

What I find astonishing is that on any given day, you and I have the persistent opportunity to live in the Spirit, rather than the flesh. For Saint Paul there are only two paths to take. One is to set your mind and heart upon the Spirit. The other is to set your mind and heart on the flesh. (The "flesh" refers to a path that is antagonistic to the Spirit of life.) It seems much too simple to put it that way.

**Yet the simplicity of the spiritual life is what makes it beautiful and compelling. It's not complicated, but it does require something of you.** It does require you to consider your life with intention and attention to what matters most. You get to choose. What a gift! Our mortal life is all too brief, and briefer for some than others. **Just last week I heard from my friend that he may have two months to live or a bit longer if he chooses treatment for his cancer. That is utterly shocking. Yet, in a certain sense it's the same choice for each us each day. Each day you have no idea whether you will live two more months, or one day. How will you choose to live this day?**

When you actively choose to set your mind upon the way of Christ and follow Jesus' teachings throughout your day, there is a measure of deep peace that sustains you, under even the worst circumstances. The great Quaker theologian Howard Thurman famously said, "Do not ask what the world needs, ask what makes you come alive and do it; because what the world needs is people who have come alive." I believe Thurman was talking about life in the Spirit. There is a vitality to this way of life that is impossible in the way of the flesh.

Don't misunderstand. This is not a summons to perfection. It's no secret that we fail, and fall back upon the ways of the flesh. But your failure on any given day is only an occasion for forgiveness, and the chance to start over with a new set of learnings. Your failure becomes the opportunity to choose to live again in the Spirit who gives life. What's more remarkable is that the Spirit living in you brings forth fruit in world that is precisely what the world needs at any given moment. ***The spiritual life is never about you alone. It's always about the way your life can be a channel for the Spirit of life blessing others through you.*** This is how compassion and mercy, forgiveness and truth, love and kindness appear through your life as beautifully as blossoms in spring.