

Life Into Christ

Introduction

By Michael Clark and George Davis

Jesus not only gave His life on the cross to take away our sins, but He gave Himself to us that He might live His life through us. We are not doomed to live out a life of sin in our sin-prone weakness. Paul wrote to the Roman saints, "Know you not that so many of us that were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" Notice the two into's. These are that same word in the Greek, *eis*. Yes, Jesus died once for all who were placed by the Father into Him, but that is not all.

"As long as we expect God to do for us what we ask or think, we limit Him. When we believe that as high as the heavens are above the earth, His thoughts are above our thoughts, and wait on Him as God to do unto us according to His Word, as He means it, we shall be prepared to live the truly supernatural, heavenly life the Holy Spirit can work in us—the true Christ life." **Andrew Murray** *The Two Covenants, 1898*

"The greater danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we hit it." **Michelangelo**

Introduction

This has been a difficult book to write. On the one hand we have seen something supernatural and heard the Spirit call unto us, "Come up here," and we have set out to describe that call we have heard. How do you put in human words those things that the Spirit speaks to our spirits? Language at best is the result of the fall of man. It was called Babel because they were cast into confusion by not speaking the same language to one another. When we wrangle with doctrines, the result is the same.

If you minister or write with a motive of building something temporal (to make a name, or build a legacy on this earth), you are doomed to add to the confusion of Babel. All fleshly motivated builders reject the Cornerstone, the tried and true Stone on which and by which all eternal habitations are built. Sooner or later that Stone not cut with hands

falls from heaven and strikes this unholy mixture of iron and clay in its feet and its glory fades from memory or becomes a living example of everything that is wrong.

The other thing that makes a book like this difficult is the awareness that when you set out to illuminate a truth that is beyond where most of us exist, you can be seen as setting forth an exclusive calling. This is not our heart. The call is to whosoever wills. The question is, are we willing to leave those things built by men, those comfortable doctrines that say, "I'm okay, you're okay." Will we go humming on down the path, content with our mediocrity as nominal believers, or will we press on into the depths of the Son of God? The goal of the gospel of Jesus is summed up in His final prayer to our Father: "That they all may be one; as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us." To exist as Christians that are divided into sects and denominations, to even be divided against one another inside these groups, even in our own congregations, is a blatant testimony that we are living in Christian mediocrity and have fallen short of the goal of the high calling of Christ. Jesus is one with the Father and extends that same wondrous existence unto us.

One final word. This document is not a treatise on proper usage of Greek or Hebrew. We are not scholars, but brothers who have set out early in our lives to have hearing ears tuned to the voice of God. We have set out to leave everything that attracts and fortifies our sinful selves and live lives that require constant repentance as God shows us His more excellent ways. With Paul we can say,

I'm not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me. Friends, don't get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward--to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back. So let's keep focused on that goal, those of us who want everything God has for us. If any of you have something else in mind, something less than total commitment, God will clear your blurred vision--you'll see it yet! (Philippians 3:12-15 MSG)

Let us press into the Son and we will walk together in His love.



Chapter 1: What is Salvation?

Salvation is not a static thing, but rather the beginning of a new life in which we have become born of the Spirit. Being "born again" is not the end or goal of salvation (any more than a child is a fully developed human on conception) but rather this is the beginning of the process. The seed of the Spirit comes into us and the life of Jesus begins to grow and develop into the fullness of the Son of God within us. Just as the chromosomes of the male component combine with the female chromosomes and the two become one new being, so it is with us in Christ and Christ in us.

We are certain that we are of God, but all the world is in the power of the Evil One. And we are certain that the Son of God has come, and has given us a clear vision, so that we may see him who is true, and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. My little children, keep yourselves from false gods. (1 John 5:19-21 BBE)

What is true belief in the mind of God? Millions of people today say they believe in one thing or another. Some believe in their riches; they believe they will be kept from any suffering and need by their money. Others believe in their weapons or fighting ability to keep them safe. Some believe in their country or politicians to do that for them. Some even believe that they belong to the right religion and *that* will keep them safe. But what does this word *believe* mean to God? James wrote in his letter, "[You believe that there is one God; you do well: the demons also believe, and tremble.](#)" James 2:19 KJ2000 Many professing Christians today believe in Jesus at this level. They believe that He walked this earth 2000 years ago; that He did many wonderful works and miracles and spoke with great wisdom; that He died on the cross and rose again from the grave; and some even believe He is the Son of God who died for their sins. But is that what *belief* is in the mind of God?

There is an often quoted verse in John that has been mistranslated and as a result, misquoted as if the very words of Jesus about *belief* to Nicodemus were no deeper than the belief that James is talking about. We see the address of this verse on placards at football games and see it quoted on religious tracts as if it were some

magic potion that will convert the unbelieving immediately. By now, you know which verse we are speaking of-- John 3:16.

There is one little preposition that we believe has often been mistranslated that makes all the difference in God's eternity--the Greek word for *into*. The verse in question in our Bibles reads, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes *in* him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16 KJ2000 Two verses later we see this same preposition mistranslated twice again, but this time it is translated *on* as well as *in*. "He that believes *on* him is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed *in* the name of the only begotten Son of God." John 3:18 KJ2000 Another mistranslated verse where *on* is used to describe our salvation is, "Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that you believe *on* him whom he has sent." John 6:28-29 KJ2000

So what is wrong with all these important verses that determine our part in obtaining eternal life? This Greek preposition *eis* (pronounced "ice") indicates motion and more correctly should be translated *into*. *On* and *in* do not indicate motion, though they are very similar in meaning. One is resting on and the other is resting in. There is a sense of having *arrived* about their usage.

Here is a diagram that graphically shows the meaning of Greek prepositions.

The word for *in* is εἰν or *en* and is shown resting inside the object or circle. The word for *on* or *upon* is ἐπι or *epi* (shown resting above the circle). But the word for *into*, εἰς or *eis*, is shown going into the circle. Here is a passage in which both *en* and *eis* are used and translated correctly so we can compare them:

In [en] whom [Jesus] the whole structure is joined together and grows **into** [eis] a holy temple **in** [en] the Lord; **in** [en] whom you also are built **into** [eis] it for a dwelling place of God **in** [en] the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:21-22 RSV)

In Jesus we who are living stones *in* the temple of God are joined together and grow *into* the temple of God *in* the Spirit *in* the Lord. Once we have believed in Jesus we have passed into Him, but we have not arrived. There is more. We continue to grow into a temple fit for God to dwell in by the power of the Spirit of Life in Him.

It is interesting that *eis* or *into* is depicted as an arrow penetrating a sphere. This is exactly what happens when the male sperm goes into the female egg. The result is a new life starts to form and grow. God has created all things in the natural to show us how things are in the spiritual world. See 1 Corinthians 15:40-46 When Jesus was talking with Nicodemus about salvation He said, "You should not be marveling that I said to you, 'You must be begotten anew [from above].'" John 3:7 CLV This is the literal translation of this verse in the Greek. Unless Father begets our spiritual life, we will never have spiritual life. What is begotten of the flesh is still flesh, but what is begotten of the Spirit is spirit.

Eternal life begins with this act by the will of God. Paul, speaking of our salvation wrote, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he [Jesus] might be the firstborn [*protokotos* - first begotten] among many brethren." Romans 8:29 KJ2000 Jesus was begotten of the Father in the womb of a virgin by the Spirit. He is the prototypical Son of God and thus the *only* son begotten of God this exact way. The Son of God had to become the Son of Man for there to be a perfect sacrificial Lamb of God who could take away the sins of the world. Paul wrote:

But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the effect of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men. (Romans 5:15-18 RSVA)

Salvation is not a static thing, but rather the beginning of a new life in which we have become *born of the Spirit*. Being "born again" is not the end or goal of salvation (any more than a child is a fully developed human on conception) but rather this is the *beginning* of the process. The seed of the Spirit comes into us and the life of Jesus begins to grow and develop into the fullness of the Son of God within us. Just as the chromosomes of the male component combine with the female chromosomes and the two become one new being, so it is with us in Christ and Christ in us.

Now let's go back to our passage in John chapter three where the Authorized Version reads:

And no man hath ascended up to [*eis* - *into*] heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is **in** [en] heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent **in** [en] the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in [*eis* - *into*] him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in [*into*] him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son *into* [*eis*] the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on [**into**] him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in [**into**] the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come **into** [*eis*] the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. (John 3:13-19 KJV)

The Son of Man ascends *into* heaven and is *in* heaven. Moses was *in* the wilderness when he lifted up the brazen serpent. We believe *into* Jesus Christ and it is here that eternal life, His life changing life, begins as we abide in Him. We believe *into* His life and we are freed from condemnation because we have seen the truth in the light of His life. In each case in the Greek we are instructed to believe *into* His name and believe *into* Him! Faith *into* salvation is growing *into* the fullness of the living Christ.

From here on out in this writing you will see "[into]" following every preposition that was not translated with this living motion in mind and yet was intended in the original Greek text to do so. Sad to say, there are many verses in our Bibles that were not translated to show this living dynamic. All too often this important word was translated, "*in, unto, upon, to or among,*" thus watering down the impact of the gospel message as a call into a living and growing walk into an ever deeper relationship with Jesus and His Father.

Are We to Believe *On* or *Into* Jesus?

How do you believe "on" something? We can understand believing "in" something, but not "on." How do you have faith "unto" salvation? (See 1 Peter 1:5 KJV) Is salvation something we only approach, but never enter into?

What does God desire when it comes to our relationship with His Son? Are we to have a superficial, back-slapping, bar buddy in Christ or are we to have the intimacy of a man and a woman who are married and are becoming one flesh? (See Ephesians Ch. 5:22-32) Have you ever noticed that couples who have lived together and become one flesh even start to look and act like each other after many years? When one dies who has been united this way with the other for many years, the other soon dies afterwards. They have become one flesh.

In all too many cases the translators chose to nullify the living dynamic of what salvation is by choosing words that make it sound static instead of growing and alive. Words like *on*, *among*, *unto*, even *in* indicate no movement or growth and were used often for *eis* instead of *into*. This oversight is such a travesty and it fortifies the Christian idea of what "church" has become. You go to a service, you sit there, you listen and you leave. Growth into the fullness of Christ is never demonstrated as a living dynamic. You said a "sinner's prayer" and you came to Jesus and that is that-- another spiritual infant is destined to live out life in, as one brother put it, "the perpetual babyhood of the believer." Yet, the scriptures indicate that this life is *not* static, but rather a dynamic growth into the fullness of Christ.

And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.
(Romans 12:2 KJ2000)

What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun! (2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT)

And have clothed yourselves with the new [spiritual self], which is [ever in the process of being] renewed and remolded into [fuller and more perfect knowledge upon] knowledge after the image (the likeness) of Him Who created it. (Colossians 3:10 AMP)
Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.
(Ephesians 4:22-24 RSVA)

Our lives with Jesus must become intermingled. He gave His life for us and we are called to lay down our natural lives for Him. If you go down to the hardware store and order a can of paint and you want it to be tinted to a certain color, but tell the clerk to

just put the tint in a separate container on the top of the can, you have tinted *onto* the paint. When you take it home and brush the tint base on the wall, it is not the color you wanted at all. Now let's say that you understand paint and painting better than that and you allow the clerk to put the tint *in* the base paint, but do not allow him to put it in the shaking machine. Then you go home and brush this unmixed volume of paint on your walls. There will be streaks and blotches on all the surfaces and you still won't have the effect you wanted. Is it the clerk's fault? No, if you are to get the desired result, pleasing to your eyes, the tint must be thoroughly mixed *into* the tint base or it is useless.

In a sense this explains why Paul wrote, "Everything that can be shaken, will be shaken until only that which can not be shaken remains." God provides the shaking in our lives that tears down our fleshly walls that isolate our spirits and allows the blending of His Spirit into ours. Paul wrote:

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off are made near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; to make in himself of two one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you who were afar off, and to them that were near. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto [pros- forward to] the Father. (Ephesians 2:13-18 KJ2000)

This important preposition *eis* in the Greek makes all the difference in the world... literally! According to the Liddell & Scott Intermediate Lexicon *eis* is used

... with all Verbs implying motion or direction...

2. with Verbs which express rest in a place, when a previous motion into or to it is implied...

Motion is implied as well as the goal of that motion. The following scripture, where *eis* was translated correctly, brings this out.

Then said he to Thomas, Reach here your finger, and behold my hands; and reach here your hand, and thrust it *into* [*eis*] my side: and be not faithless, but believing. (John 20:27 KJ2000)

Jesus invited doubting Thomas to put his hand *into* His wounded side and *believe* that He had risen from the dead! If we are to be witnesses of the kingdom of God that removes all doubts, we also must be thoroughly enveloped into Christ and He into us. Now, let's look at these very important verses many of us hang our salvation on, once again with the right word inserted in them.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes *into* him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

"He that believes *into* him is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed *into* the name of the only begotten Son of God."

Yes, true *belief* is not just a mental assent, but rather a moving force that causes a change of identity and *life source*. Believing into Jesus changes our position out of our old natures and into the nature of Jesus.

In the advent of mankind upon the earth, Eve was tempted to have a life and identity separate from her Creator. Satan told her if she would eat of the forbidden tree of knowledge she would be her own woman saying, "For God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods." Until she caved into the temptation, Adam and Eve were in unity with their Father and worked and lived in the garden in unison with Him. His thoughts were their thoughts, His works were their works and their desires were to please Him alone. Since they fell away into their own self-wills, God has set out to bring man back to this primary place of existence where we rest and abide *in* Him.

When we veer off course in God's plan, He requires us to go back to the point where we took the wrong turn and proceed again on the right path. This is true repentance. Our starting point as His fallen creation is to get back into unity with our Father and His will where we are not only created in his image, but we may proceed with being transformed into His *likeness*. (See Genesis 1:26) He requires a total transformation from our fallen Adamic state, in which we have lived out life by our own desires, *into* the very being of Jesus Christ who lives for the Father!

Jesus is the Pattern Son. Father only has one measuring line by which He judges all mankind; are we walking in the obedience to and unity with His Son? The first Adam must put on the Last Adam.

One Spirit with Him

A brother from England recently wrote and asked, "Can I ask how regularly you hear the 'still small voice of the LORD'? I only ask because I long to hear it once again." To this George replied:

As we live our lives in a reverent posture before Him, seeking Him, waiting on Him, simply walking with Him in the cool of the day, two hearts become one. We become increasingly joined to Him. Isaiah prophesied, "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." The word wait here in the Hebrew is a primitive root that means to bind together by twisting. Waiting on God is to be so intertwined with Him that we feel what He feels and we know what He knows and desire what He desires. We become so joined to him that when He moves, we move. The Spirit rested upon the prophets and they knew "the burden of the Lord." How much more attuned to the Lord's burden are those who are so completely intertwined with Him that He and they are one Spirit. Like John at the last supper, we recline with our head upon His breast, listening to the beat of His wondrous loving heart. This is our birthright! "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." There is a communication with the Father that is much deeper than just hearing His voice, though that is very important. It is the mystery of two hearts becoming so intertwined that they become one. You sense His burden for others and speak His words to them. You can say, with the Son, "the doctrine is not mine . . . I speak those things I hear the Father saying. . . I do those things I see the Father doing. . . My Father works hitherto and I work." So Joined! One Spirit! One heart! One mind! Without this glorious intertwining we might hear God and not understand a word He is saying. When God spoke to His beloved Son, those who stood by thought it thundered.

Hearing the Father's voice requires resting in His arms and hearing His heart beat with love for us as John did with Jesus. So many of us are all about doing for God, so that we have not taken the time to first know Him as our loving Father, but rather as a terrible demanding task master. Religious task masters often instill this image on Him and it is such a travesty.

Everlasting Life

In John 3:16 we read that we who believe into Jesus will have everlasting life. What is everlasting life? Literally the Greek says, "life without beginning or end." How do we who are finite get this kind of life? Only by living our lives in the Son of God, because He alone is eternal in the Father.

In chapter six of John, Jesus says some revealing and remarkable things that stumbled the Jews who heard Him.

And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone who sees the Son, and believes in [into] him, may have everlasting life and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:40 KJ2000)

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believes on [into] me has everlasting life. (John 6:47 KJ2000)

Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to [into] eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal." (John 6:27 ESV)

Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that you believe on [into] him whom he has sent. (John 6:28-29 KJ2000)

And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone who sees the Son, and believes on [into] him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:40 KJ2000)

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. (John 6:51 KJ2000)

He that eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, dwells in me, and I in him. As the living Father has sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eats me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eats of this bread shall live forever. (John 6:56-58 KJ2000)

To eat and drink Jesus is to have Him totally assimilated into us. He is the antidote to the venom of the Serpent's bite that brought death. Not only in eating of Him does He

dwell in us, but Jesus says that we also dwell in Him. We live in and by Him alone. Only here in this reality is there any life without beginning or end.

In his fine work, *Bone of His Bone*, F. J. Huegel wrote:

The job he [the Christian worker] is attempting to do requires of him superhuman force. The merely human, however noble and strong and cultivated, proves as insufficient and as inadequate as a handful of glowing coals would be for the dissipation of an arctic blizzard. He must transcend the purely natural, and immerse himself in the supernatural. He must experience the power of the indwelling Christ, and, dispossessed of his own life, become in an ever fuller measure possessed of a Divine life.

Only "rivers of living water" flowing from his innermost being -- the promise which the Saviour has made to His own -- can make possible the renewal of life in those to whom he is sent.

Believing into Jesus' Name

Let us look at that opening passage again. John quotes Jesus, "He that believes into him is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed into the name of the only begotten Son of God." What does it mean to believe into His name? His name is not a mere "handle" spelled J-E-S-U-S that He was tagged with at birth. In fact His Hebrew parents named Him Yeshua (from where we get Joshua or Savior), not the Greek Jesus. Many today have gone back to using the Hebrew forms for the names of Jesus and God, thinking that this will give us power when we pray, but that is not what it means to pray or believe in His name. It goes much deeper than that. A rose by any other name is still a rose. The word translated name in the New Testament is *onoma*. W.E. Vine says of this word:

(II) for all that a "name" implies, of authority, character, rank, majesty, power, excellence, etc., of everything that the "name" covers: (a) of the "Name" of God as expressing His attributes.

Jesus is in His name! He told the disciples, "For where two or three are gathered together in [into] my name, there am I in the midst of them." Do you just believe in the name of Jesus or have you believed into His name? In Fausset's Bible Dictionary we read of the important significance of what it means to believe into His name:

Name

In the Bible [this is true in the Old Testament as well] expressing the nature or relation for the most part. According as man has departed more and more from the primitive truth, the connection between names and things has become more arbitrary. In Genesis on the contrary the names are nearly all significant... God, in calling His people into new and close relationship with Himself, gives them a new name. Abram becomes Abraham; Sarai, Sarah; Jacob, Israel. So the name was given the child at the time of circumcision, because then he enters into a new covenant relationship to God (Luke 1:59; Luke 2:21). So spiritually in the highest sense God's giving a new name implies His giving a new nature... Christians receive their new name at baptism, indicating their new relation. They are "baptized into (eis onoma) the name of (the revealed nature, 2 Peter 1:4, into living union with) the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit"... [Emphasis added].

Baptized into His Name

Another verse we hear parroted often in our evangelical churches is what is called "the Great Commission." Jesus told the apostles, "Go you therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in [eis - into] the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit..." Yes, we are to be baptized [immersed] not with just water, but immersed into the very character of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit; becoming one with God and His nature. Water baptism is supposed to signify that this has happened to the person being immersed, yet today baptism has become little more than a rite of initiation into a particular denomination. Many of us have, with iconoclastic zeal, smashed our Catholic and Protestant idols and have scrutinized and shed a myriad of meaningless ceremonies, rites and rituals, but have we cast the baby out with the bathwater when it comes to baptism?

While we don't believe in baptismal regeneration, we do believe that God honors our obedience and faith in this area. Repentance and baptism together are God's ultimate insult to the flesh. Repentance is first of all repentance from dead works. True repentance is giving up on our fleshly lust of trying to fix it ourselves or live life our way. The flesh has no qualms with trying to save itself. Stopping this fleshly endeavor and acknowledging that there is none righteous, no not one, is the beginning of a proper walk with God. The next step in obedience to God is baptism. Repentance says, "I can't do it! I can't be righteous of my self." Baptism says, "He can."

Paul wrote,

In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. (Colossians 2:11-12 NKJV)

Baptism is our public circumcision. It is the circumcision of Christ made without hands. We are buried with Christ and raised in newness of life, not by virtue of any ritual, but by our faith in the operation of God. Baptism is our public confession of our belief in God's intention to bring about, by His mighty power, all that baptism represents and prefigures. And so begins this operation of God.

We are not promoting an elitist idea that by our great faith we are somehow more into Christ than others. We are not in Christ because of our exceptional belief but because of His great love and power. Even faith itself is a gift. As Paul put it, "But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus . . . so that, just as it is written, 'Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.'"

With this in mind, consider now the words of Peter to the Jews in Acts chapter 2:

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. (Acts 2:38-39 KJ2000)

First repent, that is, turn about and take a new and living course for your life and then be immersed into the very character and person of Jesus. As you can see, Christendom has diluted the truth of what salvation is to the point that it really means nothing like it did to the first century church. For most, the transformation of our very life source has been missed and we are expected to plod along trying to be good Christians in our own strength. What a frustrating existence!

Praying and Living in Jesus' Name

In the modern church, the name "Jesus Christ" has been also used as some kind of magic incantation to call down power over demons and get things we ask for. We tack

the words "In the name of Jesus we pray, Amen" onto the end of our prayers. It means much more than that. The "magic" is not in the words, but in the heart of the one who is praying.

