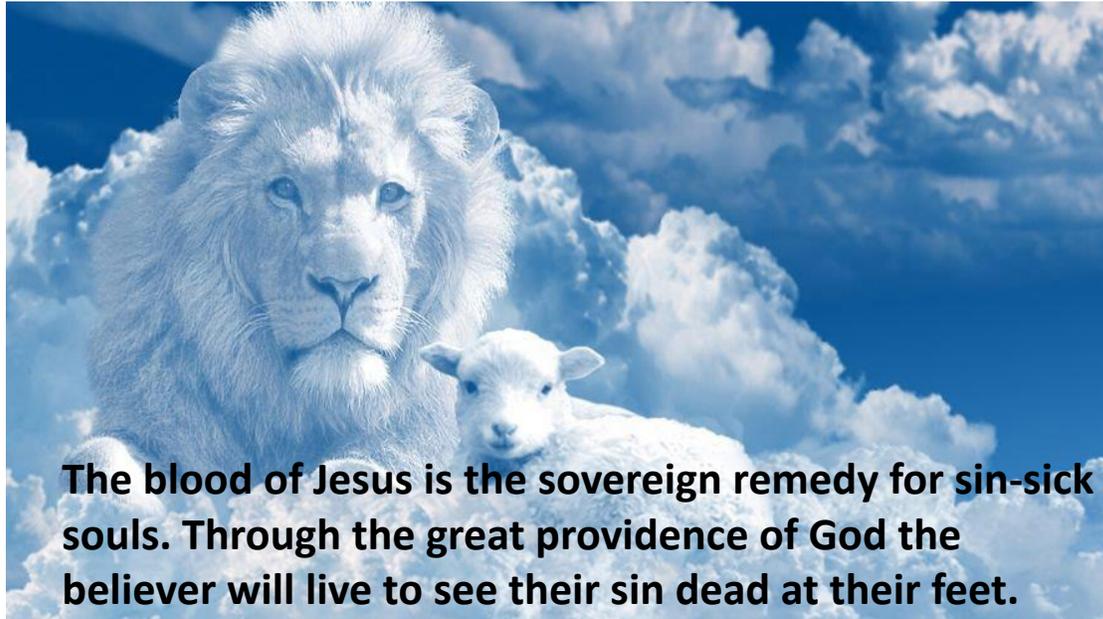
God our Father knows this.

This is why he has given to us the precious Holy Spirit.

By him and with his power we are to.... because we can... put to death the misdeeds of the body... see Romans 8:13 and Colossians 3:5.

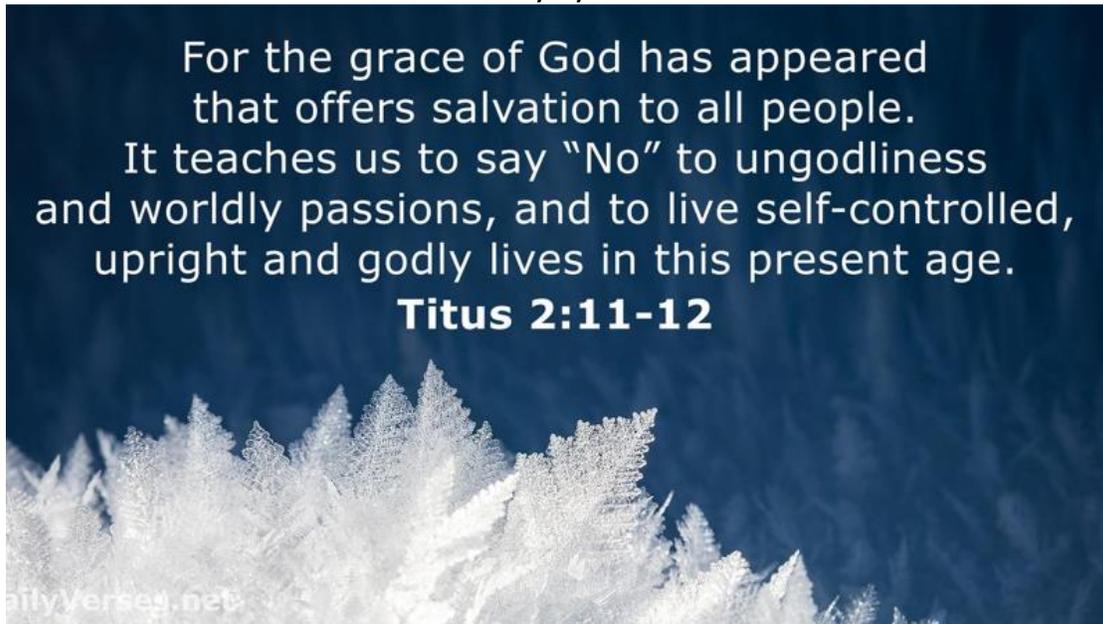
Let me say it again... the battle to do so is lifelong, but so are the victories over sin and temptation.

