

Follow Through with Today's Message
Sunday, July 25, 2010

Have you embraced Jesus and his words with your whole life? Why or why not?

What changes do you see happening in your life because of Jesus and his words?

Is your relationship with God better described as striving and effort or trusting, believing and depending on God?

Do you ever feel stuck in a place, spiritually, you'd rather not be? Do the words of Jesus recorded in John 5:24 help you to get "unstuck"? Why or why not?

Dostoevsky Finds Christ after Escaping Death

Fyodor Dostoevsky was one of the most famous and accomplished Russian writers of the 19th century.

Early in his life, Dostoevsky underwent a virtual resurrection. He had been arrested for belonging to a group judged treasonous by Tsar Nicholas I, who, to impress upon the young parlor radicals the gravity of their errors, sentenced them to death and staged a mock execution. The conspirators were dressed in white death gowns and led to a public square, where a firing squad awaited them. Blindfolded, robed in white burial shrouds, hands bound tightly behind them, they were paraded before a gawking crowd and then tied to posts. At the very last instant, as the order, "Ready, aim!" was heard and rifles were cocked and lifted upward, a horseman galloped up with a pre-arranged message from the tsar: he would mercifully commute their sentences to hard labor.

Dostoevsky never recovered from this experience. He had peered into the jaws of death, and from that moment life became for him precious beyond all calculation. Now my life will change, he said; I shall be born again in a new form. As he boarded the convict train toward Siberia, a devout woman handed him a New Testament, the

only book allowed in prison. Believing that God had given him a second chance to fulfill his calling, Dostoevsky pored over that New Testament during his confinement. After 10 years he emerged from exile with unshakable Christian convictions, as expressed in one famous passage: "If anyone proved to me that Christ was outside the truth, then I would prefer to remain with Christ than with the truth"

(PreachingToday.com, Philip Yancey, *The Jesus I Never Knew*, Zondervan, 1995, pp 140-141; submitted by Aaron Goerner, Utica, NY).

"God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. "There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son." (John 3:17-18)

"So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death." (Romans 8:1-2)