Compare Paul's abiding in the name of Jesus Christ and ministering from there, to those who tried to use the name of Jesus Christ as some kind of magic:

And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain maid possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, who show unto us the way of salvation. And this did she many days. But Paul, being troubled, turned and said to the spirit, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour. (Acts 16:16-18 KJ2000)
Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon themselves to call over them who had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. (Acts 19:13-16 KJ2000)

In the first passage, Paul was speaking from and in the very character and authority of Jesus and the demon obeyed and left the young woman. In the second, these itinerant Jews tried to use the name as if it has some kind of magic and the demon in the man thrashed them thoroughly. The demon knew who Jesus is and who Paul was because of the very Nature in them.

Paul the apostle wrote often of this total transformation that went far beyond a mere mental assent or "believing in." We quote, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Philippians 1:21 KJ2000)

"For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with [in union with] him in glory." (Colossians 3:3-4 KJ2000).

There is a difference between believing *in* and believing *into* someone. In the *into* state the tint has entered into the paint and the paint into the tint. For the paint to manifest on the wall is also for the tint to be manifest. For the tint to be manifest is for it to be

enveloped *into* the paint. Their identities are one. The tint by itself is dead, but it is brought to life once it is mixed into the paint.

Only if we believe *into* His name and are taken into His very character. By an exchange of His life source for ours, we have His power in our actions and prayer to overcome the works of the devil. In order to have power in our salvation, we must first be dead to that old Adamic nature within us and be spiritually resurrected by the operation of God into the very life of Christ. To the Corinthians Paul wrote, "And of him [God] are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." This covers every aspect of life and godliness. Without Him we can do nothing. Jesus Himself is our righteousness. Our ability to obey and keep some set of "Christian" rules, "Don't handle, nor taste, nor touch" may as Paul put it, "appear like wisdom in self-imposed worship, and humility, and severity to the body," but may we acknowledge once and for all that such things will never be of "any value against the indulgence of the flesh."

The same is true of sanctification. Jesus is our sanctification. He is the only redemptive force in our lives, not our good religious works or our determination and stick-to-it-iveness.

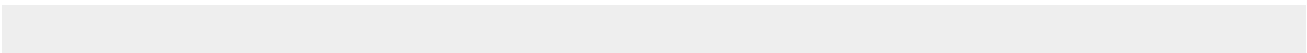
If *our* life is manifest to the world; what *we* think, what *we* want, what *we* know, what *we* feel, it can not be "hid with Christ in God." It is time that we take a new appraisal of what it means to be "saved." There is a world of difference between *believing in* as it is used in our culture and *believing into* as God intended. One allows us to keep going in our separated lives from God and only give a mental assent to His design and wishes. The other makes us come to a full stop, die to our wants, likes and dislikes, our desires, goals, and all that is of the self; self-righteousness, self-satisfaction, self-love, self-centeredness, and downright selfishness. Not only that, to believe *into* Christ is to become Christ centered in everything we do and think. He is All and in all! He is the beginning and the end! He is the sum total of Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption! What a glorious truth! He is "the way, the Truth, and the Life." All that pertains to life and godliness is ours in the gift of Himself! In Him is Life! In Him dwells the fullness of all that life was meant to be in the mind of our Father!

Abba Father

Paul wrote of this death and life in Christ to the Galatians. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." It is the faith *of* the Son of God that is ours in this crucified life in Christ, because this life within us is the life *of* the Son and the Spirit *of* the Son within us cries, "Abba! Daddy, dear Daddy!" The intimacy that Jesus has with His Father is the intimacy that is afforded us also. All the issues of obedience, righteousness and sanctification are answered by the Spirit of Him who, when obedience demanded unimaginable suffering, said in the face of it all, "Abba, Father . . . not what I desire, but what you desire." This is the very Spirit that Father God sends into each of us when we believe.

Because we are His children, God *sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, "Abba, Father!"* We have not been given a spirit of religious bondage where everything is motivated by fear and implemented by mere willpower. We have received the Spirit of adoption, the Spirit of Christ "by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

Jesus not only gave His life on the cross to take away our sins, but He gave Himself to us that He might live his life through us. We are not doomed to live out a life of sin in our own sin-prone weakness. Paul wrote to the Roman saints, "[Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?](#)" Notice the two into's. These are that same word in the Greek, *eis*. Yes, Christ died once for all who were placed by the Father *into* Him, but that is not all. Paul continues, "[Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that just as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life](#)" First we are dead to our old Adamic lives and natures and then we are risen into the very personage of Jesus Christ who is the expression of His Father.



Chapter 2: Saved by Jesus' Life

So much of Christian church teaching and belief falls so short of us being "more than conquerors through Christ Jesus." Why? Because we are taught to be content with believing in Jesus without first believing into Him as our life changing dynamic.

What a profound and deep salvation we have been given! The very meaning of what it means to be saved should take on a much deeper revelation to us than just the saying of a sinner's prayer, signing a "Four Spiritual Laws" tract, and having our sins removed. He desires to "save to the uttermost." Here it is important that we distinguish between reconciliation and full salvation. Paul wrote,

For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. (Romans 5:10 KJ2000)

Reconciliation and salvation are not the same thing. Together they represent a much larger redemptive work. We are reconciled to God by Jesus' death on the cross, but we are saved by His *life*. "Therefore he is able also to save them to [into] the uttermost [completion] that come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them." (Hebrews 7:25 KJ2000) The living intercession of Jesus within us is salvation. Here is the sum of all God's provision and expectation. It is this fact that we are "saved by His life" that we so often miss. The common message that we hear throughout Christendom today is, "We are reconciled through the *death* of the Son." Rarely do we hear, "We are saved by the *life* of the Son." What a wonderful truth it is!

When I, Michael, grew up in the Catholic Church, there were crucifixes everywhere; over the church altar, over the classroom chalkboard, over the main doors, on the steeples-everywhere you looked was the dying Jesus. Death, death, death-it seemed as if death and Satan got the final word. There was no power over sin. Sin and death had dominion. The *Life* that saves us from all that was missing.

It was not much better for my wife, Dorothy, who grew up in a "Bible Church." Every Sunday an altar call was given for any new converts that might have been persuaded by the pastor's sermon to "get saved." Then an invitation was given to the rest of the congregation to come forward and recommit their lives to Jesus if they sinned that

previous week. They were constantly having to get saved all over again! Where was the abiding Life of Christ that saves and keeps one saved? Like Dorothy said, "Jesus saved us, but after that it was up to us to keep ourselves saved." We are reconciled through *His* death but we dare not stop there. Reconciliation is only a ticket to ride - an invitation to embark on a grand journey called *Life in Christ* where we are free from sin and death, living by His righteousness and eternal life within us.

Not only are we redeemed from being bad sinners; we are also redeemed from the fruitless effort of trying to be "good Christians"! We did not reconcile ourselves to God, neither can we save ourselves. Christ's death was required for reconciliation. His ever-present intercession and empowering life is required for salvation. To view salvation as a past event, something that happened to us years ago when we first believed, is a shortsighted theological blunder. We are saved moment by moment *by His life* within us. His life in us meets every challenge. "I can do all things through [in] Christ who strengthens [empowers] me." Christ in us and we in Him is where the empowerment to be sons of our Father comes from, just as it empowered Jesus here on earth 2000 years ago. Jesus promised the disciples, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believes on [*eis - into*] me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." (John 14:12 KJ2000) We will and should be doing greater works than Jesus did in the limitations of His earthly body. He told His disciples,

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not **on** [*into*] me; (John 16:7-9 KJ2000)

Where He was limited to the ground He was standing on as He preached, taught and healed for only the three and a half years while He worked His Father's works, He is no longer limited by time and space. He now has a body made up of millions of members and because He has joined the Father in heaven, the Father has sent the Holy Spirit upon all flesh, (See Acts 2:17) the very Spirit of Christ, to work Jesus' life into and through all who truly believe. It was prophesied, "that Jesus should die for that nation; And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together **in** [*into*] one the children of God that were scattered abroad." (John 11:51-52 KJ2000) We, both Jews and Gentiles, are gathered *into* One, even Christ, as the children of God. We are His

body through which He manifests the love, desires and power of our Father upon this earth. To live without this reality and vision of what it means to be "more than conquerors through Christ" is to allow the enemy to oppose the will of God in us.

I, George, shared this story in a previous article entitled, "The New Creation Rule" but it bears repeating once again.

I had a conversation with a young college student recently that almost moved me to tears. She, being a recovering agnostic, had now come to believe that there is indeed a God and that He created everything but having done so, He left and is now watching from afar to see how it will all turn out. All I could think to say, initially, was, "That is so sad!" But as I pondered her words I realized that they reflected not only the state of her life and mentality toward God but were, from her perspective, the only reasonable explanation for the condition of Christendom today. Thankfully, I was given opportunity to share with her what makes *true* Christianity so exceptional. That is simply this: Jesus is Emanuel, God with us! He is an ever-present help in time of trouble, a Friend that sticks closer than a brother! The words of an old hymn come to mind. "He Lives! He lives! Christ Jesus lives today! He walks with me and He talks with me along life's narrow way. He lives! He lives, salvation to impart! You ask me how I know He lives; He lives within my heart!"

The earnest of our salvation is the abiding Spirit of Christ within! He is the guarantee of all that is to follow ([See Ephesians 1:14](#)), just as an earnest money agreement is the guarantee that we are going ahead with the purchase of a home.

This is the key to everything. We have not been left to see how well we can pull things off on our own. Jesus promised, "[I will come to you.](#)" Christ's Spirit in us is passionate to please the Father. Think of it! God has sent into our hearts the Spirit of His Son who, in the face of horrendous sorrows, cried out "[Abba, Father.](#)" The Spirit of God's Son, in our hearts still cries, "Abba, Daddy!" The Spirit of the Son creates His passion for the Father's will within us. More than earthly comforts and pleasures, more than physical life itself, the Spirit of the Son seeks Abba's will. This is true sanctification. This is what distinguishes Christians, not only from the world but from all religions, and true believers from mere religious men.

What we are talking about here is an exchanged life. Jesus took not only our sins upon Himself on that cross, but He took *us* and our very sin natures upon that cross to be put to death so that we could live in His resurrection power.

So much of Christian church teaching and belief falls so short of us being "more than conquerors through Christ Jesus." Why? Because we are taught to be content with *believing in* Jesus without first *believing into* Him as our life changing dynamic. Muslims believe in Mohammad and they believe in Allah. But Mohammad is dead and cannot be believed *into*. Only the Son of God has life that is unending and that His creation can partake in. Of this John wrote, "In Him was *life* and the *life* was the light of men." His life is the light that lights our darkness. It is only as we experience the life of Christ that we see light (spiritual understanding). As the psalmist wrote, "In your light we see light." Then by His grace this same *light* becomes our faith in Him. Finally it becomes our very Light (the Light of men) and Life as our lives are enfolded into His. What a great salvation!

Believing Into Vs. Believing On

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on [*into*] his name: Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12-13 KJ2000)

Where do we receive power to become the children of our heavenly Father? Is it by becoming good enough? Is it by imitating Jesus? No, a thousand times no. We become children of the Father by ceasing from our own good works and believing *into* the very person and character of Jesus Christ the Son. As we are *in* His name we are in the sonship of our Father with Him. For us to live is Christ. We are born of the Father and it is this that makes us His sons. We are not born into Him by being born into a certain bloodline, or by our own wills or the wills of well meaning Christian parents. We are ". . . born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:13)

He is the progenitor of our heavenly lives, the Father of life. Of this salvation Jesus said,

All that the Father gives me shall come to me; and he that comes to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that

sent me. And this is the Father's will who has sent me, that of all that he has given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone who sees the Son, and believes *on* [into] him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:37-40 KJ2000)

Today we, with the help of some poor translations of the Bible, think that all we have to do is believe *upon* or *on* the name of Jesus *unto* salvation, but being born *into* Christ is the first step to becoming fully reconciled with our Father. *Upon* and *on* are not good enough. Our very lives must be hid in Christ with God. (See Colossians 3:3) This insidious watering down of the full implications of our great salvation in Christ the Son is demonic to the core. Today's prominent Bible teachers with the help of poorly translated scriptures are keeping Christians weak in their faith by their missing the deep meaning of what *faith* really is! With a lack of faith, people are prone to do dead works (works not born of the Father) out of pride and fear. These dead works are used to build the churches and organizations of men. If we do not believe into the Son and abide there in Him, we have a faith that will not stand the tests that are coming upon this earth. Jesus is the only one who has passed the test and into whom we can abide without being shaken. No wonder Paul prophesied that before Jesus returns in His glorified body, there will first be a great falling away of those who profess His name. (See 2 Thessalonians 2) Jesus warned:

Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and you shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall grow cold. But he that shall endure unto the end [preservers *into* the goal], the same shall be saved. (Matthew 24:9-13 KJ2000)

There Are Only Two Existences

With all this in mind, let us look once again at the scripture that was quoted at the very beginning of this writing:

We are certain that we are of God, but all the world is in the power of the Evil One. And we are certain that the Son of God has come, and has given us a clear vision, so that we may see him who is true, and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He

is the true God and eternal life. My little children, keep yourselves from false gods. (1 John 5:19-21 BBE

John asserts here that there are only two existences available to man. We are either in the world, the *kosmos* system, and living a lie under the power of the Evil One or we are in the Son and of the Father living in truth and clear spiritual vision.

Why does John go on to say, "My little children, keep yourselves from false gods"? What are our false gods? In the modern world we do not make ourselves carvings and bow down before them in worship. But the most prominent false god that displaces Jesus of His place in us is just that-- *us*--the old self-nature that thinks that the Christian has a third option to do as *he* wills and do "good works" for God. Actually, the term "carnal Christian" is an oxymoron. If we are led by our carnality, we are not led by Christ nor are we abiding *in* Him. This is why John is so emphatic in his letters about the true saints of God not sinning and following false spirits and false teachers and prophets:

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but test the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, of which you have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. You are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. (1 John 4:1-4 KJ2000)

Did you get the continuity of flow in this passage? It ends in a restatement of the two realities once again, "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." By abiding in Christ, *abiding in* His very being, we are overcomers. We overcome the false gods, false spirits, false prophets, and the spirit of antichrist that is in the *kosmos* system. Remember that the meaning of *antichrist* in the Greek not only means "against Christ," but the more common manifestation, "instead of Christ." Jesus is the Head of His body. When mere men rise up and start taking headship of the *ekklesia* of God, *antichrist* is present.

To be carnally minded, worldly, believing false teachers, false prophets and false christs under false spirits has this same outcome - it displaces Jesus from being Lord in your very being. You cannot get bitter and sweet water from the same fountain. If

you turn on both your hot and cold taps on your mixer faucets you get lukewarm water and the lukewarm Jesus has promised to spit out of His mouth. One of the greatest delusions of modern Christendom is the teaching that we can have the best of both worlds at the same time, having the kingdom of God and all His benefits and the kingdom of the prince of this world, enjoying all his enticements that appeal to our flesh natures; prosperity, success, notoriety, recognition by all, etc. Remember Jesus' temptation in the wilderness.

Let's look at our passage again, "Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist." What does it mean to confess that Jesus is come in the flesh? Does it mean that if someone or some spirit does not say the words, "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh," they are antichrist? Well, demons believe this and they fear and tremble. It means much more than parroting a phrase as a proof of your spiritual status. *W.E. Vine's Dictionary of New Testament Words* says of this word:

Confess <A-1, Verb, 3670, *homologeō*> lit., "to speak the same thing" (homos, "same," lego, "to speak"), "to assent, accord, agree with..."

To *confess* not only means to speak this phrase, but to be in the same reality with Jesus Christ where we speak the same as He does, we give total assent to Him and are in one accord with He who dwells within us. Literally, Jesus Christ has come not only in *His* earthly body, but *our bodies* as well and we are in agreement with the one who dwells within us not only in word, but in our deeds. This is *confession* into salvation. We are saved by His life within.

In **I John 4**, John set forth the standard for testing whether particular spirits are of God. Everything hinges on a single confession. "By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." Even the world might reluctantly admit that Jesus Christ *has* come in the flesh but only those who are born of the Spirit can confess He *is* come in the flesh. *Confessing* is more than a mere speaking of words; it is the effect of deep inner conviction that brings our lives into perfect alignment with Him. Viewing this in the present tense changes everything.

"Jesus Christ is come in the flesh - a twofold truth confessed, that Jesus is the Christ, and that He is come (the Greek perfect tense implies not a mere past historical fact, as

the aorist would, but also the present continuance of the fact and its blessed effects" (Jamieson, Fausset and Brown).

The antichrist spirit may dare to confess that Christ *has* (past tense) come in the flesh but it will never admit, much less act upon, the fact that He *is* (present tense) *come in the flesh*. In innumerable verbal and practical ways this great *spirit of error* denies the present implications of Christ's incarnation. In every way possible he resists a viable manifestation of Jesus being alive in his body, the *ekkllesia* of God.

John went on to demonstrate what he meant by confessing that Christ is come in the flesh, "*Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*" The antichrist spirit that is in the world system works on the body of Christ like a neurological poison to paralyze the people of God and mold them into passive temple-congregants. Those possessed or under the influence of this spirit can neither discern nor accept (much less promote) that Christ is come in the flesh. To confess, "greater is he *that is in you*, than he that is in the world," would be to tear down their power base. If we really believe and confess this reality of the *abiding* Christ we can no longer clutch the reins of control as though everything is dependent on our guidance. Nor can we any longer sit passively under the controls of those who hold the reins. Neither can we build religious systems and buildings after the style of the world systems of governments. Instead we must act in a manner consistent with our beliefs (*our confession*) and trust in the overcoming One who is in all true believers to lead them into all inward truth, knowing that the church is not a building or system of control, but a living organism that responds to the will of Jesus here on earth.

Do we really believe that Jesus Christ *is* come in the flesh, so much so that when we look at our brothers and sisters, can we confess with utmost confidence confirming them in their walks and say with John,

But the anointing which you have received of him abides in you, and you need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, you shall abide in him. And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. (1 John 2:27-28 KJ2000)

The True Temple

Can we trust one another's spiritual growth and development to the Spirit who dwells in the saints of God? Christ *is* come in the flesh! He is in you! If we do not truly confess this by our words and actions we can no more see the true temple of God than the Pharisees could when they stoned Stephen to death, though his face shown like that of an angel. (See Acts 7)

Who is Jesus according to the prophets? He is Emanuel, *God with us*, not God who was once with us! Jesus was God *with* Israel only in the sense that He was the true temple of God in their midst. God was and is *in* Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. The author of Hebrews goes so far as to say that Jesus' flesh was the veil concealing the holiest place - the place of God's dwelling - from prying eyes. God was veiled in Christ. Jesus' body was the temple of God. When the Jews asked Jesus for a sign, He answered, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." They thought that he was speaking of the temple on Mariah's crest, but he was speaking of the true temple, "the temple of his body." (See John 2:19-21)

For the most part, religion is antichrist in its expression because it focuses almost exclusively on the wrong temple. The earthly temples of religion take precedence over the true temple of God, the fullness, God in Christ in you. The maintaining of holy sites, ceremonies, observances and a hierarchical priest caste keeps them centered on earthly things. Religion refuses to *confess* that just as Jesus came in the flesh or had a body for a temple, likewise Christ is clothed with a body to this day here on earth. "A body you have prepared for me." We have this treasure in earthen vessels. Christ in you is the hope of the glory of God! Greater is He who is *in* us who believe than the prince of this world. Unless we fully see Him dwelling in His body and respect Him, we are not properly discerning the body of Christ. (See 1 Corinthians 10:16-17)

Paul asked the Corinthian believers, "What? Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have of God, and you are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6:19 KJ2000) Paul asked this question in a way as if to say, do you actually not understand this foundational truth? Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? Have you forgotten that He is in you? Have you forgotten that He is in all of you? How should this affect our behavior? What should our confession be?

Have you ever noticed that almost every time the Spirit speaks or moves through a member of Christ's body in a church service, the leader of the service immediately captures the attention of the congregation back to himself and puts the "service" back on *his* planned order? This is what the antichrist spirit does. This is the nature of antichrist, *to displace Christ* of His rightful place as Head of the body. It is all about control. Satan possesses and controls, but the Spirit gently leads showing respect for each member giving them place to function in the body. (See [1 Corinthians 12:3-11, 14:26](#); [Ephesians 4:12, 16](#))

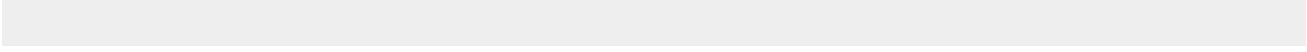
The Head of the body manifests through *all* His members, not just a select few in high prominence. In fact, He gives more abundant honor to the humble, lesser members and gives them a chance to be strengthened by use and experience. The current system that rules in the churches today does the opposite. The talented and the beautiful get the attention and the positions while the weak remain forever weak like infants in a nursery. This is job security for the leadership, yet Paul longed for *all* the saints to come into the fullness of the body of Christ. The time has come for us to go outside the gate of the temple system and become fully drawn into Jesus and suffer His reproach with Him if we are to ever grow up into the fullness of the Head. To remain under antichrist's control is death.

Should we remain pacified observers of Christian rites and observances like the church has become in these last days? God forbid! The temple of God, through the spiritual neutering of its living stones, has been torn down. Peter wrote that a day is as a thousand years in the calendar of God. We are about to enter the third day since the founding of the church at Pentecost and it is about to be raised up by Jesus once again. Hosea prophesied of these days saying,

[Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he has torn, and he will heal us; he has smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: on the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Let us know, let us press on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth. \(Hosea 6:1-3 KJ2000\)](#)

Just as Jesus' body was raised from the grave in the third day, so will the body of Christ be raised from its spiritual grave. God is causing His Spirit to blow once again upon all who confess that *Christ is come in the flesh*, that temple made of living stones

(not stones that have been fashioned with the hands of men) and life is beginning to flow from their innermost beings. "There is a river whose streams make glad the City of God."