John Owen wrote:



The blood of Jesus is the sovereign remedy for sin-sick souls. Through the great providence of God the believer will live to see their sin dead at their feet.

This is how the follower of Jesus says yes to God and no to sin.



Look at how Ephesians 4:22-24 describes our grace inspired and grace enabled efforts...

Ephesians 4:22-24

²² You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to **put off your old self**, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires;

²³ to **be made new in the attitude of your minds;**

²⁴ and to **put on the new self**, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

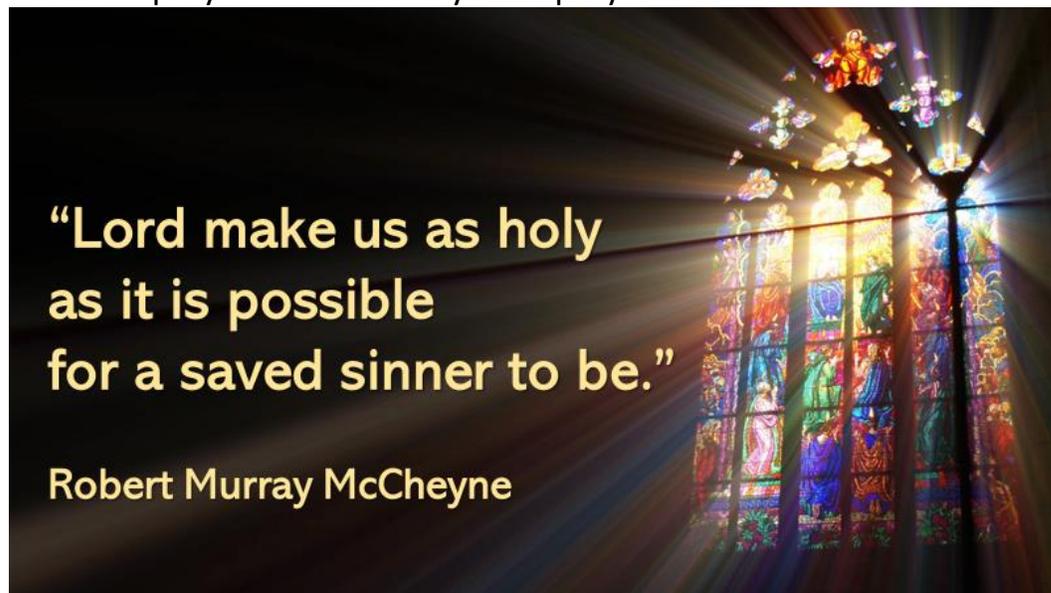
We... put off and we... put on.

God doesn't do it for us.

But he does it with us through the Spirit.

I read this prayer of Robert Murray McCheyne, and I have to say it greatly challenged me.

I want to pray it...and I invite you to pray it with me.



To the answering of that prayer the Holy Spirit provides the follower of Jesus with power from heaven; power that can raise the dead.

The Blessing

Jude 24-25

*To him who is able to keep you from falling
and to present you before his glorious presence
without fault and with great joy –
to the only God our Savior
be glory, majesty, power and authority,
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
before all ages, now and forevermore!*

Amen.