



*“You have about a year to live,” he said.*

Well, that certainly wasn't what I wanted to hear! The lowest day of my life was when my doctor used the words “inoperable” and “cancer” in the same sentence, and gave me a year to live – maybe sixteen months with chemo. I sought a second opinion at Mayo Clinic, and they told me the same thing – “about a year.” It'll take a miracle for me to beat this.

But I know you don't want to read about all my health problems. What I really want to tell you is what I've done to prepare for the fact that my life on earth is going to end – maybe sooner than I'd like. The Bible says that physical death isn't really the end – that the human soul lives forever – either in the presence of God (heaven) or in complete and total separation from God (hell). It says that “*man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment*” (Hebrews 9:27).

I don't want to die. I've got a wife and two teenage sons and a lot to live for. But the fact is, we're all going to die, and none of us knows when, so it's best to be prepared. Are you prepared?

A few years back, I reached a point when my sin overwhelmed me, and I felt a need to make my peace with God. Now, I hadn't committed any of the “biggie” sins like murder and adultery, but those aren't the only sins there are. What about unjust anger, lying, greed, gluttony, pride, lust, envy?... If you're like me, there are several things on that list that you could write the word “guilty” beside.

...And just one of them will keep you out of heaven.

Thankfully, God loves us too much to let the story end there. Someone has to pay for sin, and Jesus offered to do that. Why Him? Because it takes someone perfect, and as God's Son, He's the only one who meets the qualifications. When He died on the cross, He was taking your place, my place. He was paying for our sin. “*For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God*” (1 Peter 3:18).

Some think they can earn their way to heaven, but there's nothing I could do that would impress God in that way. The Bible says that “*all our righteous acts are like filthy rags*” (Isaiah 64:6). There's good news, though: the work is already done! Jesus did everything that God required when He took the punishment for our sins.

Acknowledging my sin and my inability to ever meet God's holy standards, I have welcomed Jesus Christ into my life as my savior and asked Him to take charge. Now I know that whatever happens to this body of mine, my soul will live forever with God. Believe me, I'm at peace knowing that that issue is settled!

Maybe you're going through a tough time right now. Maybe you have family issues, financial issues, disappointments in your life that are getting you down. I can testify firsthand that having a relationship with Christ is priceless when going through times like these. Sometimes He delivers us from them. Other times, He helps us through them, growing our faith in the process.

I'd like to leave you with a recommendation: Check out the Bible. Start reading the book of John in the New Testament. You'll quickly get a view of exactly who Jesus Christ is. I'm confident you'll be attracted to Him, just as I was.

When you've finished, go back to chapter 3, verse 16 and read it again. It says, “*For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.*” Everlasting life! That's exactly what I need! And it's what you need, too.

Trusting Christ with your life is not complicated. It's simply a matter of admitting to God that you are a sinner, and that you need Jesus to be your Savior. “*If you confess with your mouth 'Jesus is Lord' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved*” (Romans 10:9). You don't have to say just the right words. The all-knowing God knows your heart, so just speak from your heart.

It's my prayer that you'll discover for yourself the inner peace I have as a result of placing my faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

*Thanks for reading..*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark', is written in a cursive style.