Chapter 3: Christ's Body, "Bone of His Bone"

As Paul found out, you can not persecute a member of Christ's body without persecuting Him. Paul even said that when one member of Jesus' body suffers all the members suffer. You also can't bless a member of His body without it blessing all members and Jesus as well. It was He who said, "What you have done to the least of these, my brethren, you have done unto me." When Christ's body is in Him and He is in His body, the two become one. To persecute one is to persecute the other. This is the mystery of the Body - many members - one body - so also is the Christ.

On his way to Damascus from Jerusalem this Pharisee of Pharisees who was out to arrest and kill as many Christians as he could-- in one blinding encounter with the resurrected Christ, learned about what it meant to be *in* Christ as members of His body.

And as he [Saul or Paul] journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? And he said, Who are you, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom you persecute: it is hard for you to kick against the goads. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what will you have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told you what you must do. (Acts 9:3-6 KJ2000)

"I am Jesus whom you persecute!" Wait a minute! Jesus was dead. So was Stephen, whose execution Paul witnessed. Now he finds out that Jesus is not only alive, but that the Lord makes no distinction between Himself and His body. From heaven's perspective, the very believers in Christ whom Paul was out to kill and persecute are Christ Himself! This became a lesson well-learned by Paul, who later wrote, "For even as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body being many, are one body, thus also is the Christ." (1 Corinthians 12:12 Wuest) The Christ and His body are one. Or as the first Adam said of his bride, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." (Genesis 2:23)

Likewise, the *ekklesia*, the bride of the Last Adam, is "bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh," spirit of His Spirit--members of His very body. Paul had a lot to think and pray about during the next three years while he was hidden away with Christ in the Damascus wilderness. He learned and experienced the reality of an *exchanged life* as a viable member of our Lord's body. He later wrote, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me."

It was out of this encounter and a further time of intensive discourse with the living Christ in the Spirit over the next three years that Paul had an increasing revelation of the workings of the cross and the body of Christ. He saw this more clearly than any other apostle. None of them taught the truth of the many-membered body of Christ like Paul did. No one emphasized the importance of every member growing up fully into Christ like Paul did. The other apostles knew Jesus after the flesh--they walked with Him in the days of his flesh here upon the earth. But Paul probably knew Jesus after the Spirit better than any of them. (See Galatians 1:15-19) It was from this experience he wrote, "Therefore from now on know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet from now on know we him no more." (2 Corinthians 5:16 KJ2000)

Paul also wrote, "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." (Ephesians 5:30 KJ2000) One cannot truly know Christ after the Spirit without discerning His body, because that body is spiritual. That body *is* His earthly manifestation. He is His body and His body *is* Him.

So Jesus, the Last Adam, says of His bride, "You are bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh and spirit of my Spirit." As Paul found out, you can not persecute a member of Christ's body without persecuting Him. Paul even said that when one member of Jesus' body suffers all the members suffer. You also can't bless a member of His body without it blessing all members and Jesus as well. It was He who said, "What you have done to the least of these, my brethren, you have done unto me." When Christ's body is in Him and He is in His body, the two become one. To persecute one is to persecute the other. This is the mystery of the Body - many members - one body - so also is the Christ.

Eve was made from one of Adam's ribs, and Adam said of her, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." The bride of the Last Adam, taken out of Him, is bone of His bone and flesh of

His flesh. These two are one. When the Roman spear was thrust into Jesus' side, water and blood poured out. This is also what happens in child birth; lots of water and blood accompany the birth of the child. That day a bride was born, just as Eve was taken from the side of Adam, bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, the bride of Christ was taken from the side of Jesus.

In chapter two of his book, "Bone of His Bone," F. J. Huegel wrote:

We must bear in mind that it is the office of the Holy Spirit to graft the believer into Christ, as a gardener would graft the branch of a tree into the main body of another. "*By one Spirit are ye all baptized into one body*" (I Cor. 12:13). Paul dwells upon this grafting process in the eleventh chapter of his letter to the Romans, where he speaks of the breaking off of Israel from the Root, Christ, and the grafting in of the Gentiles, to become partakers of the Root.

True conversion in its deepest aspect is just this. If it fails to result in a veritable grafting into Christ, it is spurious, and from the nature of the case, unfruitful. Indeed, we must be born again. We must be rooted into the very Trunk of the Eternal Godhead. We do not simply strive to imitate a Divine Leader; exceeding great and precious promises have been left to us whereby we are made partakers of the Divine Nature (II Peter 1:4). The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: ... heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:16,17).

It was the Spirit who convicted us of sin, creating in us a deep antipathy for sin, and a burning desire to be free from its foul dominion. It was the same Spirit who revealed Christ to us as the only way out: our sin-bearer (John 16:7-15). It is the same Spirit who binds us to Christ, rooting our lives into His Divine Life, and causing us to grow up into Him who is the Head. Madame Penn-Lewis, in one of her books, points out that in the Greek the much-loved John 3:16 conveys a very different meaning from that of our English versions. It is not simply *he that believeth in Christ*, but rather *he that believeth into Him*, who shall have eternal life. By the co-action of the Spirit (and the Holy Spirit works so in conjunction with our spirit that we are often altogether unconscious of His working) we have believed *into* Christ. He has become our life. "But he who is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (I Cor. 6:17).

To see how this applies to the Body of Christ, let us look at the larger context of the passage in Ephesians mentioned above. Paul exhorted men to love their wives as their own bodies, and then went on to explain the deeper purpose behind this love mystery.

"He that loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Then Paul continues to delve into the greater purpose or cause behind it all. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." (Ephesians 5:28-32 KJ2000) This is indeed a great mystery! ". . . he that is joined unto [literally, *glued to*] the Lord is one spirit." (1 Corinthians 6:17 KJ2000) Ezekiel saw this New Covenant coming; a covenant not based on our old natures keeping God's laws, but one based on the Spirit of God being placed in us. He prophesied,

Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my judgments, and do them. (Ezekiel 36:25-27 KJ2000)

There can be no true *joining* into Jesus without His first putting a new heart within us. It is His indwelling Spirit that makes this joining possible. Jesus told the disciples,

For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that takes not his cross, and follows after me, is not worthy of me. He that finds his life shall lose it: and he that loses his life for my sake shall find it. (Matthew 10:35-39 KJ2000)

Being grafted into the Vine requires certain things of us as branches. Like a branch from a wild olive tree, we are grafted into the Spiritual root and severed from our natural root. (See Romans 11:13-18) This often causes a rift between us and those closest to us who are still of the wild olive tree. When a young man was called by Jesus to follow Him, he asked if He could first bury his father. To this Jesus replied, "Follow me. Let the dead bury the dead." With this engrafting also comes the grace to obey our Lord in whatever He requires from our new hearts filled with love for Him.

Who Is Our Identity?

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me... (Galatians 1:15-16 KJ2000)

Who is our identity? As we watch children, we see them dressing up as cowboys or super heroes and running around acting out the part. As adults we find our identity in sports heroes, movie stars, even political figures. Just watch grown men and how they act as they watch a football game. Not so long ago a fan even ran out on the field and tackled a player on the opposing team! Watch how parents yell and scream at their kids as they play junior football or in little league. They are trying to live out their youth again through their own kids.

My (Michael's) father lost a leg in WWII when he stepped on a land mine in France. He walked with a wooden leg and had a slight limp as a result. One day as a child I noticed that I also was walking with a limp, though there was nothing wrong with *my* leg. My aunt, his sister, later pointed out to me how I even laughed like him and smiled out of the corner of my mouth like him. He was my hero and I emulated him in almost every way. He was my identity. But as Christians who have been crucified to the world, who should our identity be?

Often Christians emulate a great teacher or a denominational leader. I, Michael, have known pastors in one denomination that even use the same gestures and voice intonations as the founder. I found out later that this is partly due to them being required to watch 5,000 hours of his video taped sermons in seminary. No wonder! But is that who we are to emulate? Jesus warned His disciples about this kind of hypocrisy. Eugene Peterson captures it well in his Bible paraphrase, *The Message*.

"The religion scholars and Pharisees are competent teachers in God's Law. You won't go wrong in following their teachings on Moses. But be careful about following them. They talk a good line, but they don't live it. They don't take it into their hearts and live it out in their behavior. It's all spit-and-polish veneer. Instead of giving you God's Law as food and drink by which you can banquet on God, they package it in bundles of rules, loading you down like pack animals. They seem to take pleasure in watching you stagger under these loads, and wouldn't think of lifting a finger to help. Their lives are perpetual fashion shows, embroidered prayer shawls one day and flowery prayers the next. They love to sit at the head table at church dinners, basking in the most

prominent positions, preening in the radiance of public flattery, receiving honorary degrees, and getting called 'Doctor' and 'Reverend.' Don't let people do that to you, put you on a pedestal like that. You all have a single Teacher, and you are all classmates. Don't set people up as experts over your life, letting them tell you what to do. Save that authority for God; let him tell you what to do. No one else should carry the title of 'Father'; you have only one Father, and he's in heaven. And don't let people maneuver you into taking charge of them. There is only one Life-Leader for you and them--Christ. Do you want to stand out? Then step down. Be a servant." (Matthew 23:2-11 MSG)

It should be evident by now that our only Teacher is to be Jesus through His Spirit, (See John 14:26 and 1 John 2:27) and we are all students in the school of His abiding Life under our One Teacher. It also should be evident that we are to emulate only One Father--the one who is Father of us all in heaven and we as His children are all brethren or siblings. "Don't ever let anyone call you `Rabbi,' for you have only one teacher, and all of you are on the same level as brothers and sisters." (Matthew 23:8 NLT)

Not only can we displace Christ of His proper place in us by taking back control, but as we give others in our lives the place that belongs to Him alone, this is antichrist. This is the real danger of calling others our "Teacher" or "Rabbi" or even "Father." We begin to emulate them and they become the one who is manifest to others through us instead of Jesus. The title *Reverend* belongs to the One who has redeemed us. "He sent redemption unto His people; He hath commanded His covenant for ever; holy and reverend is His name" (Psalms 111:9 KJ21) We have yet to meet a "man of God" who has the marks of Jesus in his body and has purchased us with his own blood. The titles "Vicar" or "Vicar of Christ" mean "Instead of Christ." How blinded by pride can we get?

Our only identity is who we are *in* Christ! We who have believed into Christ have also been crucified in Him. We have also been resurrected in Him and we now live as members of His body in heavenly places in Him as well as members one of another here on earth. Soon the word *identity* should come to our minds as we understand these things and live them out. As Christians truly born from above, His identity *is* our identity.

Christ identified with us in our fallen state and so "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." He so identified with us that He took upon Himself our sins, but not only

that, He took our sin-prone natures and nailed them to that tree. The scriptures in both Old and New Testaments point to our co-identification in Him.

In Isaiah 52 we read, "For you shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rear guard. Behold, my Servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at you; so his appearance was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." Jesus has promised to go out before us and to be our rear guard. He is not only before and behind us, but we are totally *in* Him. We don't face our trials alone because He said, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." No man can get to us except through Him. Have you been rejected, beaten, scarred and maligned in this life? How much more Him? As many as were astonished at *you*, so were they at Him. As many as marred you with their fists and attacks, so did they to Him. Because of this have any been exalted and extolled above every name that is named more than Jesus? If we abide in Him in His sufferings, we too will be exalted in Him. We have not been left here on earth to go it alone. Jesus is still acquainted with our griefs and sorrows. Notice the verb tense of this passage. "He *is* despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows."

He is *still* despised and rejected by men. They malign His holiness in movies and books; they speak lies about Him and mock Him constantly. Is it any wonder that we get the same treatment as He abides in us? He is still being despised by this world daily as He makes His abode in us. Our griefs, our rejection and our sorrows are His and His are ours. Christ is our identity and He identifies with us. But know this, if all men are speaking well of you, watch out! You are not abiding in Christ nor His cross. (See Luke 6:25)

Has life dealt you a bad hand and given you a hard row to hoe? So was the life of Christ. He was a tender root in a parched land being rejected and assaulted on every front. The king sent out a hit squad to kill Him while He was only an infant. Are you homely or disfigured or not included among the beautiful people of this world? So was Jesus. "He has no stately form nor splendor; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." Are you homeless and have been cast out of society? Jesus said, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of

man has nowhere to lay his head." (Luke 9:58 KJ2000) Again, identity! It is all in the present tense. Has your experience in today's church been painful and full of rejection? The chief priests and rulers of His people, the Jews, rejected Jesus at every turn and finally they plotted to have Him killed out of pure jealousy. (See John 11:48)

He was not only despised 2000 years ago, but still is! He is still persecuted when His body, the body of Christ, suffers vehement criticism, violence and harm by those driven on by the spirit of the red dragon who always tries to devour the manifestation of the man-child, the end-time body of Christ. Why is there such similarity in the life that we have been dealt and the one that He had to live? He identifies in every way with His body, the called out ones, the *ekklesia* of God, and our lives manifest *His* presence. Identity!

Isaiah continues, "Surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all." In Hebrews we read about Jesus total identification with us:

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our weaknesses; but was in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:14-16 KJ2000)

In the Old Testament Law, there was a solemn sacrifice in which two goats were appointed to take away the sins of Israel. This was a shadow of what Jesus would do. One goat was sacrificed and his blood sprinkled on the altar. The High Priest then laid his hands on the head of the other, transferring to him the sins of the people in type. Then the goat was led out into the wilderness to be left in a desolate place to die. He was the scapegoat. This a type of the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins.

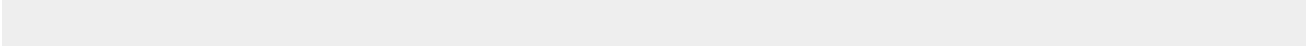
Men unwittingly do this today. They blame others for their own sins and accuse others of things they are guilty of themselves. We saw this during the Vietnam War. Those who obeyed the laws of the land were sent into combat, only to return home and be

blamed for all that went wrong in that war. Yet the elected officials voted in by the people who were casting blame were the ones giving the orders and controlling the war. Who was to blame? Who voted them in and kept them in office? Also, those who called our soldiers "baby killers" went on to practice and endorse abortion and the killing of millions of unborn children. To commit a wrong and blame others for it is about the worst form of cowardice, and the serpent who accuses the saints before God for what he tempts them to do is the prince of cowards.

"And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death." It is not only in the life of Jesus we see complete identity with and in us, but also in His death. He carried all this rejection and suffering, but men thought Him some kind of terrible sinner, because it had to be God that was smiting Him. He died the death of a criminal. They could not see that He was suffering for and with *their* sins so that all men could be free of sin once and for all, free to live as the sons of God in His holiness. He was torn so we could be healed. Yes, there is a physical healing available from God from time to time, but more than that our very souls, the center of our beings, the motivating force behind all sin, must be healed most of all. The flesh profits nothing. What is born of the flesh is still flesh, even if it is healed by God. But what is born from above is eternal and finds its counterpart in the very Spirit of God the Father. Everything else is temporal and will be done away with. Jesus said, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father has not planted, shall be rooted up."

The flesh of man, his old nature, cannot be fixed or improved on. You can take a pig into your house, bathe him, put perfume behind his ears and even put a pretty ribbon around his neck and let him eat at the table with you. But has he changed? In his heart he is still a pig, and as soon as you leave the door ajar, out he goes, back to his wallow. So is the uncrucified life in even the best of religious men. Today we see men rising to high stature in their church systems; they are even made leaders of their evangelical organizations, but what happens? Those who have not had the deep work of the cross in their lives revert to the pig within when given a chance. They are caught partaking in adulterous affairs, homosexuality, pornography, embezzlement of the faithful's money, you name it. Just type in "church fraud" or "church corruption" on a web search engine and you will find hundreds of cases where church leaders have been caught. God is not impressed with our Bible knowledge, our high positions, or even our great Christian works. What impresses Him is when He looks into us and sees His own Son.

Such identity! Someone said, "Jesus loves you the way you are, but too much to leave you that way." I, Michael, remember singing, "Just as I Am" at many an altar call. I think that many of us get the idea that since we confessed our sins and made a public show of our repentance, we get to go on *just as we are* and live life in the same selfish ways as before. We have our "fire insurance" paid for and don't have to worry any more about hell. This is not the "so great a salvation" that Paul was speaking of. Salvation is being saved not only from our sins, but being saved from ourselves, from the very man of sin that abides within, and being placed into the Son of Righteousness, the very Son of God. "And as we have borne a resemblance to the earthy one [man], let us see to it that we also bear a resemblance [image] to the heavenly One." (1 Corinthians 15:49 WNT) Just as Jesus could say to Philip, "If you have seen me you have seen the Father," so can we who are *in* Jesus say, "If you have seen me you have seen Christ." Those born from above have Him as their sole identity, not themselves or their great works.



Chapter 4: Identification in Jesus' Walk

It is all so contrary to our human natures to be *like* Jesus. The harder we try, the worse we do. We set our teeth and swear to do better the next time, all to no avail. Just when we think we are doing pretty well at being a Christian, we read Jesus' words that to just hate a person is the same as murder, to covet what another has is the same as stealing, and to just lust after a woman is the same as adultery. Failure to be a Christian (i.e., living as Jesus lived) seems inevitable. And yet, that is the point. The first and most important lesson learned in this walk is that *we cannot walk it!*

Jesus taught His disciples a higher way than just knowing His words and parroting them.

Whosoever comes to me, and hears my sayings, and does them, I will show you to whom he is like: He is like a man who built a house, and dug deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that hears, and does not, is like a man that without a foundation built a house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great. (Luke 6:47-49 KJ2000)

It takes both hearing and *doing* the sayings (the *Logos*) of Jesus if we are to withstand the tests that life throws at us. True doing comes from the working of the abiding Christ within-- a house that is built upon the Rock, not the sands of self effort and religious works. We are to love our enemies, do good to those who spitefully use us, and speak well of those who speak out against us just as Jesus commanded. How are we to do this? Are we truly thankful in all things that come our way as Paul said we should be? Do we live like we believe that *all things* work together for our good?

It is all so contrary to our human natures to be *like* Jesus. The harder we try, the worse we do. We set our teeth and swear to do better the next time, all to no avail. Just when we think we are doing pretty well at being a Christian, we read Jesus' words that to just hate a person is the same as murder, to covet what another has is the same as

stealing, and to just lust after a woman is the same as adultery. Failure to be a Christian (i.e., living as Jesus lived) seems inevitable. And yet, that is the point. The first and most important lesson learned in this walk is that *we cannot walk it!*

How will we ever become "more than overcomers" and lights in a darkened world? As we look around Christendom today, it seems that we, the salt of the earth, have lost our saltiness and have been cast out to be trodden under the feet of men. This has been called the post-Christian era as we watch the rise of radical Islam on all fronts and the decline of a moral church leadership. So what is missing, and where has our mission in the earth failed?

In Romans chapter 7, Paul seems beyond despair. He says that the things that he would do as a follower of Christ, he finds no strength to do them and the things that he would not do, he finds himself easily doing these. He finally concludes that in himself, that is, in his flesh dwells no good thing. He agrees with Jesus that, "none are good, only the Father in heaven is good." So did he throw-up his hands in defeat? No, he kept going until he found the answer. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 7:24-25a KJ2000)

In the closing verse of Romans 7, Paul mentions two laws that had held him in a constant state of condemnation and defeat--the law of God and the law of sin. The law of sin is served with *the flesh*. The law of God is served with *the mind*. Both are weak and unable to walk as God demands. Paul, however, is about to introduce another law, a higher law that is served by another faculty in man. Man is comprised of body (flesh) soul (mind, will and emotion) and spirit. Paul is preparing to introduce the reader to a higher law—the law of the Spirit of life. It is not enough to serve God with the mind. That leads to the divided state or condemnation described by Paul as having the desire for good with no ability to carry it out. The good news of the New Covenant is Christ *in* you! Christ living! Christ obeying! Christ loving! The law of the Spirit of life *in* Christ Jesus is the liberating law. It frees us from the law of sin and death, opening the way to true worship, *in Spirit and in truth*. Paul found *that* exchanged life. He continues:

There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. (Romans 8:1-2 KJ2000)

Again we see this phrase, "in Christ Jesus." The life of the Spirit is found *in* Christ Jesus. How important is this two letter word! *In* Christ Jesus is our victory. We believe *into* Him and there we abide. Paul wrote, "Faith comes by hearing and hearing comes by the word of God." He also wrote that even the *faith* that we have is *of* Jesus Christ-- it is His faith. It stands to reason that our understanding of spiritual things is from Jesus the Word of God as well. To the Corinthians Paul wrote, "All things are yours and you are Christ's and Christ is God's." We will always fail in and of ourselves, but if we are hidden in Christ as He is in the Father, we can't fail.

The secret of a fruitful Christian life is a twofold abiding. Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches: He that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing." (John 15:5 KJ2000) This speaks of the complete inundation of Christ's sanctifying presence in our spirits souls and bodies. The hope of fruitfulness is our life *in* Him and He in us. The hope of glory is Him *in* us. We fall short of His glory when Christ in us is not our hope of glory. We fail because we trust in our own strength and righteousness. Paul wrote, "And he [Jesus] said unto me, My grace is sufficient for you: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather boast in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." (2 Corinthians 12:9-10 KJ2000)

In Romans 8 we read about a great victory and a greater salvation.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:28-31 KJ2000)

For those who are hidden in Christ, neither Satan nor their flesh gets the last word. In Romans 7 we read about defeat, but in Romans 8 we read about a great victory. What is the difference? In Romans 7, the personal pronouns of *I*, *me* and *my* are used forty-seven times. In Romans 8, they are only found three times and these are not pointing

to Paul, but to Christ. Jesus Christ and the Spirit are mentioned over twenty times in Romans 8 and only twice in Romans 7. Paul is demonstrating to us the utter hopelessness of trying to obey God and the commands of Jesus in and of ourselves, but the total triumph we have by abandoning the flesh and walking after the Spirit. If you want to see if a person is truly a triumphant Christian, just count the number of times they use personal pronouns in their speech and letters and then compare it to how often they speak of Christ and the Spirit. "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks." If a person is full of themselves, it will show. Love is the utter absence of personal ambition. It selflessly desires what is best for others. "Greater love has no man than he lay down his life for his friends." This is the love of Jesus who died on the cross and who continues to live in us.

Yes, Jesus takes away our sins. John wrote, "[And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.](#)" (1 John 2:2 KJ2000) But unlike modern preachers who mention only this part of our salvation, keeping us forever weak against the wiles of the devil, John does not stop there. He continues, "[And by this we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that says, I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: by this we know that we are in him. He that says he abides in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.](#)" (1 John 2:3-6 KJ2000)

You might read this and conclude that it is our duty to imitate Christ by always asking ourselves in each situation, "What would Jesus do?" But are we to be mere imitations of the real thing, like some kind of cheap knock-off? Are we to be content with being a plastic Jesus mounted on the dashboard of Christianity? So many Christians today are like a toy made in China that was advertised before last Christmas. It was a Jesus doll that can be activated and it speaks Jesus' words out of the gospels. It came complete with a little New Testament, all for \$300. What a deal! But is that how the world sees Christians? I am afraid it is. Just pull their strings and out comes a Bible verse.

"And by this we know that we know Him..." Does keeping His commandments mean that we scour the New Testament and make a new list of commandments to take the place of those in the Old? How do we keep His word? Later in this same chapter John wrote, "I have written unto you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one." Jesus is the Word of God.

John makes this very clear in the first chapter of His gospel. It is the abiding Christ that keeps His commandments in us. It is the life of Jesus as our life that gives us the power to do what is right by filling us with Himself and His love. Against love there is no law. (See Galatians 5:22-25)

In First John we read the phrase, "He that says he abides in Him ought to walk even as He walked." The translators arbitrarily put the last word in the past tense. It should read, "even as He *walks*." Jesus still *walks*! He still conducts His life in us! To the woman that was caught in adultery and about to be stoned to death whom Jesus rescued, He said, "'Woman, where are those your accusers? Has no man condemned you?' She said, 'No man, Lord.' And Jesus said unto her, 'Neither do I condemn you: go, and sin no more.' Then spoke Jesus again unto them, saying, 'I am the light of the world: he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.'" (John 8:10-12 KJ2000) Later to the Jews Jesus said, "While you have light, believe in [into] the light, that you may be the children of light." (John 12:36 KJ2000) This word *walk* in the previous verse is the same Greek word as the one in 1 John 2:6. Jesus did not put this sin-prone woman under a new law. "Go and sin no more" was a pronouncement of grace. What He said to that woman that day was, "Go and sin no more for you have me and need no longer to walk in darkness, because I am the Light of the world and your Light of life!" We will have the correct walk with our Father if we believe *into* the light of Jesus Christ.

All too often the translators and church doctrines make it seem like we have a relationship with the Christ who died and never rose again! Thus we read, "He that says he abides in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he *walked*." We are to walk even as He *walks* within us. We are *not* left alone to follow His example in our own strength. Satan would love nothing more than to have Christians cut-off from the ever present life of Christ, trying to be righteous without Him. When Jesus was about to be crucified He told the disciples, "I will never leave you nor forsake you [leave you behind]."

Chapter 5: Christ Crucified - the Logic of God

Nothing so vividly captures this principle of the exchanged life as the cross. The cross was an instrument of death and shame. It was despised by the Jews, in whose law it was written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree." ...In spite of the pain, suffering and open shame of Jesus on the cross, this act remains at the center of all God's dealings with men.

In the beginning [before all time] was the Word (Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God Himself. He was present originally with God. All things were made and came into existence through Him; and without Him was not even one thing made that has come into being. In Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men. (John 1:1-4 AMP)

For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. (1 Corinthians 1:22-24 KJ2000)

As in nature, the way to life in the kingdom of God is through death. Jesus said, "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone." We see a vivid picture of this when Israel crossed the Jordan River to enter the land of promise. Joshua put twelve stones (one for each tribe) in the middle of the river in a figure of baptism into death. Then they took twelve more stones from the bottom of the river bed and placed them on the bank of the river in the Promised Land as a sign of resurrection life, free of their old lives of unbelief in the wilderness. Then the waters closed over the first stones as a sign that they were to leave their stony hearts and the reproach of Egypt behind them to enter a new life. (See Romans 6:3-11 and Joshua 4:9)

In Hosea 6:2 we also see this principle of death overcome by life just as Jesus overcame His own death and rose again on the third day. "After two days will he revive us. On the third day he will raise us up, and we will live before him." Yet, this promise is to *us* and not Jesus alone! We died in Christ, but we also rose again in Him. After two days, our Father revived us when He revived Jesus. Now we have been raised up

and sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We live before our Father in heaven! Can we grasp that? Just before He went to the cross Jesus told the disciples,

Yet a little while, and the world sees me no more; but you see me: because I live, you shall live also. At that day you shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. (John 14:19-20 KJ2000)

The prophecy of Hosea was fulfilled almost 2000 years ago. We who are Christ's live in Him and He in us. He has risen from death in us and we together with Him are in our Father. (Note: In a sense this prophecy will be fulfilled again in the *ekklesia* of God rising again from its religiously imposed death when it turns to following the voice of God once again, "After two days I will revive you and *in the third day I will raise you up and you shall dwell in my sight.*" Many prophecies about Jesus also apply to those who live in Christ as His bride.)

Nothing so vividly captures this principle of the exchanged life as *the cross*. The cross was an instrument of death and shame. It was despised by the Jews, in whose law it was written, "*Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree . . .*" Even the Romans who loved the brutality of the coliseum abhorred the gore of the cross. The Roman statesman, Marcus Cicero, wrote, "Let the very name of the cross be far away not only from the body of a Roman citizen, but even from his thoughts, his eyes, his ears." It was forbidden for Romans to be crucified because it was considered the death of a slave--a description that certainly fits the servant-hood of Jesus Christ. His whole life was in service to His Master, the Father, and finally to and for all who would be saved by faith into Him.

In spite of the pain, suffering and open shame of Jesus on the cross, this act remains at the center of all God's dealings with men. The *Word* of the cross was central to the redemptive purposes of God. So much so that Paul wrote, "*For the word (logos) of the cross is foolishness to those who are dying, but to us who are saved it is the power of God.*" (1 Corinthians 1:18) The King James Version reads, "*For the preaching (logos) of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*" This is somewhat misleading, because the Greek word *logos* is much broader in scope and meaning than the word *preaching* conveys. When you hear the word *preaching*, what comes to mind? Do you envision a man standing behind a pulpit expounding on a Bible text? Although the Greek word *logos* means "a word," the

emphasis is not upon the utterance itself, but upon the *inward thought, reckoning or reason* behind the utterance. The *logos of the cross* is the *logic or reason* of the cross. But more, *logos* is the Divine thought, the heavenly principle of life, power, witness and growth in the kingdom of God. When our Father said to Jesus before the dawn of man, "Let us make man in our image and in our likeness," He had all this in mind. Jesus, the Word, is God's answer to man's defects and man's imperfection. This is the power in Paul's words, "I am determined to know nothing, except Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

The prologue of John's gospel reads, "In the beginning there was the Word (*logos*). The Word (*logos* - not preaching) was with God, and the Word (*logos*) was God. He [the Word] was with God in the beginning. All things were made by him, and nothing was made without him. In him there was life, and that life was the light of all people. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overpowered it." (John 1:1-5 NCV) Jesus was in the beginning with the Father. Jesus is the very Word of God that comes forth from His mouth with power. Everything was made by Christ as God spoke it into existence. Jesus is the Life of God spoken into creation. Jesus is that Light that God made to shine into the darkness that resulted from satanic chaos and rebellion from where the Genesis accounts starts, "darkness (Heb. *choshec* –chaos, destruction, wickedness) was upon the face of the deep." Jesus is the power of God unto the salvation of the world. He is still overpowering the darkness and wickedness in the hearts of fallen man as the *Logos* of God speaks into their hearts.

The translation of the New American Standard Version of our verse in First Corinthians comes the closest. "For the *word* of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." The author of Hebrews wrote, "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world." (Hebrews 1:1-2, RSV) The prophets spoke *about* the Word, but Jesus came *as* that Word, the very Oracle of the Father. Jesus is the *Logos*, the Word, Father's Divine thought. He is the Word of God who is alive and powerful, able to separate soul from spirit, bone from marrow, discerning the thoughts and intentions of men. He is God's final and ultimate word from the beginning of creation unto the end, the Alpha and the Omega! Jesus is the sum total of divine wisdom.

Chapter 6: Identification in the Cross of Christ

So how does this happen? How do we get out of ourselves, that old Adamic nature, and *into* the very nature of the Son of God? God's surgical tool for this is the cross.

Suffering and the glory of God go hand in hand. Peter wrote, "[Since therefore Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.](#)" (1 Peter 4:1-2 KJ2000)

Paul wrote, "[For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in \[into\] us.](#)" (Romans 8:18 KJ2000)

Regarding the mystery of the cross and suffering Madame Guyon wrote in a letter to another believer:

I cannot but wonder at the virtue that lies in suffering; we are worth nothing without the cross. I tremble and am in an agony while it lasts, and all my conviction of its salutary effects vanish under the torture, but when it is over, I look back at it with admiration, and am ashamed that I bore it so ill. This experience of my folly is a deep lesson of wisdom to me. Whatever may be the state of your sick friend, and whatever the issue of her disease, she is blessed in being so quiet under the hand of God. If she die, she dies to the Lord; if she live, she lives to Him. *Either the cross or death*, says St. Theresa. Nothing is beyond the necessity of the cross but the established kingdom of God; when we bear it in love, it is his kingdom begun, with which we must remain satisfied while it is his pleasure. You have need of the cross as well as I. The faithful Giver of every good gift distributes them to each of us with his own hand, blessed be his name! Ah! how good it is to be chastened for our profit!

We should point out here that asceticism is neither the self-denial nor the suffering that Jesus set forth as a condition for following Him. ([Matthew 16:24](#)) True self-denial denies both self-righteousness and self-torment. We have all seen pictures of faithful Shiite Muslims marching down the street in unison while they flog their own backs with chains in a public display as penance for their sins, but this act of asceticism has no power to remove sin. It has no more power to prevent its return than pulling up on your own boot straps. A public display of our piety only serves to feed the flesh and make it stronger with religious pride.

Self-righteousness must be crucified before we can be found in Christ. As long as we labor to be righteous by our own energies, we cannot know the righteousness that is of God. Paul wrote,

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but rubbish, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. (Philippians 3:7-11 KJ2000)

The things mentioned here by Paul that he had come to count as rubbish, were not gross sins of the flesh. He was not referring to smoking, chewing or going with the girls that do. So what were these things? The answer is in the previous three verses, [Philippians 3:4-6](#). Here we see that confidence in the flesh is extremely religious in nature. "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinks that he has reasons he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." Paul's confidence in the flesh and those things that once distinguished him above his fellows as righteous and blameless are the very things he came to despise as worthless. All those things that were gain to him are now viewed as hindrances to be discarded for a greater prize. Religious prowess and exercise only builds up pride and separates us from God, for He resists the proud and gives grace to the humble.

". . . that I may win Christ . . . be found in him . . . That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings . . . If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

We cannot stand in our own righteousness and be found in Him. These are mutually exclusive. The things that are gain to us must be counted loss for Christ. If we are to win Christ, be found in Him, and know Him, we cannot have our own righteousness, which is of the law. Only through the righteousness that is of God by faith—the

righteousness that is through the faith/faithfulness of Christ—can we stand. Only then can we know the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, the sufferings that come upon us as we fellowship in Him. Jesus told His disciples, "If the world hates you, you know that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." (John 15:18-19 KJ2000)

How are we delivered from self-righteousness to a living faith in the faith and faithfulness of Christ? How do we move from a law-based righteousness to a Christ-based righteousness? We find the answer in Romans chapter seven. Paul begins:

For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he lives; but if the husband dies, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she is married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband dies, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she is married to another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that you should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the passions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, being dead to that in which we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. (Romans 7:2-6 KJ2000)

Chapters 6 through 8 of Romans tell of our death, burial and resurrection with Christ. In Romans 6:7 we discover that only he who has died is free from sin. In chapter 7 Paul continues to explain the extent of this death as it applies to the law. To be free from the old husband (the law) and the righteousness which is of the law, someone has to die. The death that is required is our own as we identify in Christ's death. In chapter 8, with strong praise to God, Paul describes that resurrection life that is known only to men rescued from death into the resurrected life of Jesus.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that

the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:1-4 RSV)

Death to the old man in us is the answer. In 2 Corinthians we read Paul saying, "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in [into] us, so our consolation also abounds by Christ." (2 Corinthians 1:5 KJ2000) Later he wrote, " For we who live are always delivered unto [into] death for Jesus' sake that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." (2 Corinthians 4:11 KJ2000) We are delivered into Jesus' death so that Christ's life may become our life. Paul again wrote about this death saying, "Yes, we ourselves have had the answer of death in ourselves, so that our hope might not be in ourselves, but in God who is able to give life to the dead." (2 Corinthians 1:9 BBE) Death is the *answer* to life filled with sin and falling short of the glory of God. Paul could unselfishly say without remorse,

We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death works in us, but life in you. (2 Corinthians 4:8-12 KJ2000)

The ever present cross of Christ and suffering are the antidote to the flesh and bring about the release of the Spirit of God within us and life in others. Peter understood this when he wrote, "Since therefore Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." (1 Peter 4:1-2 KJ2000)

The cross is God's pruning instrument. It pares away everything in us that does not produce fruit unto Him. Jesus put it this way, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser. Every branch in me that bears not fruit he takes away: and every branch that bears fruit, he prunes it, that it may bring forth more fruit." (John 15:1-2 KJ2000) Our Father prunes us with sufferings sent into our lives from His loving hands so we can bring forth eternal fruit unto His glory.

In our culture we do all we can to avoid discomfort and we do our best to run from suffering. Many religious people blame all suffering on the devil. We have a pain and

we run to the medicine cabinet or the doctor. We avoid confrontation and discomfort at all cost. There is a pill for every ailment, most treating the symptoms without curing the disease. We buy insurance policies to hedge us in against anything that can strip us of our wealth. We seek comfort at all cost, yet this was not the way of the early church. They were witnesses of Christ's life in them regardless of the cost and counted it all joy to suffer for Him. (see Acts 5:41) James wrote:

Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don't try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way. If you don't know what you're doing, pray to the Father. He loves to help. You'll get his help, and won't be condescended to when you ask for it. (James 1:2-5 MSG)

Trials are the work of the cross in our lives. They deal death to our old natures and should be embraced because of it. Is your husband or wife hard to live with and doesn't seem to appreciate you the way they should? Then throw yourself on the mercy of God and seek His wisdom on how you should handle it. Is your boss an ogre that never seems to appreciate your work, no matter how hard you try? Then cheer up, your self and ego are being crucified and you are being taught not to find your worth in what you do, but rather in who Christ is within you. Are you handicapped and bed ridden? Know that when you are weak, Christ is being made strong within you as you offer your sufferings up to Him as a living sacrifice.

Regarding suffering and pain C. S. Lewis wrote,

"We were promised sufferings. They were part of the program. We were even told, 'Blessed are they that mourn.'"

"God, who foresaw your tribulation, has specially armed you to go through it, not without pain but without stain."

"But pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

Even Paul the apostle was warned by Jesus that following Christ would involve suffering. Jesus said of Paul, "[For I will show him what great things he must suffer for my name's sake.](#)" It seems that this hard-headed Pharisee needed God's megaphone

to rouse him out of his self-righteous deafness. Many of us are just as deaf to the wishes of God in our lives and need suffering to wake us up.

The great missionary who died a martyr in Tibet, Sadhu Sundar Singh, wrote,

"A newborn child has to cry, for only in this way will his lungs expand. A doctor once told me of a child who could not breathe when it was born. In order to make it breathe the doctor gave it a slight blow. The mother must have thought the doctor cruel. But he was really doing the kindest thing possible. As with newborn children the lungs are contracted, so are our spiritual lungs. But through suffering God strikes us in love. Then our lungs expand and we can breathe and pray."

In the letter to the Hebrews the writer tells us that suffering has a divine purpose and is a sign of a healthy relationship with our loving Father.

Looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such hostility of sinners against himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds. You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks unto you as unto children, My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loves he chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives. If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chastens not? But if you be without chastisement, of which all are partakers, then are you illegitimate children, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them who are trained by it. (Hebrews 12:2-11 KJ2000)

When we are chastened by the Lord and suffer in this life it is because we are His sons. Even in this, Jesus is the pattern Son. In Hebrews we read, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." (Hebrews 5:8-9 KJ2000) What makes us think that we are above our Christ and can

avoid persecution and suffering? What makes us think that we will learn how to be obedient sons of God any other way?

Jesus told His disciples what they could expect.

And you shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endures to the end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee into another: for verily I say unto you, You shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man comes. The disciple is not above his teacher, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his teacher, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household? (Matthew 10:22-25 KJ2000)

It is enough that we who are His disciples and servants be *as* our Teacher and Lord. This is the high calling of the sons of God. "Behold what manner of love the Father has given unto us, that we should be called the sons of God."

Suffering in this life is inevitable. It can't be avoided. We can hedge our bets and surround ourselves in opulence, but even then suffering breaks through. It is the mercy of God that it does. What is important, though, is how we react to these events for how we react determines whether they will have attached to them a far greater weight of eternal glory. Our verse in Hebrews twelve is worth repeating, "*All chastening seems for the present to be not joyous but grievous; yet afterward it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been exercised thereby.*" (Hebrews 12:11 WEB) Oswald Chambers said, "We all know people who have been made much meaner and more irritable and more intolerable to live with by suffering: it is not right to say that all suffering perfects. It only perfects one type of person... the one who accepts the call of God in Christ Jesus."

Chip Brogden wrote:

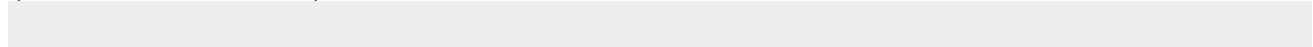
It is not a question of God allowing or not allowing things to happen. It is part of living. Some things we do to ourselves, other things we do to each other. Our Father knows about every bird which falls to the ground, but He does not always prevent it from falling. What are we to learn from this? That our response to what happens is more important than what happens. Here is a mystery: one man's experience drives him to

curse God, while another man's identical experience drives him to bless God. Your response to what happens is more important than what happens.

As Joy, the wife of C. S. Lewis, was facing death due to terminal bone cancer, Lewis was angry with God because of her suffering and the fact that he would be losing her. He had been able to write about suffering with that English stiff upper lip, but when it hit him square on in the suffering and loss of his wife, that was another matter. They had many a joyful time together before she had a relapse and became totally bed ridden. To his anger she said, "The pain then is part of the happiness now. That is the deal."

Suffering in our lives has a greater purpose than just being an interruption of our temporal happiness. To the Romans Paul wrote:

Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom we also have our access by faith into this grace in which we stand. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only this, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering works perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope: and hope doesn't disappoint us, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (Romans 5:1-5 WEB).



Chapter 7: The Cross of Christ, Our Cross

When God caused His only Son to be born of a woman into this world, He broke the barrier between God and man, between the holiness and purity of the Father and the fallen weakness of sin controlled humanity. The Son of God became the Son of Man. Through His life, death and resurrection Jesus led the way and "took [our] captivity captive and gave gifts unto men." As a result of having our captivity to sin and Satan broken, we have received the greatest gift of all, the freedom we have been given by the Father placing us *into* His Son, Jesus Christ. Anything short of this is to remain in our bondage and sin as "only human." There is only one cure for this kind of double minded and unstable Christian that says he believes in Jesus, yet lives in the pleasures of this world system, and that is the personal cross. Jesus stipulated that taking up one's cross is a requirement for following Him. (Mark 8:34, 10:31)

How often do we hear the phrase in our churches, "Jesus paid the price for your sins so you don't have to." In a sense this is true, but is that all that our salvation means to us—a free ride into la-la land where we live happily ever after? There is much more to salvation than this. Are we to continue living in lives filled with self will, isolated from the fullness of the abiding presence of the life of God?

So what work does the cross of Christ do in us as members of His body? It severs us from the world and all its carnality through death. Paul wrote, "But God forbid that I should glory, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Galatians 6:14 KJ2000) So are we left in death as the body of Jesus was left to rot in that tomb? No, life in Christ overcomes death just as it did in Him. He told the disciples, "This is why the Father loves me: because I freely lay down my life. And so I am free to take it up again. No one takes it from me. I lay it down of my own free will. I have the right to lay it down; I also have the right to take it up again. I received this authority personally from my Father." (John 10:17-18 MSG) As we lay down our lives, we also are raised again in newness of life. He lay down His life and even in that state of death, He took it up again. Death had no power over Him. So it is in us as we lay down our lives in the world and take up our lives in Christ. With Paul we too can say, "For me to live is Christ."

Jesus went on to say, "And he that takes not his cross, and follows after me, is not worthy of me. He that finds his life shall lose it: and he that loses his life for my sake shall find it." (Matthew 10:38-39 KJ2000) The work of the cross within us is designed to weaken our natural man until we are totally given over to the life of Jesus in us. Jesus said, "The flesh profits nothing." Paul said, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwells no good thing...." (Romans 7:18 KJ2000) Apart from Christ we can do nothing of eternal value. We should rejoice in the cross we have to bear for the joy that is set before us. (See Hebrews 12:2)

Many of today's Christians, like defiant spoiled children, would rather avoid the chastening hand of their Father and so they avoid this passage of scripture, too. I, Michael, once knew a brother who had a son named Danny. Danny was acting up and being disobedient one day and Dave said, "Danny go get my spoon" (for he was going to paddle the boy). Danny got the spoon and hugging it said, "It is *my* spoon, too." This is the attitude in a son that warms the heart of a loving father.

How often have we heard the saying, "It is a great life if you don't weaken"? Paul saw his weakness as a God thing and something given him by Jesus,

And he [Jesus] said unto me, "My grace is sufficient for you: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Most gladly therefore will I rather boast in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Corinthians 12:9-10 KJ2000).

But God forbid that I should glory, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. (Galatians 6:14 KJ2000)

God opposes the proud. He puts those who are His through many trials to get them where they no longer put faith in their own strength and abilities so He can give grace to them in their humility. We are made into His perfection in our weakness. We also become instruments of grace to others in our trials. Paul wrote of his own walk saying,

Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death works in us, but life in you. (2 Corinthians 4:10-12 KJ2000)

Is our momentary comfort so important that we are willing to sacrifice our eternity for it? Jesus said, "He that loves his life shall lose it; and he that hates his life in this world shall keep it *unto* [into] life eternal" (John 12:25 KJ2000)

Straighten Up and Die Right!

In Hebrews we read, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto [into] salvation." (Hebrews 9:27-28 KJ2000) As it is in Him, so it is in those of His body who are *in* Him. Our first death has already taken place in Jesus on the cross. There is no second death for those who are in Christ. "He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches; He that overcomes shall not be hurt of the second death." (Revelation 2:11 KJ2000)

Our judgment is already in the works. We are being set in order, which is what *judgment* means. Jesus not only bore our sins on the cross, He bore us. In Him we first descended and then ascended, leaving all our load of sin behind. He bore us not only on the cross, but bore us *into* everlasting life in Him. "Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." (Revelation 20:6 KJ2000)

The real shocker is that as the cross of Christ goes ever deeper, it not only separates us from our families who are outside of Him, but it eventually separates us from religious sects and denominations we once belonged to. This is what Paul was alluding to when he wrote, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision [the religion of the Jews] avails anything, nor uncircumcision [the religions of the Gentiles], but a new creation." (Galatians 6:15) We are cut-off from everything that is carnal and of the flesh; from all the divisions of Christendom that have been built by and are under the control of man as we are made into His new creation in the Spirit.

Does this mean that we can't have Christian fellowship? Not at all, but what is true fellowship? John wrote in His first letter to the saints,

If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with

another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:6-7 KJ2000)

It is all about walking with Him, the Light that lights every man who receives Him. (See John 1:9-12) True fellowship is reserved for those who walk in His light together as He is in the light, not those who belong to the same religious club.

First death must come to our old man of sin, then resurrection life in Christ. In this alone can we walk in the One who is the Light of men. In Paul's letter to the Romans we read,

Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that just as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that we should no longer serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we are dead with Christ, we believe that we *shall also* live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he lives, he lives unto God. Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:3-11 KJ2000) [Emphasis added]

The translation above does not do verse eight any justice, nor do most other translations. The Greek does not put our lives, after sharing His death, into the future (although this is true), but rather the present. The verse should read, "Now if we are dead with Christ, we believe that we also live -- co-survive – with Him." Vincent's word studies says:

Shall live with (συνζήσομεν)

Participation of the believer's sanctified life with the life of Christ rather than participation in future glory, which is not the point emphasized. Compare Romans 6:11.

Verses 10 and 11 get it right. "For in that he [Jesus] died, he died unto sin once: but in that he lives, he lives unto God. Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through [in] Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:10-

11 KJ2000) All too often, the teachings of Christendom relegate the most important things that apply to our lives in Christ either into the future or to the past. We should *now* be walking "alive unto God *in* Jesus Christ our Lord" as the original text describes.

In Romans 6, we see that the baptism of one who has believed *into* Christ is no mere sacrament where our outer self gets soaked and prayed over by some holy man. It is to be an outward sign to the world that we are baptized *into* Christ's death and cut off from the world, but not that alone. We are raised up out of our watery graves just as Jesus was raised up into the glory of the Father that we might walk here on earth in His life. "Now if we are dead with Christ, we believe that we also *live* with him."

This is the message of the cross which Paul preached -- co-crucifixion to sin and co-resurrection into the life of Christ from where we can boldly say, "[He] has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Ephesians 2:6 KJ2000) "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20 KJ2000) Yes, our lives are now hidden in Christ's faith and in His life. (See Colossians 3:3)

This is the true gospel of Jesus Christ. This is what Paul meant when he said, "I determined not to know anything among you, except Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (1 Corinthians 2:2 KJ2000) To know the crucified Christ in co-crucifixion is also to know a co-survival in His life. When we stray from this simplicity and start teaching about other things, it gives place for the flesh and our carnal minds to get into arguments and divisions. There is no place for endless theological debates and *receiving one another in doubtful disputes* when the members of Christ's body are dead to the flesh and the lusts thereof. They have found the sufficiency of Christ both in His death and resurrected life of the Spirit. They walk in the light as He is in the light.

And such confidence are we having through the Christ towards God. Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to evaluate anything, this evaluation originating from ourselves, but our sufficiency has its source in God who also made us sufficient as those who minister a testament, new in quality, not of the letter but of the Spirit, for the letter kills, but the Spirit makes alive. (2 Corinthians 3:4-6 Wuest)

Chapter 8: Identification into His Glory

The ministry of Christ, the Logos of God, is to take us up into the Glory of God, living glorious lives in the glorious riches of the living Christ within. We have been given the life of the Son and that same relationship that He has with the Father. It is all ours. This is the glory of the Son as we share in Him the glory of God.

Paul wrote to the Colossians:

I became its [the Church's] servant according to God's commission that was given to me for you, so that I might fulfill the ministry of the word [Logos] of God. This secret was hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints, to whom God wanted to make known the glorious riches of this secret among the gentiles-which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:25-27 ISV)

The ministry of Christ, the *Logos* of God, is to take us up into the Glory of God, living glorious lives in the glorious riches of the living Christ within. We have been given the life of the Son and that same relationship that He has with the Father. It is all ours. This is the glory of the Son as we share in Him the glory of God. Paul wrote to the church at Thessalonica,

But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God has from the beginning chosen you to [into] salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: To which he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of [into] the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 KJ2000)

When Jesus was praying before He was crucified, He prayed, "Father, glorify your name." To this our Father answered, "I have glorified it and will glorify it again." Then we read:

The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spoke to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world

be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. (John 12:29-32 KJ2000)

The voice came for our sake! Father glorified His name first in Jesus, His obedient Son and He has been and is glorifying it again in the *ekklesia*, the saints of God as they yield up their lives to Him. The world has and is being judged (set right or made just). How? By the power of God casting down the accuser of the brethren and making way for Christ to abide in us as sons of God. When Jesus was lifted up on that cross, the grip of Satan on mankind was broken, and a way was made for the glory of God in His sons, the very life of Jesus Christ. *This* is the glory of God.

In John 17 we read Jesus' heart's cry as He was about to be crucified. It was all about the glory of the Father.

These things Jesus spoke; and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son, that the son may glorify you: even as you gave him authority over all flesh, that to all whom you have given him, he should give eternal life. And this is eternal life, that they should know you the only true God, and him whom you sent, [even] Jesus Christ. I glorified you on the earth, having accomplished the work which you have given me to do. And now, Father, glorify me with your own self with the glory which I had with you before the world was. I manifested your name to the men whom you gave me out of the world: they were yours, and you gave them to me; and they have kept your word. Now they know that all things that you have given me are from you: for the words which you gave me I have given to them; and they received [them], and knew of a truth that I came forth from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them: I don't pray for the world, but for those whom you have given me; for they are yours: and all things that are mine are yours, and yours are mine: and I am glorified in them. And I am no more in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we [are]. (John 17:1-11 UPDV)

Notice that He did not pray for universal salvation of all mankind. He did not pray for the world, but rather for those the Father had given Him. He prayed that the glory of our Father and His salvation would rest in those the Father had given Jesus, those that had kept His word. These are the ones who received Jesus from the Father as the Son of God. "Keep them in your name." What name? The name that Jesus always used

when he prayed, *Father*. We are to know our Father just as Jesus knows Him so we can be one in Him just as Jesus is one in Him. True sons of the Father have an intimate relationship with Him, just as Jesus has.

"Father, glorify me with your own self..." This is Christ's inheritance as God's obedient Son and it is our inheritance as His obedient sons who abide in Him—the very glory of God as the God of glory abides in us. Is it any wonder that the face of Stephen shone like the face of an angel when He prayed to our Father as the Jews were about to kill him? Stephen had just quoted Isaiah saying, "Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will you build me? says the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Has not my hand made all these things?" (Acts 7:49-50 KJ2000) As Stephen was about to die, we read,

But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. (Acts 7:55-56 KJ2000)

These self-righteous Jews who did not know God as their Father could take it no longer. They were driven by their father the devil (see John 8:44) to kill this son of glory who was filled with Christ's Spirit. They were blind with rage, but Stephen saw the glory and experienced the glory upon himself.

He also saw Jesus, the Son of Man, *standing* at the right hand of the Father. It is interesting that Christ is always seen as seated at the right hand of the Father in other passages, but in this instance Jesus stands. Why? He was standing in recognition of this saint that was filled with the glory of His Father and loved not his life unto death. Stephen stood and did all to stand because he was standing in Christ Jesus. Paul wrote, "Therefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Ephesians 6:13 KJ2000) Stephen stood in Christ in that day while surrounded by evil men.

How do we put on the whole armor of God? Do we, as many teach us to, pray for each component, the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith, and so on as if they are separate commodities you can buy from the armory of the Spirit? No! It is God's armor. He is wearing it. Paul said, "For as many of you as have been baptized *into Christ have put on Christ*" (Galatians 3:27 KJ2000) You cannot be immersed fully in the waters of

baptism without "putting on" water. Here the Greek word *eis* was translated correctly, *into*. We have been baptized *into* Christ and thus have *put on* Christ. You cannot put on God's armor without putting on Jesus Christ, and you cannot put on Jesus Christ without putting on His armor. We must believe *into* the Son of God as Stephen did if we are to stand against that evil day that is coming upon us all. In Hebrews we read,

See that you refuse not him that speaks. For if they escaped not who refused him that spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape, if we turn away from him that speaks from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he has promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven [the heavens]. And this word, Yet once more, signifies the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire. (Hebrews 12:25-29 KJ2000)

Only as much as we abide in Christ do we dwell in His kingdom. Where the King is found is also where His kingdom exists. Satan threw every temptation, every false accusation, and every rejection from his own people at Jesus, trying to shake Him and move Him off-course from His heavenly goal, but He could not be shaken, even in death. The kingdom of heaven dwells in our midst, (Luke 17:21) and only as we are enveloped into Christ and His kingdom will we also remain unshakeable.

We are about to see all the kingdoms of men, their markets, and their man-made churches come crashing down. Their inflated currencies are about to collapse. Where will the faith of these shallow Christians be when the worldly prosperity they have placed their faith in crumbles? The kingdoms of this world will be shaken to their core. Only Christ's kingdom and its King will remain unshakeable. We must be hid in Christ if we are to stand in this coming evil day.

If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with him in glory. (Colossians 3:1-4 KJ2000).

Chapter 9: Into All Truth

People by nature like to study truth and like others to think of them as possessors of the truth, but avoid truth's changing power in themselves, because that requires a substantial change of Who is in control of their lives.

For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. (John 1:17 KJ2000)

In the eternal reality of God, Truth is not only what is factual, but much more. Truth is verity. The Encarta Dictionary defines *verity* as "the quality of being true or real." This is not how we in the western culture use the word. We tend to equate truth as some system of facts that can be held separately in the mind of a person whether their lives represent that truth or not. There are many Christian churches and cults that claim to know "the truth," and most of this "truth" is conflicting. Most of their adherents do not live truth nor do they have hearts filled with truth. Yes, they have a lot of "truth" in their minds, but it has not taken over in their innermost beings. Jesus found this same kind of belief system in the Pharisees of 2000 years ago when He warned, "You do well to do as the Pharisees say, but do as they say and not as they do, for they say one thing and do another."

People by nature like to study truth and like others to think of them as possessors of the truth, but avoid truth's changing power in themselves, because that requires a substantial change of *Who* is in control of their lives. Our human nature wants to maintain control at all cost. Truth is not just knowledge of what is true, but it is a quality of being which is true and real. Søren Kierkegaard rightfully observed, "Truth has always had many loud proclaimers, but the question is whether a person will in the deepest sense acknowledge the truth, allow it to permeate his whole being, accept all its consequences, and not have an emergency hiding place for himself and a Judas kiss for the consequence."

John declared in the first chapter of his gospel,

And the Word [*or, the Expression of {divine} Logic*] became flesh and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of an only-begotten [*or, uniquely-begotten*] from [*the*] Father, full of grace and truth... For the law was given through Moses: grace and truth came to be through Jesus Christ (John 1:14&17 ALT).

Moses gave us the law and it contained truth, but God sent His only begotten Son to us as the embodiment of Truth, not just a shadow of it. (See Colossians 2:16-17, Hebrews 8:1-6, and Hebrews 10:1) Jesus took our understanding of what *truth* is a step further than the Law of Moses.

Thomas says to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going away. And how are we able to know the way?" Jesus says to him, "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [*or, by means of*] Me! (John 14:5-6 ALT)

Jesus came not only to teach us truth but to *be* our Truth! When the Samaritan woman asked Jesus where she should worship God, either at their holy mountain shrine or in Jerusalem He answered,

Woman, trust (*believe*) me; The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the father. Ye worship ye wot nere (*not*) what: we know what we worship. For salvation cometh of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the father in spirit, and in truth. For verily such the father requireth to worship him. God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must honour (*worship*) him, in spirit and verity. (*truth*) (John 4:21-24 TRC)

Jesus came to inhabit our very beings and fill us with true verity, the very life of the Son of God that dwells in us and worships the Father in the very Spirit of Truth as only His Spirit can. With His Spirit alive in us worship no longer has to be done in a special building or conducted in a special "worship service." Worship is a product of having His life in our beings and prayer, communion with our Father, is something we do without ceasing. True worship comes from a Life Source within. To the Jews who sought to kill Jesus he said,

You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth... You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me; yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. (John 5:33, 29&40 RSVA)

John the Baptist came preparing the way for Jesus to come and witnessed about Him saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, for he was before me.'" Many of the Jews and their leaders did not receive the witness of John, but rather kept searching the scriptures for the truth. In chapters 52 and 53, Isaiah prophesied in great detail about the coming Messiah, his life, suffering, ministry, even what He would look like, yet the Jews were blind to His witness. In their blindness they cut themselves off from God and brought about their own destruction. Jesus prophesied over Jerusalem saying, "If you had known, even you, at least in this your day, the things which belong unto your peace! but now they are hid from your eyes. For the days shall come upon you, that your enemies shall cast a bank about you, and surround you, and hem you in on every side, And shall lay you even with the ground, and your children within you; and they shall not leave in you one stone upon another; because you knew not the time of your visitation." (Luke 19:42-44 KJ2000) Will we also miss our hour of Christ's visitation and not yield fully to His abiding presence? If so, we can expect the same consequences to befall us.

Jesus said, "[I am the way, the truth and the life.](#)" We must come to *Him* and not just the scriptures to have life. Truth and life are in Jesus Christ. Unless we take up our crosses and let them crucify our flesh, His life and His truth will never be preeminent in us nor will it be manifest in us anymore than it was in the scholarly Jews who sought to kill the Truth. (See [John 5:16-18](#)) The more that Jesus' life is manifest in us, the greater the persecution that comes from those who have only a head knowledge of the truth. Paul was persecuted by these same Jews that killed Jesus because he refused to put the Gentile believers under the law. They loved their incomplete knowledge of the true meaning of the Old Testament more than they loved truth in their inward parts.

David knew the truth of the scriptures in his head, but it did not keep him from having an affair with Bathsheba or having her husband killed in battle to cover his sin. It was after he was confronted about his sinful deeds by Nathan the prophet that he prayed in true contrition,

[Against You, You only, have I sinned and done that which is evil in Your sight, so that You are justified in Your sentence and faultless in Your judgment. Behold, I was brought forth in \[a state of\] iniquity; my mother was sinful who conceived me \[and I too am sinful\]. Behold, You desire truth in the inner being; make me therefore to know wisdom in my inmost heart... Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right,](#)

persevering, and steadfast spirit within me... For You delight not in sacrifice, or else would I give it; You find no pleasure in burnt offering. My sacrifice [the sacrifice acceptable] to God is a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart [broken down with sorrow for sin and humbly and thoroughly penitent], such, O God, You will not despise. (Psalms 51:4-17 AMP)

Are you proud of your knowledge of the scriptures and your high place in the eyes of other Christians? How about your clerical robes and ecclesiastical titles? Paul wrote that though you have all knowledge and understand all mysteries, without God's love in your heart it profits you nothing. The sacrifice that pleases God is a broken spirit of humility and a broken and contrite heart. David knew that he could offer thousands of rams and goats on the altar for his sins, but he would still be stuck with his sinful heart. He needed a new heart. He needed truth in his innermost being. Only then would he ever walk in the wisdom and knowledge of our Father and be free from the clutches of sin. Yes, the truth can be found in the scriptures and they speak of Jesus from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation, but the question is, will we surrender to Him in His death on the cross and be raised in His newness of life? Unless we know the living Jesus in our inward being, we will never know the Truth and we will never be free of the man of sin within.

What If We Sin?

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. (1 John 1:7-10 KJ2000)

First we must make it clear that there are *sins* and there is *sin* as a principle of life within us. If Christ is in our innermost being as a result of our believing *into* Christ, the principle of sin is dethroned and sin is no longer a way of life, but Christ's life is. Paul wrote in Romans:

If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then *it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me*. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwells no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that

which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that which I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: *But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.* (Romans 7:16-23 KJ2000) [emphasis added]

Here we have Paul describing his life as a Jew under the law. He knows the law, but because of the life force (or should we say "death force"?) of sin being alive and well within him, he disobeyed the law and sinned constantly. He had not yet known the healing power of the cross and its death to the sin nature found in carnal man.

I, Michael, was raised Catholic. I would sin and go to confession and communion week after week and still go on sinning. It seemed to grow worse as I got older, not better. So with each confession and communion I made a greater resolve to not sin. I would pray more and study my catechism more thoroughly, pray the rosary and take of the sacraments more often, to no avail. I shared my frustrations with the priest and he just gave me more of the same as a solution. I could pray the rosary and do novenas until the cows came home and nothing changed. I was devout and religious, but I still had no power over sin. I had a Romans 7 existence. I concluded that unless I went to confession and communion and was struck dead as soon as the host landed on my tongue, I would never make it to heaven. Leaving the altar rail and making my way back my pew, I would see a pretty girl in the congregation and lust after her (a mortal sin) and once again be on my way to the burner. I could relate to Paul's own confession, "*O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*" (Romans 7:24 KJ2000)

A most remarkable thing happened to me after surrendering my whole life to Jesus, I could opt-out from sinning for the first time. Yes, I could still sin, but I had the power not to and that has made all the difference. This is what John was writing about where we read,

My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And by this we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. (1 John 2:1-3 KJ2000)

When my father-in-law saw me for the first time after this life changing faith came into me, he said, "What happened to Mike? He doesn't swear any more!" Jesus said, "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks." I had a new heart and it was His so I was no longer compelled to swear. Now, *that* was a witness of the power of God to change a life. It was not until I totally surrendered my life over to Jesus and His Spirit came into me and became my new life that I was set free of the sin principle within. Have I sinned since then? Yes, many times, but the principle of sin, that man of sin, no longer has total control in me. I am righteous in the eyes of the Father, because of the righteous Christ that dwells within me as my new Life Source.

David wrote from experience, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delights in his way. Though he falls, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholds him with his hand." (Psalms 37:23-24 KJ2000)

So if we sin what do we do? John wrote to the church,

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:7-9 KJ2000)

Notice the *if* in that last sentence. Some Christians cling to a doctrine that says that they can go on sinning because they are eternally secure and nothing can take away their salvation. How is that any different than the Catholic that intentionally sins and then runs to the confessional, knowing he can be absolved there of whatever he does? I have known both Protestants and Catholics that have had a flippant attitude toward their sin-filled lives. This is the sin of presumption. David wrote, "[Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent of great transgression.](#)" (Psalms 19:13 KJ2000) To presume on the grace of God and Christ's death on the cross by continuing in sin once you have been given power over sin is a great transgression and no small thing in the eyes of God.

There are also "Christians" that live like hell all their lives and think that in the last moment before they die, they will ask God for forgiveness. In Hebrews we read,

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. (Hebrews 6:4-6 KJ2000)

Presumptuous sin in the life of the Christian is no game with God. This is not the life of Christ or the power of His cross. John went on to write further on this.

My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. *And by this we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.* (1 John 2:1-3 KJ2000)
[emphasis added]

If we truly know Him (have an intimate relationship in Him) and have His life within us, we will keep Jesus' commandments, not by constraint, but by His empowering life within. If we *do* fall short of His grace (life giving empowerment), we have an Advocate that stands before and in the Father in our behalf. Why? Because the enemy of our souls also stands before God accusing us when we sin (fall short of the glory of God). John wrote in Revelation:

And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accused them before our God day and night. (Revelation 12:10 KJ2000)

As Christ has made His domain in our inward parts, so has His salvation. Not only that, but His strength and kingdom has come within us as well as His power over sin. *His* Life Force within us is what casts down (and out) the accuser of the brethren. There is no greater advocacy with our Father than when he looks upon us and sees His Beloved Son.

Ours is to be holy (free from sin) even as Jesus is holy. Andrew Murray wrote in his book, *The Two Covenants*:

It is for this the Holy Spirit has been given in our hearts. He is the "Spirit of Holiness." His every working is in the power of holiness. Paul says : "God hath *chosen us unto salvation, in sanctification of the Spirit* and belief of the truth." As simple and entire as is our dependence on the word of truth, as the external means, must our confidence be in the hidden power for holiness which the working of the Spirit brings. The connection between God's electing purpose, and the work of the Spirit, with the word we obey, comes out with equal clearness in Peter: "*Elect, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience.*" The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the life of Christ; as we know, and honour, and trust Him, we shall learn and also experience that, in the New Covenant, as the ministration of the Spirit, the sanctification, the holiness of the Holy Spirit is our covenant right. We shall be assured that, as God has promised, so He will work it in us, that we "should serve Him without fear, in righteousness and holiness before Him, all the days of our life." With a treasure of holiness in Christ, and the very Spirit of holiness in our hearts, we can live holy lives. That is, if we believe Him "who worketh in us both to will and to work."

Chapter 10: Power of His Resurrection - Identity in Jesus' Life

Many a Christian lives his whole life in that old life of Adam while waiting to die and be raised again in Christ at the last resurrection. But is this all that Jesus, the resurrection and the Life, has for us? No wonder the visible church is racked with sin and scandal if that is what it believes! Jesus came that we might have life and that more abundantly, not some "hang in there" existence in our flesh.

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believes in [into] me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever lives and believes in [into] me shall never die. Do you believe this? ([John 11:25-26 KJ2000](#))

"I am the resurrection and the life." What was Jesus saying to this woman of Bethany? He did not say, "I am the life and resurrection afterwards if you believe in me," though in a sense this is true. We are given a new life in trade for the old one, just as Lazarus was given a whole new life. Jesus waited until Lazarus was dead before He came and prayed over him. Why? There was an interesting exchange between Jesus and Lazarus' sister before he died.

[Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom you love is sick. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. \(John 11:3-4 KJ2000\)](#)

Jesus then stayed where He was another two days waiting for Lazarus to die! Jesus let him die so He could raise him again to accentuate what His mission to mankind is about. Our sin sickness is not unto our death, but by the power of the life of the Son, it is a step along the path to eternal life so our Father might be glorified in the Son.

He came that we might have life and have it more abundantly. In what order does that life come? Many a Christian lives his whole life in that old life of Adam while waiting to die and be raised again in Christ at the last resurrection. But is this all that Jesus, the resurrection and the Life, has for us? No wonder the visible church is racked with sin and scandal if that is what it believes! Jesus came that we might have life and that more abundantly, not some "hang in there" existence in our flesh.

In Christ, the Life and the Resurrection, there is so much more to our reality here on earth than just going through the motions of our old Adamic life. Jesus told Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God... Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (John 3:3-6 KJ2000) These words set this leader of the Pharisees on his heels and it went right over his head. To this Jesus said, "If I have told you earthly things, and you believe not, how shall you believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" (John 3:12 KJ2000)

Being born of the flesh and of the Spirit speaks of earthly things! These things must happen here on earth if we are to move on to the heavenly things. A person must first be born of water, born of a woman, and then he must be born of the Spirit or he will never see the kingdom of God. He will never have spiritual eyes and move with the wind of the Spirit in this life unless he is born from heaven. Once we are born from above we will then be given spiritual sight and then we can start to see and understand heavenly things. We not only are resurrected from the dead in Christ, but live in Him by being born into Him here on earth.

Yes, He is the Life we live and not only that, He is the Light of Life by which we see our Father and His kingdom. (see John 8:12) Nicodemus had a vast knowledge of the Old Testament like most Pharisees, but Jesus' light exposed his darkness. Head knowledge of the Bible is not enough. We must have the Light of Life or we are doomed to walk in spiritual darkness. None are so blind as those who falsely think they see. The Bible scholars of 2000 years ago, the fundamentalists of the Jews, had knowledge of the scriptures but they were blind and dead. To them Jesus said, "And you have not his word abiding in you: for whom he has sent, him you believe not. Search the scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And you will not come to me, that you might have life." (John 5:38-40 KJ2000) There is nothing more dead than a student of the Bible who does not have the Light of Life abiding within. Unless the Word, the *Logos* of God, is abiding in us and we abide *in* Him we will never see and understand heavenly things no matter how much we read the Bible, or how many classes we take, or how many sermons we listen to.

After the first birth, born of a woman, must come the first death to that natural Adamic life. The first life is terminal in Adam. But there is more. The second life we are given is

eternal in Christ. There is a resurrection *into* Life, the very life of Jesus. "Though he were dead, yet shall he live." The unregenerate man is dead in the eyes of God because God is a Spirit (see John 4:24). When man sinned he became only flesh, severed from the life of his Father. "And the Lord God said, My Spirit shall certainly not remain among these men for ever, because they are flesh, but their days shall be an hundred and twenty years." (Genesis 6:3 Brenton)

Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome,

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned— sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses... But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many... If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:12-17 NRS)

Adam had life until he sinned. He was in the goodness of God Who created man and he walked in His light. But when Adam sinned he was cast into spiritual darkness. He saw himself as naked and hid himself from his Father. His connection in the Spirit was severed. Jesus came to the earth and said to the descendants of Adam, "The thief [the Serpent that tempted Eve in the garden] comes not, but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10 KJ2000) In one moment Satan stole man's inheritance as sons of God. He killed the life of God within man and destroyed what was to become the kingdom of heaven on earth, many sons unto the glory of God. Jesus came to restore that kingdom and life in the Father by dealing with the blot of sin and giving us a new nature that is led by the Spirit of God once again. Our inheritance has been restored. Paul wrote:

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of adoption, by which we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit himself bears witness with our

spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, so that we may be also glorified together. (Romans 8:14-17 KJ2000)

Why didn't the Father just send us life through Moses or the prophets? It is because the abundant life promised us is only found in the Giver of life, the very Creator of life, that Being who *is the Life*. To have *this* life we must believe *into* Jesus because He is our Life. Paul wrote to the Ephesian believers:

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love with which he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, has made us alive together with Christ, (by grace you are saved;) And has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:4-6 KJ2000)

And to the Colossians he wrote,

If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with him in glory. (Colossians 3:1-4 KJ2000)

Our old man (the carnal nature) is dead. To dwell on that nature borders on spiritual necrophilia. We are raised with and in Christ. We are spirit beings having an earthly experience. Most Christians see it the other way around, but we should have our affections set on the kingdom of God where we dwell in the Son of God, not the desires of the world. The fallen state of the church is so well portrayed by its numerous dinners, potlucks and the fashion show every Sunday morning. Just listen to the content of the conversations outside after the service. Do men and women revel in their lives in heavenly places in Christ or do we hear them speaking about their interests and affections in this world? Out of the abundance and affections of the heart the mouth speaks.

Glory

Where did we ever get the idea that *glory* is heaven and something off in the future? Colossians 3:4 in the Concordant Literal Version translates it better. "Whenever Christ,

our Life, should be manifested, then you also shall be manifested together with Him in glory." Where did we ever get the idea that glory is the same as heaven? Of Jesus John wrote, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." (John 1:14 KJ2000) John beheld Jesus' glory on the mount of transfiguration where the Father spoke and said, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased; hear you him." Later in John we read where Jesus prayed:

And the glory which you gave me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and you in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that you have sent me, and have loved them, as you have loved me. (John 17:22-23 KJ2000)

When Simeon beheld the infant Jesus in the temple he prophesied, "For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel." (Luke 2:30-32 KJ2000) Jesus is not only our light, but he is also our glory. The glory of God is given to those who believe *into* Jesus and it is not just something we get in the future. It is given us that we might be one with our Father and with one another. Our lack of unity shows our lack of His glory abiding in us. It was when the disciples beheld Jesus' glory that they started to believe in Him. (See John 2:11) Without this glory in the body of Christ, the world has not had a witness of Jesus presented to it.

We must appear with Him in glory in the here and now or we will not have it in the future, either. In this life if we seek our own glory we will not have the glory of God. Jesus said, "He who finds his life will lose it, but He who loses his life for my sake shall find it." Jesus sought the glory of God, not his own, (See John 8:50) so should we seek to glorify Jesus on this earth and not ourselves. Jesus went on to pray:

Father, I will that they also, whom you have given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which you have given me: for you loved me before the foundation of the world. (John 17:24 KJ2000)

He did not pray, "that they may be with me where I am going," but "where I am." It is by our believing *into* and abiding *in* Jesus that we behold His glory. This is our inheritance in Christ in *this* life as we abide in the Vine.

True and full eternal life is found hidden in Christ Who is in the Father. He is without beginning or end and if we are hidden in our Father, we have that same life within us. This revelation should make us jump for joy! His life is our life without beginning or end. We have a state of being that is timeless. Here death has no power and the grave has no victory. This is why Jesus could say to the Pharisees, "Before Abraham was, I am." As we are in Christ, we are also not subject to the limiting constraints of time. The further we go in this walk in Him, the less we think in the terms and limitations of time and space. We see that eternal life is a life of power over not only sin, but sickness and death. The same power that the obedient Son had on the earth two thousand years ago is also found in the many obedient sons who live in and unto their Father's glory. The more we dwell in our hearts in the eternity of God, the more we see that all things are possible in Christ. Philip was in a revival in Samaria and the next thing he knew he was in the desert talking to an Ethiopian eunuch. Time and space did not limit him. Paul was stoned to death, yet he got up and walked away. The dead were raised, demons were cast out, the blind and the lame were healed. Why? Because the early church sat in heavenly places, walked in Christ and stood in Him against the wiles of the devil that were the results of the fall of man.

"Set your affections on the things above, not on things on the earth." That includes leaving earthly limitations behind in the way we think. Many in today's church would love to have these same powers that were common in the early believers, but why? Most often it is so they could stand out in the crowd or even use them to become rich and famous. As a result they are not setting their affections on the things that are above, but on earthly things. Only as we are totally taken in body, soul and spirit with our relationship with Jesus and our heavenly Father will we know the life giving force of God. Those who are in Christ, like Jesus, will only do the works we see our Father doing and speak the words we hear our Father saying. This is what true spiritual sons do. "And whatsoever you shall ask in my name [character, excellence and authority], that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." (John 14:13-14 KJ2000) True sons of God live for one reason-- that their Father might be glorified in the earth and wherever His Son dwells. This is why they ask anything of their Father, not for themselves, but for the glory of God. As with Jesus, we seek to glorify our Father in this earth.

Chapter 11: Let Us Go On

First we must fully *go on* into Jesus and being fully into Him we go with Him into the Holy of Holies into the presence of our Father where the goal of our spiritual maturity lies.... Many want to know resurrection power in their lives like the early believers walked in, but are not willing to go through the suffering and death of their old natures to get there.

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews wrote,

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, *let us go on* unto maturity; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. (Hebrews 6:1-2 KJ2000, emphasis added)

How many times have we heard these same six doctrines rehearsed over and over in our church gatherings? We have even seen this passage used as an outline to go on teaching these rudimentary things yet again. So how do we **get on** beyond them? By following Jesus.

The author of Hebrews goes on to describe where we are to *go on to* saying,

Now we are yearning for each one of you to be displaying the same diligence toward the assurance of the expectation until the consummation [conclusion]...that by two immutable matters, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may... lay hold of the expectation lying before us, which we have as an anchor of the soul [pneuma – spirit] both secure and confirmed, and entering into the interior beyond the curtain, where the Forerunner, Jesus, entered for our sakes, becoming Chief Priest according to the order of Melchizedek for the eon [forever]. (Hebrews 6:11-20 CLV)

First we must fully *go on* into Jesus and being fully into Him we go with Him into the Holy of Holies into the presence of our Father where the goal of our spiritual maturity lies. Only there will we no longer walk in our carnal dead works, because we do only the works we see our Father doing. This is the true meaning of "faith toward God." We no longer speak of faith *toward* God, but rather abide *in* the faith of Jesus Christ who is

in the Father. We no longer argue over different forms of water baptism or just what words to use because we are immersed *in* the presence of God. We lay on our hands as He does it through us. There is absolutely no question in our minds that the dead live because we remember from where we came and where we have risen in Christ in the presence of our Father. We have been judged to have fallen short of the glory of God, but now we know Him as Father and walk in the light of the Son in His presence. We know no condemnation because we live and move and have our being in Him. Yes, by all means, let us go on!

Paul in a heart searching moment wrote of His life *in* Christ when he penned:

[For my determined purpose is] that I may know Him [that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly], and that I may in that same way come to know the power outflowing from His resurrection [which it exerts over believers], and that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed [in spirit into His likeness even] to His death, [in the hope] that if possible I may attain to the [spiritual and moral] resurrection [that lifts me] out from among the dead [even while in the body]. (Philippians 3:10-11 AMP)

This is what *going on* is all about! There are limestone caverns in the east and mid-western US that are so huge that they have not yet been fully explored. Paul found himself in such a search, trying to explore the depths of the Father in Jesus. The power that came to us when we were raised up into heavenly places in Christ is unsearchable.

That was not all; Paul wanted to know a deeper fellowship with Christ in His sufferings, for they are part of Him, too. Many want to know resurrection power in their lives like the early believers walked in, but are not willing to go through the suffering and death of their old natures to get there. Paul wanted to be so like Christ in his relationship and grow into Him that he could be conformed to Jesus in his death. God granted that wish and Paul died a martyr for his faith. He wanted to attain the fullness of the riches that are ours in the divine Pattern Son in whatever form the Father chose to reveal it in him. This is true faith, faith that does not limit God for fear of its own fleshly discomfort.

How many of us at the first sign of difficulty and suffering are so easily turned away from our commitment to fully know Christ? In our immaturity, many of us have a

fairytale mentality that God will send down Tinker Bell with her magic wand and make us into super-Christians without having to go through hardship and sufferings. Paul and the early church knew full well that this was not the case, yet they pressed on through persecution and death that they might attain to the fullness of Christ.

In Hebrews we read of Moses who walked by faith and rejected the wealth of the house of Pharaoh as a Prince of Egypt, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a time; esteeming the reproach of the Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." (Hebrews 11:25-26 KJ2000) He goes on to write, "Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection." (Hebrews 11:35 KJ2000) There is a "better resurrection" for those who embrace Jesus' sufferings in themselves, but how many of us just want the power without all that?

I, Michael, once heard a story of a traveling evangelist that came to a church to hold some meetings. On the last night he had an altar call and asked the people to form two lines. "I want all you who want the power of God to line up on the left side of the church and I want all of you who want the sufferings of Christ to line up on the right side." About 95% went for the *power* line and only 5% went to the *sufferings* line. After they were all through lining up the evangelist said, "Now, I am going to pray for these people on my right side that they may know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings and *these* are the ones that will know His power."

When the writer of Hebrews wrote in chapter five, "Let us go on," this is what he was talking about. Read the rest of the book and you will see it. These true believers were found "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:2 KJ21) Paul wanted all the saints of God to know and explore the depths of Christ in this way. To the Ephesian church he wrote:

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:16-19 KJ2000)

Yes, *let us go on* and fully know the fullness that our Father has for us to walk in.

Repentance from Dead Works

Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that you believe on [into] him whom he has sent. (John 6:28-29 KJ2000)

What is the connection between repentance from dead works and faith toward God? Jesus put it this way:

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches: He that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing. (John 15:4-5 KJ2000)

When a farmer prunes his grape vines, he cuts off the growth that is wild and untrained. He trains the vine to grow along the grape arbor by pruning it. Branches that do not produce fruit are also severed. The severed branches still want to cling to the arbor or other branches, so they have to be removed by force. This is a parable of the nature of the church and how Father deals with it. Jesus said that unless the branch abides in the vine it cannot produce any fruit. His Father prunes back the productive branches so that they will bring forth more fruit. All fruit bearing trees and vines have to be pruned or they will put most of their energy into making fruitless branches and leaves. This is the nature of our natural flesh. Our Father is a good husbandman and knows what has to be pruned away in each of us. He is after fruit.

Where does the Father's fruit come from? It comes from pruned branches abiding in the Vine. Jesus is that Vine. He said, "Without me you can do nothing." When we go out and do something *for* God instead of abiding in Christ our Vine and letting Him bring forth the fruit in and through us, we are doing dead works. So many of us read something in the Bible as all the authority we need to run out and start doing "good works" for God. But this is not what it means to abide in the Vine. Paul was doing what he thought was commanded by God while he persecuted the church. After a life-giving encounter with Jesus, he repented from his dead works and lived in obscurity for most of fourteen years as he was being pruned by the Father! Finally, Barnabas had to go get him and bring him to Antioch where after some more time, the Spirit spoke and sent

the two of them out with the gospel. Paul's dead works were pruned, but the Spirit was alive in Him and the fruit that he bore was ordained by God.

A. W. Tozer once said that God seems to be more interested in what He can *put into* a man than by what He can get out of him. So many of us in our youthful zeal want to give Jesus our best efforts and make fruit, but most of our efforts end up making rotten fruit at best. No one in the church has ever had such a broad and powerful impact on the world as Paul. Why? Because he was learning an important lesson during all those years of isolation, being pruned by Father. He was learning to abide in Jesus and to only do the works he saw his Father doing and to only speak what he heard his Father saying.

If we fail to learn what Paul learned, any fruit that we do produce will not remain. Pollsters found that less than five percent of Billy Graham's crusade converts were still going to church a year later. Bill Bright's campaign, "Here's Life America," found that only three percent were still going to church a year later. Jesus had twelve disciples that His Father gave Him, and eleven of the twelve went on to live and die for their faith in a hostile world. The one that was lost was foreordained and prophesied to betray Him. Jesus was able to pray, "[While I was with them in the world, I kept them in your name: those that you gave me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.](#)" (John 17:12 KJ2000)

Shotgun evangelism is very hit or miss, but those called forth into the kingdom of God by God's design will abide in Christ forever. Of his conversion Paul wrote:

[Paul, an apostle, \(not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead\)... But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ... But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them who were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. \(Galatians 1:1-17 KJ2000\)](#)

Here is a changed life. Paul once persecuted the church and was a bloody man who learned his Jewish faith from the best teachers in Jerusalem. This all meant nothing to

God. Paul himself went on to count it all dung. What does Paul glory in? Christ in him whom the Father revealed by placing him *into* Christ. Paul knew first hand that he need not that any man should teach him . (See [1 John 2:26-27](#))

Have you ever wondered why there is no record of John, Peter or Paul going out and building church buildings everywhere they preached as is the habit of church missionaries today? It is because they knew that the things of this earth are temporal and will not cross over into the kingdom of God so they put their energies into building a living temple made of living stones. When he was describing his heavenly vision, John said, "And I saw no temple there." All that money poured into the church building funds has no eternal value to God. More dead works. Only the souls of men go on for eternity and only the souls and spirits of men who are *in* the Son go on into the glory and eternity of God. The greatest time of church growth recorded in history (the first three hundred years) harvested millions of souls without the help of one church building. The early church was not about an endless calendar of scheduled meetings as is the case today; they were about Christ's life *in* them whether they were gathering in a home as the family of God or they were at the market place shopping. They knew that apart from the Vine, they could do nothing.

Paul walked and ministered by the direction of the Spirit. Once he was going into Bithynia and Spirit prevented him, so he took another route and finally the Spirit gave Paul a vision of a Macedonian man saying, "Come over into Macedonia and help us."

On another occasion in Thyatira Paul and the brothers were hounded by a woman possessed by a demon, yet he did nothing about it, though being troubled by her for many days. Why? He waited on his Father to act in his behalf. When the Father did act through Paul it was decisive. The spirit came out of her in that hour. He did not shake a bag of bones or wave garlic at her or scream and holler. He just said calmly, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her."

Faith toward God

The secret to success in the work of God is to abide in the Father just as Jesus abides in Him. We abide there in His rest. In Hebrews 4 we read:

[There remains therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also has ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labor](#)

therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. (Hebrews 4:9-11 KJ2000)

To cease from our own works is to cease from dead works. God rested on the seventh day and He still is resting because His works have been finished from the foundation of the world (see Hebrews 4:3-4). To do the works of God is to do His completed works and abide in His foreknowledge. He knows who are His and who are not. The writer continues in chapter 4 to declare,

For the word of God is living, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. (Hebrews 4:12-13 KJ2000)

John wrote in his gospel that the Word of God, the *Logos*, is Jesus. Jesus in us divides our souliness from our spirit, His abode, that His Spirit might be the life source within us. He discerns the thought and intents of the heart and then shows them to us. He lays all things naked before Him and then shows us the true need of the person He wants us to minister to. Paul wrote to the church at Corinth,

But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believes not, or one unlearned, he is convicted of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth. (1 Corinthians 14:24-25 KJ2000)

The *Logos*, the Son of God, desires to speak through us to the hearts of men, not their heads. Most people speak from their heads, posing hypothetical question and evading the issues like the Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar did with Jesus. A sinner's sickness is a heart condition, not a head problem. Too often we try to argue and reason with their heads instead of letting that two-edged sword of the Father speak to their hearts through us. If we are to bear fruit that remains, it will only come through Christ who searches the hearts and speaks from His place of rest in the Father. It is the faith of Jesus in us that is true faith toward God. This faith believes in Father and Father's works and not in the works of the flesh.

We often quote Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It is a statement of spiritual fact that is defined by what follows. The important thing about understanding verse one is found in the examples given of those who *walked by faith*. These were men and women abiding in God, while *He* did miraculous things in and with them. Enoch was translated, Abraham saw Jesus' day and rejoiced, Noah believed that the world would end by a deluge even though it had never rained up until that time and he prepared for it. They did the humanly impossible. They shut mouths of hungry, voracious lions and lay down with them. They received their dead back to life again, closed wombs were opened, and they sought the invisible city of God. Jesus' Hebrew lineage has a long line of barren wombs! How could this be? These women were able to conceive by faith in their God who acted in their behalf. Faith believes in God, waits and acts in concord *with Him*. Faith prays and waits until God acts, acting in accord with Him. Men go out and do dead works because of their *lack* of faith in God. Faith is not inactivity, but a cessation of the human origin of all activity, trusting in God to act. Herein is true rest in Him and abiding in the works that He has ordained from the foundation of the world for us to walk in. Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus:

For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:8-10 KJ2000)

When Satan was trying to get Jesus to act on His own initiative, turning rocks into bread for His hunger, Jesus replied, "It is written, *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.*" (Matthew 4:4 KJ2000) He did not say "that has proceeded" (referring to the Old Testament) but *proceeds* in the present tense. Do Christians today live by every word that the Spirit is saying to them? Most that we have met try to live by the words they read in the Bible, but too many are oblivious to the voice of the Spirit speaking to them in the here and now.

Paul had to correct the foolish Galatians for going back to the written works of the law. He asked them a series of questions:

- Who has bewitched you?
- Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?

- Are you so foolish?
- Having begun in the Spirit are you now made perfect by the flesh?
- Have you suffered so many things in vain?

He sums up these questions with, "He therefore that ministers to you the Spirit, and works miracles among you, does he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Galatians 3:5 KJ2000) What is "the hearing of faith?" Church teachers say that if we hear the Bible over and over, that finally some of its principles will rub off on us and we will start to walk by faith. But is this really "the hearing of faith" or more hearing of the letter? We could believe in this methodology except for one thing. Those faith walkers listed in Hebrews 11--Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Rachel, Rebecca (all barren women that conceived)--all had no Bible to walk by, but they *did* have a faith that caused them to walk by every word that came forth from the mouth of God. God spoke it, they believed it and God acted in their behalf according to His divine will.

Paul continues, "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know you therefore that they who are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." (Galatians 3:6-7 KJ2000) We are the children of Abraham, the true Israel, *if* we believe and walk as he walked, by obeying that ever present Word of God that still speaks to our hearts today.

"Even as Abraham believed God" is what is important here. It is no coincidence that while speaking to the seven churches in John's Revelation, the Spirit of God has to repeat Himself over and over with one common phrase, "Let he who has ears hear what the Spirit *is* saying to the churches." The church by the end of the first century had for the most part gone stone deaf to "every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." Many of them had gone back to being good bibliolaters like the Jews, forsaking the voice of God among them for the written law. Before long the scripture was canonized. To these texts men added creeds, doctrines, books of prayer, and the writings of "the church fathers," all which are not necessary if we walk by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Spirit as Abraham did. But because the church had ceased to walk by the Spirit and became an organization created by men by the beginning of the fourth century, it needed these things and many more to prop it up.

Jesus promised His Spirit would be with us to lead us into all truth. He did not promise to leave us seminaries full of dead scholars. Through the endless teachings of men

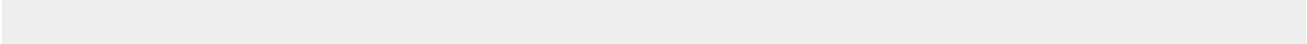
who emphasize the importance of what *they* teach instead of our ability to hear the voice of God, we now have over 200,000 Christian sects and denominations, all teaching that what *they* say about the Bible is true. Recently a young college student wrote, "All these different denominations teach that if you don't belong to *their* church, you are going to hell. Being that not everyone belongs to the same denomination, it only stands to reason that *everyone* is going to hell!" This might be humorous, but it shows the witness that fractured Christendom really has in this world. Jesus prayed, "That they all may be one; as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that you have sent me." (John 17:21 KJ2000) Through all this division, carnal Christianity has handed the world to the devil on a platter. We can only know the unity of Christ as we each walk in the light of the Spirit as He walks in the light of the Father.

We thank God for the scriptures. God uses them and brings them to our memory often as we listen to His voice. But we are to walk by the Spirit and not by the letter. Reading the Bible without the Spirit's enlightenment can make you religious, but it can also make you deaf to the Spirit when He *does* speak if you limit Him to your carnal mind's understanding of what you have read. To the Pharisees Jesus said,

"You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me; yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life." (John 5:39-40 RSVA) Jesus said that He was sending us the Spirit in His place to lead us. How many of us have shut our ears to His leading by putting our faith in what men teach about the scriptures, making void the commandments (the inner voice) of God by their traditions?

The Spirit can speak to us through the words recorded in the Bible and often does, but He is not limited by that alone. How did the early church know that there was going to be a famine in the days of Emperor Claudius that would cover the world and prepare ahead for it? One of their members, Ag'abus, foretold it by the Spirit, not by reading the Bible. Have you ever wondered why Jesus and the disciples were always breaking the letter of the law and in trouble with the Jewish law keepers, yet we know that Jesus never sinned, but lived perfectly before His Father? He lived by every word that proceeded from the mouth of God and obedience does not get better than that! Go ye and do likewise.

Pray that the Spirit's voice would lead you in everything you say and do, just as Jesus walked in obedience to His Father's voice. If you are steeped in religious teachings, the first thing God will probably do with you is demand you sit in silence for a few years like Paul had to. This quiets our hearts and numbs our minds to all the teachings of men. Then after we are still long enough before the Father, we will be able to hear His voice more accurately without the din of the voices of our religious teachers interfering. Do you remember what Peter said to Jesus when he had a vision on the rooftop in Joppa? He was commanded to kill and eat unclean animals in his vision. To this he said, "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean" (Acts 10:14 KJ2000). Now that is an oxymoron if we have ever heard one, "Not so *Lord*"? Since when do we as believers tell God what we will or will not do and call Him our Lord? The traditions of men make us deaf to the voice of God. In the days ahead hearing His voice will be imperative to our survival as Christians.



Chapter 12: Christ's Righteousness is Our Righteousness

First we live as natural men and women, subject to the nature of Adam and all its weaknesses without the Spirit of God. But when we are born from above another life principle takes over, the very life of Jesus into Whom we have been born.

Have you ever tried to share Jesus with a person and they came back with the excuse, "I can't be good enough to be a Christian"? Or have *you* even said, "I can't do this! I just can't be a Christian. I give up!" There is both truth and hope in these statements.

God never intended for us to be *good enough* or keep a set of laws or generate our own righteousness. He knows that we can't! He knows that we are but dust in our natural state, so God sent Jesus to live, die and live-on in resurrection life *in* us and us *in* Him. Paul wrote,

We know what the message of the Law is, to those who live under it - that every excuse may die on the lips of him who makes it and no living man may think himself beyond the judgment of God. No man can justify himself before God by a perfect performance of the Law's demands - indeed it is the straight-edge of the Law that shows us how crooked we are. But now we are seeing the righteousness of God declared quite apart from the Law (though amply testified to by both Law and Prophets) - it is a righteousness imparted to, and operating in, all who have faith in Jesus Christ. (For there is no distinction to be made anywhere: everyone has sinned, everyone falls short of the beauty of God's plan.) Under this divine system a man who has faith is now freely acquitted in the eyes of God by his generous dealing in the redemptive act of Jesus Christ. God has appointed him as the means of propitiation, a propitiation accomplished by the shedding of his blood, to be received and made effective in ourselves by faith. God has done this to demonstrate his righteousness both by the wiping out of the sins of the past (the time when he withheld his hand), and by showing in the present time that he is a just God and that he justifies every man who has faith in Jesus Christ. (Romans 3:19-26 J.B. Phillips N. T.)

For hundreds of years the Jews proved themselves miserable failures in keeping the laws of Moses. They broke the covenant that God had made with them so He set out to make a new and lasting covenant for all mankind to walk in. Jeremiah prophesied,

Behold, the days come, says the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; my covenant which they broke, although I was a husband unto them, says the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, says the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, says the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. (Jeremiah 31:31-34 KJ2000)

God wanted to prove to mankind that only One is good, even our Father Who is in heaven. God also had a plan to redeem weak and fallen man from himself. He would put *His* goodness within us. The prophet Ezekiel also prophesied, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." (Ezekiel 36:26 KJ2000)

Jesus told the disciples that He was going away, but that He would not leave them alone. He would send His Spirit to dwell within them. He has given everyone who puts their trust in Christ alone a new heart and a new spirit - *His* heart and *His* Spirit! To put our trust in keeping the old law or even a new "Christianized" law is to make void this New Covenant promise of a new heart being put within us. This is the good news of the gospel, *Christ in you* the hope of glory, not a new list of rules to keep. We cannot perfect in our flesh what God has set forth in the Spirit. (See Galatians 3:1-3)

Paul wrote,

The first man is of the earth, made of dust. The second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the one made of dust, such are those who are also made of dust; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. As we have borne the image of those made of dust, let's also bear the image of the heavenly. (1 Corinthians 15:47-49 WEB)

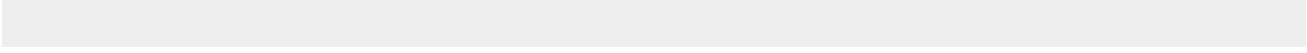
First we live as natural men and women, subject to the nature of Adam and all its weaknesses without the Spirit of God. But when we are born from above another life principle takes over, the very life of Jesus into Whom we have been born. The old Adam cannot please God and he can never live righteously in the eyes of God. God has one standard of excellence, His own Son Jesus. God measures righteousness by Him alone and only Jesus can be righteous as we live in Him. Righteousness comes by living an exchanged life in Christ. Outside the life force of Jesus there is no righteousness. Walking by faith is not about doing good works! It is all about resting in Christ and His righteousness. He does the work in us and we rest in Him. (See [Hebrews 4](#)) This is true righteousness.

To do our own works, trying to be good enough, or a good Christian is really an act of unbelief. Like the Hebrews in the wilderness, we are failing to enter into the promise by our unbelief. Faith is not doing good works or living a good life. Faith is Jesus doing the works as only He can. Only He is the Way we are to walk in, because it is Him walking it out within us in His life. John wrote, "[If you know that he \[Jesus\] is righteous, you know that everyone that does righteousness is born of him.](#)" (1 John 2:29 KJ2000) Just as He is righteous, we who dwell in Him are also righteous. His righteousness is imputed *into* us. As John went on to write, "[Little children, let no man deceive you: he that does righteousness is righteous, even as he \[Jesus\] is righteous.](#)" (1 John 3:7 KJ2000)

Like the Hebrews, we fail when we insist that we can be a Christian or that we must do something for God. Both are out of that old self nature of Adam, also called *the flesh* or our *old man*. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai and gave the Law to the Hebrew people, they with one voice said, "[All the words which the LORD has said will we do.](#)" (See [Exodus 24:3](#)) In short order they proved themselves liars. Paul had no illusions about his own righteousness, either. Until this issue is settled and we completely accept that we are totally bankrupt when it comes to living in righteousness or pleasing God, we will continue to fail and fall short of a victorious life in Christ.

Doing "great works for God" is no longer in our vocabulary. We know that only the Son can do works that are eternal and we rest in Him even when criticized by church task masters. Doing just one "good work" under the influence of the flesh takes us away from our place of peace and rest in Jesus and our Father. With Paul we must believe, "[Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of](#)

Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but rubbish, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." (Philippians 3:8-9 KJ2000).



Chapter 13: Identity in Christ, Our Wisdom and Knowledge

Are you looking for spiritual wisdom and knowledge? You won't find it in a seminary or Bible school. They are hidden in Christ and we must be fully enveloped into Him if we are to have this treasure.

For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For consider your call, brethren; not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth; but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption; therefore, as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord." (1 Corinthians 1:25-31 RSV)

Fallen man prides himself in his wisdom and knowledge (mostly book learning) and lives like these will save him. The common attitude is, "Before things get too bad, our scientists will figure something out." Yet, God scoffs at it all. Men cry out against their Maker blaming Him for everything that goes wrong in their lives, all the while they boast in themselves when things go right! God gets the blame and sinful man gets the glory. No wonder God sees man's wisdom as foolishness. Of those who God calls, not many are worldly wise or powerful in the might of the world's ways. Not many are called from "the beautiful people" that are honored and admired by the world.

Jeremiah prophesied the coming of this New Covenant we are part of today:

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, says the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, says the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. (Jeremiah 31:33-34 KJ2000)

In effect Jeremiah said that there would no longer be need for teachers in the New Covenant, *for they shall all know Me*. The truth of God would be in each one of us. Andrew Murray wrote about this passage in *The Two Covenants*:

"And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." Individual personal fellowship with God, for the feeblest and the least, is to be the wonderful privilege of every member of the New Covenant people. Each one will know the Lord. That does not mean the knowledge of the mind,—that is not the equal privilege of all, and that in itself may hinder the fellowship more than help it,—but with that knowledge which means appropriation and assimilation, and which is eternal life. As the Son knew the Father because He was one with Him and dwelt in Him, the child of God will receive by the Holy Spirit that spiritual illumination which will make God to him the One he knows best, because he loves Him most and lives in Him. The promise, "They shall be all taught of God," will be fulfilled by the Holy Spirit's teaching. God will speak to each out of His Word what he needs to know.

John agreed with Jeremiah when he wrote, "But the anointing which you have received of him abides in you, and you need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, you shall abide in him." (1 John 2:27 KJ2000) Ezekiel also prophesied of this new and better Covenant saying:

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, *and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them.* Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them: it shall be an everlasting covenant with them. (Ezekiel 36:26-27, 37:26)

In the Old Covenant, men had a head knowledge of the will and laws of God, but in the New we are given new hearts that *want* to obey Him and hearts that know Him intimately, not through mediators like Moses, but the one Mediator between God and man, the Lord Jesus Christ. Not only this, but we have placed in us when we believed into Jesus, a new Spirit, the very Spirit of Christ that seeks to please our heavenly Father. It is no longer up to us to please Him and keep His laws. His Spirit in our new

hearts does what those under the Old Covenant could never do by sheer will power. Jesus in us does it all! Andrew Murray went on to write:

But is it really possible, amid the wear and tear of daily life, to walk in the experience of these blessings? Are they really meant for all God's children? Let us rather ask the question, Is it possible for God to do what He has promised? The one part of the promise we believe—the complete and perfect pardon of sin. Why should we not believe the other part—the law written in the heart, and the direct Divine fellowship and teaching? We have been so accustomed to separate what God has joined together, the objective, outward work of His Son, and the subjective, inward work of His Spirit, that we consider the glory of the New Covenant above the Old to consist chiefly in the redeeming work of Christ for us, and not equally in the sanctifying work of the Spirit in us. It is owing to this ignorance and unbelief of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as the power through whom God fulfils the New Covenant promises, that we do not really expect them to be made true to us.

Paul wrote, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:13 KJ2000) More correctly this should be translated, "Till we all come *into* the oneness of the faith and knowledge of (to fully observe) the Son of God, *into* a complete man, *into* the measure of maturity of the completed Christ." Notice that our word *eis* or *into* is used three times in this verse. Perfect knowledge is found when we come *into* the faith and knowledge of the Son who gets His knowledge by observing His Father. We become completely mature when we completely pass *into* Christ who is completely *in* our Father.

Jesus has been made unto us wisdom and knowledge. Paul wrote to the church at Colossi, "in whom (Christ) are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Colossians 2:3 ALT) Are you looking for spiritual wisdom and knowledge? You won't find it in a seminary or Bible school. They are hidden in Christ and we must be fully enveloped into Him if we are to have this treasure. Paul wrote:

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. But we speak wisdom among them that are mature: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nothing: But we speak the wisdom of God in a

mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto *[into]* our glory: (1 Corinthians 2:5-7 KJ2000)

When we rest in Christ, His wisdom and knowledge can pour into and through us. Have you ever noticed that when asked a question, Jesus' answers were made to shed light on the heart of the one asking? He more often answered the heart of the person, bypassing their heads and religious shackles that held them captive. This is the wisdom of God at work. Spiritual sickness is in the heart. We can attack a perverted way of thinking by answering questions and wrangling with the mind and never bring anyone to the healing waters of Christ. When we abide in Jesus, taking every carnal thought captive, we won't be drawn into religious arguments. The knowledge we need for every situation comes through and we can be used of our Father as Jesus was to bring about a real healing to sin sick hearts.

Michael Faraday was a great English inventor, scientist and chemist of the nineteenth century. More importantly, Faraday made his abode in Jesus. The Faraday experiments led the way to such inventions as the fluorescent lamp, the electron tube, electric motors, generators, electric transformers and artificial refrigeration. He was a praying man and a close friend said that his prayers were the "... petition of a son into whose heart God had sent the Spirit of his Son, and who with absolute trust asked a blessing from his father." Another associate of his said that he "... was continually pressed to be the guest of the high and noble, but he would, if possible, decline, preferring to visit some poor sister in trouble, assist her, take a cup of tea with her, read the Bible and pray." As an elder in his church he once preached, "The law of God required perfect obedience, which man could not render, and it was in the room and stead of guilty man that Christ fulfilled it... And therefore, brethren, we ought to value the privilege of knowing God's truth far beyond anything we can have in this world. The more we see the perfection of God's law fulfilled in Christ, the more we ought to thank God for His unspeakable gift." Jesus was Faraday's All in all. A contemporary writer wrote that there was, "... a comparatively little known phase of his character, viz., his belief in a still higher means of reaching truth than by scientific investigation alone, namely, as laid open for the instruction and hope of mankind by Divine Revelation." Michael Faraday knew Jesus as the summation and source of all his wisdom and knowledge.

Paul wrote, "And if any man thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man loves God, the same is known by him." (1 Corinthians

8:2-3 KJ2000) All real knowledge is based on whether He knows us and that hinges on whether we love Him. Knowledge in the economy of God is not just knowing something in our heads, but a knowing relationship with Him in our hearts. God's knowledge is relational. This is also the basis of the final judgment, not what we did *for* God, but whether He knows us in intimacy. (See Matt. 7:21-23)

Who is wise in the sight of God? Jesus said, "Therefore whosoever hears these sayings of mine, and does them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock." (Matthew 7:24-25 KJ2000) The wise are those who not only hear Jesus' saying, but do them. Paul said of the wise,

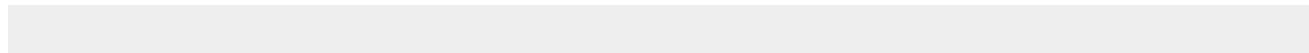
Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seems to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He takes the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And you are Christ's; and Christ is God's. (1 Corinthians 3:18-23 KJ2000)

If we are truly Christ's, if we live and move and have our being in Him (Acts 17:28), all things are ours. Why? All things are His because He is in the Father, the Creator of all things. Everywhere in western society we see men trying to improve on what God has created or done. Each time they make a change "for the better," it ends in disaster whether it is through wars, pollution or wiping out whole species of animals and plants in the march to "civilize" and "improve." The wisdom and knowledge of man in action always ends in chaos. The same wisdom that can be used for peaceful purposes more often is used for the development of weapons and carnage. In Genesis before God judged the world by flood we read, "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth." (Genesis 6:11-12 KJ2000) This is the wisdom of man outside the life of God and it all started when Eve was tempted by the serpent to become "wise" by eating of the tree of knowledge instead of abiding in her relationship in God.

Satan was also corrupted by his wisdom. Is it any wonder that he uses *that* sin to try and corrupt us? He has perfected it! Of his fall Ezekiel records:

You were in Eden, God's garden. You were dressed in splendor, your robe studded with jewels: Carnelian, peridot, and moonstone, beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald, all in settings of engraved gold. A robe was prepared for you the same day you were created. You were the anointed cherub. I placed you on the mountain of God. You strolled in magnificence among the stones of fire. From the day of your creation you were sheer perfection . . . and then imperfection--evil!--was detected in you. In much buying and selling you turned violent, you sinned! I threw you, disgraced, off the mountain of God. I threw you out--you, the anointed angel-cherub. No more strolling among the gems of fire for you! **Your beauty went to your head. You corrupted wisdom by using it to get worldly fame.** I threw you to the ground, sent you sprawling before an audience of kings and let them gloat over your demise. (Ezekiel 28:13-17 MSG) [emphasis added]

Jesus did not come to the earth to demonstrate worldly wisdom and take control as a world leader, though Satan tempted Him to do so in the wilderness early on. And He did not come to impress men with His beauty. As Isaiah prophesied, He grew up in a spiritually parched field, Nazareth. All the Jews knew that no good thing could come out of Nazareth. Isaiah describes Him as a homely "ninety pound weakling." He was passed over like the kid who is the last one to be picked for a sandlot baseball team. God only knows how many times He was beaten-up by the town bully as He was growing up. You can be sure that the presence of God in Him made Him a target of the worldly. Years later He preached from Isaiah in the town synagogue, and they dragged Him out and would have thrown Him off a nearby cliff if His Father had not saved Him. Jesus learned obedience to the Father by the things that He suffered.



Chapter 14: Power in God's Kingdom - Laying Down Our Lives

Ministers who make themselves of no reputation are a vanishing breed these days. Everyone seems to be grasping for greatness in the eyes of their fellow Christians. How rare it is to find just one who is so willing to be obedient to their Father to the point of death! He who finds his life will lose it.

Some believe that knowledge is power. They glean any tidbit they can and try to get the goods on their competition at all times. Satan tempted Jesus to use His power for His own gain and notoriety, but He refused. Jesus did not come to rule over the earth as a king, though He could have used His power to bring that about easily. He came, rather, to die as a sacrificed lamb for the sins of all. When John saw Him in resurrected splendor, what did he see?

And one of the elders said unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. (Revelation 5:5-6 KJ2000)

Yes, John saw a lamb that had been slain. The angels saw a Lion. Why this difference? God knows that man can't handle power, so He provided us an example of His power in a life that is denied and laid at His feet. A slain Lamb is not a powerful sight to our normal way of thinking about power. We would expect to see a powerful Lion that could pounce and kill in a single bound, especially in the One who rose again from the dead. But power to God is made perfect in weakness. Paul prayed for strength and God answered, "And he [the Lord] said unto me, My grace is sufficient for you: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather boast in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (2 Corinthians 12:9 KJ2000)

When the disciples were arguing over who would have positions of power in Jesus' kingdom, Jesus said, "You see that the rulers of the Gentiles are lords over them, and their great ones have authority over them. Let it not be so among you: but if anyone

has a desire to become great among you, let him be your servant; And whoever has a desire to be first among you, let him take the lowest place: Even as the Son of man did not come to have servants, but to be a servant, and to give his life for the salvation of men." (Matthew 20:25-28 BBE) Servanthood for Jesus was laying down His life for others in humility, having faith in His Father alone to do the work even when it cost Him His life--this is the wisdom of God.

Jesus exemplifies the logic of God. Christ's every word and action revealed the logic of God -- logic that defies human logic, death and hell itself, thus breaking the hold of Satan's corrupted wisdom (Ezekiel 28:17) on mankind. It makes the death of our old man on the cross the door to our victorious entry into the bosom of the Father. "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death." (Revelation 12:10-11 KJ2000) Power, strength and overcoming in weakness; in loving not our lives unto death, this is the power and wisdom of God.

Yes, we more than over come when we abide in Christ Jesus, following the example of the Pattern Son.

The Principle of Decrease and Increase

Jesus' teachings go totally crossways to human thinking. He said, "For whosoever exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted." (Luke 14:11 KJ2000) This is the life that Jesus lived out before us for our example. He came to the earth not in a display of His heavenly riches and prowess, but rather He took on the form of a human servant. Paul wrote of Him:

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not a thing to be grasped to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:6-11 KJ2000)

Ministers who make themselves of no reputation are a vanishing breed these days. Everyone seems to be grasping for greatness in the eyes of their fellow Christians. How rare it is to find just one who is so willing to be obedient to their Father to the point of death! He who finds his life will lose it. We say unto you, they have their reward.

It was not always this way. When John the Baptist' disciples saw that his popularity was swinging over to Jesus they were quite upset and complained to him. To this John said, "[He must increase, but I must decrease.](#)" (John 3:30 KJ2000)

It is interesting, this principle of decrease that God takes *His* people through. Jesus speaking of Himself said, "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone." John the Baptist ministered in this law of decrease and he meant it, pointing his followers away from himself to Jesus. John still had followers that would not turn to Christ out of loyalty to him. Just before the oft quoted verse above, John told them, "[You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that has the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.](#)" (John 3:28-29 KJ2000)

Have you ever wondered what picking a fight with Herod had to do with being the forerunner to the Messiah pointing the way to Him? John was determined to see all who followed him turn to Jesus. The one sure way to end his own cult following was to die. He knew what the outcome would be if He spoke against Herod and Herodius' (his brother Philip's wife) love life.

Even Jesus had a loyal following He ministered to throughout Israel, but they all knew Him *after the flesh*, a healer, a man of wisdom doing miracles, feeding the crowds. They almost always sought after Him to meet their temporal needs and desires. Can you think of anyone in the gospels who came to Him wanting to be delivered from their sin nature? They did not know Him after the Spirit (they wanted to make Him king because He fed them). These were what you might call "loaves and fishes Christians." Paul wrote, "[Therefore from now on know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet from now on know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.](#)" (2 Corinthians 5:16-17 KJ2000) To follow the Spirit one must

be centered on those things eternal and the temporal things of this life must lose their appeal.

In the gospel of John we read about Jesus telling the disciples that He must leave them to make way for the Holy Spirit, His Spirit, to come and abide in them. The grain of wheat must die or it would abide alone. The disciples were quite shaken because of this. Even after Jesus rose from the grave, they still didn't get it. Their thoughts were summed up in the words of Cleopas who spoke with him along the road to Emmaus, "But we hoped [that He would save Israel]." It was after receiving the Holy Spirit and being severed from His fleshly life that disciples could come to know Him *after the Spirit*, and *worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth*. So what did Jesus do to bring this about, He headed for the temple and sacked Annas' (the high priest) animal market and chased out the money changers. He touched their idol, money, and that will always get you killed in a den of thieves.

Paul also understood the need to decrease or else become more harm to the kingdom one preaches than the good you were sent to do. He had a personality cult following as did Peter and Apollos. (See [1 Corinthians 3](#)) He rebuked the Corinthians for claiming to be *of* one of these three, saying that they themselves were nothing but laborers in God's vineyard. He ends the chapter by pointing them to Jesus saying, "Don't you know that all things are yours and you are Christ's and Christ is God's?"

Then there was the time when Paul and Barnabas were walking through Lystra and they prayed for a lame man and he got healed. Well, the next thing you know the people were calling them gods, Mercury and Jupiter, and the priest of Jupiter dragged out the fatted calf and garlands of flowers to offer sacrifice to them. How did the apostles handle this? They tore open their garments and ran in among the people and said, "Sirs, why do you these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that you should turn from these vanities unto the living God." ([Acts 14:15 KJ2000](#)) All too many of today's ministers are taken with the adulation of men and refuse to come down from their pulpit and stages and affirm to their congregations that they, too, are mere servants like them.

Finally, after many years of establishing the *ekklesia* among the Gentiles, Paul came up with a solution to the cult following problem, he headed for Jerusalem saying, "It is not right that a prophet should die, except in Jerusalem." On the way three different

church prophets warned him what would happen to him if he persisted, yet Paul went on obeying His Lord, praying, "That I may know Him, the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His suffering, and be conformed unto His death." His prayer was answered. His trip to Jerusalem was the beginning of the end of his earthly stay. He was taken prisoner and finally delivered to the court of Caesar and executed in Rome.

Paul would preach Christ and see the people were filled with the Spirit and would not hang around, but moved on. He did not want them dependent on him or anyone else save the Spirit of Jesus who is our only sufficiency. The Judaizers and the Gnostics on the other hand did all they could to bind people to *them* and *their* teachings and raised great havoc among God's people.

The last god to go (if it ever does) in most who call themselves "ministers" today is "My Ministry." Even the Holy Spirit does not speak of or elevate Himself, but gives all glory to Jesus.

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. John 16:13-15

The Spirit of Truth is our guide. He speaks what Jesus gives Him for us to hear. And Jesus gives the Spirit what the Father has given unto Him... all things. The goal of the true gospel is all about putting us in relationship with the Father (of whom Jesus said, "call no man father, for one is your Father who is in heaven"), not a bunch of human fathers and mothers. When we loose site of *that* goal and see ourselves as mentors, fathers and mothers in the faith and permanent fixtures in the lives of the saints, we have robbed the very life of God from the people and that is why the churches are dead today. Being established in the Spirit of Jesus was why the early church was alive unto God and grew and became as those who *turn the world upside down*. Are we going to settle for anything less?

In chapter 16 of Andrew Murray's book, *The Two Covenants*, we read:

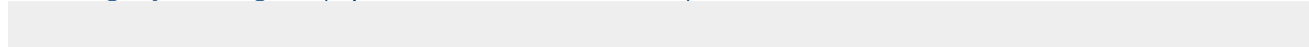
The ministry of the Spirit! What a glory there is in it! What a responsibility it brings! What a sufficiency of grace there is provided for it! What a privilege, to be a minister of the Spirit!

< blockquote>What tens of thousands we have throughout Christendom who are called ministers of the gospel. What an inconceivable influence they exert for life or for death over the millions who depend upon them for their knowledge and participation of the Christian life. What a power there would be if all these were ministers of the Spirit! Let us study the word, until we see what God meant the ministry to be, and learn to take our part in praying and labouring to have it nothing less.

To minister in the Spirit is to serve in compliance with the heart of our Father. We do not act or speak from our own wills, but His. We don't seek our own glory, but along with Jesus we seek the glory of our Father who is in heaven. This is the principle of decrease in lives that seek His increase among men.

We pray with Paul for all who seek to live in the fullness of God in Christ,

[For I always pray to] the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, that He may grant you a spirit of wisdom and revelation [of insight into mysteries and secrets] in the [deep and intimate] knowledge of Him, By having the eyes of your heart flooded with light, so that you can know and understand the hope to which He has called you, and how rich is His glorious inheritance in the saints (His set-apart ones), And [so that you can know and understand] what is the immeasurable and unlimited and surpassing greatness of His power in and for us who believe, as demonstrated in the working of His mighty strength, (Ephesians 1:17-19 AMP).



Chapter 15: Thou in Me and I in Thee

Unless the world has seen the reality of us living in our Father and His Son, it has not seen the living reality of the gospel. ...If we are not living demonstrations of that heavenly union, "Thou in Me and I in Thee," we have nothing to say to a lost and dying world.

Jesus' last prayer for us before He was crucified was recorded by John. "That they all may be one; as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that you have sent me." (John 17:21 KJ2000) Unless the world has seen the reality of us living *in* our Father and His Son, it has not seen the living reality of the gospel. Satan tried everything he could to derail the witness of the Son in the Father and the Father in His Son and he continues to raise havoc in the church to derail our witness in them as well. Jesus and the Father were one in perfect unity. Jesus said to his disciple, "Have you been so long with me, Philip, and you have not seen the Father?" The real witness of who Jesus is--the One sent by the Father to demonstrate our divine callings--depends on us being one in Them. If we are not living demonstrations of that heavenly union, "Thou in Me and I in Thee," we have nothing to say to a lost and dying world.

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe **on** [into] me through their word; That they all may be one; as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that you have sent me. And the glory which you gave me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and you in me, that they may be made perfect **in** [into] one; and that the world may know that you have sent me, and have loved them, as you have loved me. (John 17:20-23 KJ2000)

If the true gospel of the kingdom is preached, then the full reality of what it means to be "saved" must accompany such preaching. Believers in Christ must have a faith that transports them *into* Jesus and our Father. Believing in Jesus as the Messiah is not enough. True belief is a life changing force that transports us *into* the fullness of the Son of God and His relationship with our Father. It is a new identity.

Jesus told a parable of the final wedding feast of Himself and His bride saying, "Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them who are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto [into] the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise." (Matthew 22:4-5 KJ2000) They were not just called to come to His wedding feast, but *into* the marriage! They, like so many confessing Christians today, had other things that interested them more than their own wedding. They were invited unto the feast, but did not go *into* the wedding. The writer of Hebrews spoke of this daily feast that is ours in Christ saying, "We have an altar, of which they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle." (Hebrews 13:10 KJ2000) The worst enemies of the best are things that are good. Church (tabernacle) attendance can be a stop that falls short of the true spiritual altar of our Father.

Yes, there will be a future marriage supper of the Lamb, but we also now eat from the King's table in the presence of our enemies. Those who have been willing to go outside the camp unto Jesus, bearing His reproach, feed on spiritual food that is rarely found in the tabernacles of men. We know that here we have no continuing city, but we seek a heavenly one whose Builder and Maker is God.

So much of what is preached and taught today is topical or superficial at best. Faith that get us up to the very edge of spiritual reality and stops, allowing us to maintain our own self-existence and inoculates us against any further growth into the Father and the Son. Satan does not speak only lies. He actually speaks 99 percent truth. Like a poison that cannot be smelled or tasted, it is that one percent which lies hidden in a good and true broth that kills us.

Where there is the life of Christ who abides in the Father, there is always unity. Where that life is lacking, you will only find discord and *confusion*, the true meaning of Babylon. We often talk about church unity and think that if we all believe the same doctrines and go to the same church, we have unity. Of this A.W. Tozer wrote, "One hundred religious persons knit into a unity by careful organizations do not constitute a church any more than eleven dead men make a football team. The first requisite is life, always."

Some would trumpet the slogan, "What would Jesus do," as the answer to our conduct in everyday life, but are we to imitate what we read of Him in a 1900 year old book or is there something more? F. J. Huegel wrote in chapter one of *Bone of His Bone*:

We are not what Christ would have us to be; the Sermon on the Mount does not find expression in our attitudes; sin as a principle is still rampant in our lives; we are not free from envy, pride, self-love, and lust of pleasure; the mountain of secret selfishness still crushes us and in spite of all our efforts remains immovable; there is little joy, so little freedom of spirit, none of that rapture which so characterized the primitive Christians; we agonize, and bleed, and struggle --but failure dogs our footsteps. What is the matter? We are proceeding upon a false basis. We are attempting to do what the Saviour Himself never expected us to do. The Christian life is not an Imitation.

The great dilemma of which we have been speaking resolves itself into most simple terms when we grasp this distinction between Imitation and Participation.

For, what is impossible to me as an imitator of Christ, comes perfectly natural as a participant of Christ. It is Only when Christ nullifies the force of my inherent "self life," and communicates to me a Divine life, that Christian living in its true sense, is at all possible for me. I must be born again. *"The flesh profiteth nothing."* (John 6:63)

Without Jesus I can do nothing. I must live in Him and, renouncing my own life, find in Him a "new life."

Now to this "new life," the Christian requirements, so incomprehensible and unattainable while we move in the realm of the "flesh-life," are all simple. They are nothing more nor less than statements regarding its *modus operandi*. The Sermon on the Mount, so far from cramping in any way this new life, is simply a statement of the way it operates.

The trouble is, we have not listened to Jesus. He tells us that we must abide in Him as a branch in the Vine. Matthew 5, 6, 7, without John 15, would be like so many freight cars without an engine, or like a whale without water, or a bird without air.

In that upper-room interview, the Master, knowing that it was His last opportunity to impress fundamentals upon His disciples, places the supreme emphasis upon this mystical union, this spiritual oneness with Himself of all believers -- this sublime fact of Participation. *"Abide in Me and I in you."* (John 15:4) Our failures only confirm the Saviour's Word, for He said: *"Without Me ye can do nothing"* (John 15:5).

Where is our perfection in the mind of our Father? It is found in our becoming perfected into the One, the Son of God. As we are each found to be one in Him, we will be found

in that unity that the church so miserably lacks today. Unity does not come with a common doctrinal structure or a common membership in an organization. Men have tried this kind of unity for years and it always ends in schism. The division comes over doctrinal hair splitting, the shape of the church altar, the color of the church carpet, the songs sung or the instruments played in "worship." Only as we lose our likes and dislikes that are part of our self-identity by being totally enfolded into Christ and He into us will we ever know unity. Unity is only found in each of us having the mind of Christ within. Herein is perfection in the eye of our Father. John wrote:

Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love; and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him. In this is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear: because fear has to do with punishment. He that fears is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us. (1 John 4:15-19 KJ2000)

Being made perfect in the One is where we find an unending source of love that will keep us in unity. Without Father's unconditional *agape* love flowing between us, unity is impossible. But if we are *in* Christ and He is *in* us, love is made perfect like the love that Jesus and our Father share with One another. We have not passed fully *into* Christ if we have not been made perfect in love. We cannot be made perfect in love without being totally enfolded into Jesus and the Father. God is love and love is that mystical force that binds the Father and the Son together. Just as they are bound together in love, so are we bound together in them. It is this same mystical power that draws us into their fellowship. We love our Father because He first loved us.

He Who Has the Son, Has the Father

To truly know Jesus is to know our Father in Heaven. To see Jesus is to see the Father. But how about those of us who are one in Christ? What is our place in this relationship? Jesus said, "He that believes on [into] me, believes not on [into] me, but on [into] him that sent me. And he that sees me sees him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believes on [into] me should not abide in darkness." (John 12:44-46 KJ2000) You cannot believe into the Son without also believing into the Father because they are one.

He who has the Son has the Father. To believe *into* Jesus is to believe *into* our Father. To see Jesus is to see our Father. Paul wrote, "So let no one boast of men. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apol'los or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's." (1 Corinthians 3:21-23 RSVA) All things are ours if we have believed *into* Christ who is in the Father. A.W. Tozer wisely wrote, "An infinite God can give all of Himself to each of His children. He does not distribute Himself that each may have a part, but to each one He gives all of Himself as fully as if there were no others." John wrote to the infant church:

Whosoever denies the Son, the same has not the Father: [but] *he that confesses the Son has the Father also*. Let that therefore abide in you, which you have heard from the beginning. If that which you have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, you also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. (1 John 2:23-24 KJ2000) [emphasis added]

To confess Christ is not just paying Him lip service. Confessing the Son is to be in one accord with Jesus, speaking what He speaks, not out of our own will. Paul said of those who truly confess Christ, "You have the mind of Christ." Just as Jesus could say, "the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwells in me, he does the works," so it is true of all who are in Christ.

Whoever transgresses and doesn't remain in the teaching of Christ [doesn't confess Christ], doesn't have God. He who remains in the teaching, the same has both the Father and the Son. (2 John 1:9 WEB)

Let us walk in the Son and the Father in true faith and confession. When John saw Jesus knocking at the locked door of the Laodicean church in Revelation chapter 3, Jesus was asking *any man* to open the door and that He would come in and sup with him. It was the door of the smug Laodicean church that had closed Him out! As long as we say in our hearts that we have all we need by living lives separate from Him unto ourselves, He remains outside and we remain in our delusion of prosperity. But if we overcome that self-reliant smugness so common to the western church today and fully open our hearts to Him, He says, "*To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne.*" (Revelation 3:21 KJ2000) This is the goal of the gospel of Christ, complete unity in our

Father with Jesus. Jesus overcame all the temptations to live for and serve Himself. The last temptation was to save His own life from the cross. The world has a saying, "No guts, no glory." Is the glory of sitting with Jesus on His throne enough for us to "love not our lives unto death" as He did? It is up to us to open our hearts to His upward call and embrace whatever Father has for us to walk in.

Father invites many sons into His glory for the very next thing that John saw and heard was...

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up here...
(Revelation 4:1 KJ2000)

Today, with the sound of a trumpet the call goes forth to whomsoever will, "Come up here!" Jesus has a high calling. He calls us out of carnal, lukewarm lives to join Him in His Father's kingdom within. Remember, the kingdom of God is only found where Christ is King. *Come up here!*

We are called *into* His glory. Again the translators missed it. In Hebrews we read,

For it befitted him [our Father], for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto [*into His*] glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. (Hebrews 2:10 KJ2000)

The people went out of Egypt *unto* God's glory at Mount Sinai, but they refused to enter into it because of fear. Only Moses went *into* the glory of God. They failed to enter into the glory of the Father because of unbelief, but chose instead to make an idol to worship in a most sensual and devilish way while Moses was gone. But because of the perfect life and death of the Son of God we have a better hope.

Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen. (Jude 1:24-25 KJ2000)

Father has His great grace waiting for us. Paul wrote, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of

God... For if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many... For if by one man's offense death reigned by one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1-2; 15-17 KJ21) And in Hebrews we read, "Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:14-16 RSVA)

Don't settle for coming close without fully entering *into* Him. God wants to share His glory with His sons and we should pray without hesitation, "Father, take me into your glory and do whatever it takes to get me there. Don't listen to my begging and whimpering when you chasten me. Don't let me fall short of all that you have for me in your Son, Jesus. Amen."

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again unto [into] a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (1Peter 1:3 KJ2000)

Amen!



Appendix

Other into verses where the Greek εἰς or *eis* was used:

Because narrow is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads **unto** [into] life, and few there be that find it. (Matthew 7:14 KJ2000)

But go and learn what that means, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners **to** [into] repentance. (Matthew 9:13 KJ2000)

Then said He unto them, "Therefore every scribe who is instructed **unto** [into] the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." (Matthew 13:52 KJ21)

But whoever shall offend one of these little ones who believe **in** [into] me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. (Matthew 18:6 KJ2000)

This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed **on** [into] him. (John 2:11 KJ2000)

Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed **in** [into] his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. (John 2:23 KJ2000)

He that believes **on** [into] the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him. (John 3:36 KJ2000)

But whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. (John 4:14 KJ2000)

Say not, There are yet four months, and then comes harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit **unto** [into] life eternal: that both he that sows and he that reaps may rejoice together. (John 4:35-36 KJ2000)

And many of the Samaritans of that city believed **on** [into] him for the saying of the woman, who testified, He told me all that ever I did. (John 4:39 KJ2000)

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears my word, and believes on him that sent me, has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death **unto** [into] life. (John 5:24 KJ2000)

Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Do you believe on [into] the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe **on** [into] him? (John 9:35-36 KJ2000)

And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith **in** [into] Christ. (Acts 24:24 KJ2000)

Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin has reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness **unto** [into] eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 5:20-21 KJ2000)

How then shall they call on him in [into] whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a *preacher*? (Romans 10:14 KJ2000) [More correctly this should read "without it being proclaimed openly" - this word khru/ssw - Kerusso, translated "preacher," is a verb in the Greek, not a noun!]

For of him, and through him, and **to** [into] him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen. (Romans 11:36 KJ2000)

Now this I say, that every one of you says, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized **in** [into] the name of Paul? (1 Corinthians 1:12-13 KJ2000)

But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we **in** [into] him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. (1 Corinthians 8:6 KJ2000)