

# ***"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" Part I***

*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. ~ Romans 6:1-4*

Last week, we talked about the Passion of Christ (His sufferings). We spoke of what was done to Him on our behalf. The focus was solely on Jesus and not how it affected us other than the obvious.

The New Testament in particular, teaches us that the death of Jesus Christ at Mount Calvary achieved for us the following things;

- Our justification
- Allowed our sins to be forgiven
- Was our substitute (he paid the price for our sins)
- His death paved the way for our entrance into Heaven

***Isaiah 53:5-6*** But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

These are the topics we think about not only when we think of Jesus Christ death on the Cross, we tend to associate Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection to these main topics exclusively. In other words, we tend to only associate Jesus' death within this narrow range of our understanding. After we come to this surface level dept of understanding, we move on to the more complex mysteries of God and the deeply spiritual/ theological matters of Wisdom and Knowledge, or so we think.

However, the message of the cross is central to our faith. As a matter of fact, our faith would be worthless and built on foolishness, as we will soon find out, if Jesus did not die and was resurrected from the dead.

***1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:14-19*** And if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless. 15 And we apostles would all be lying about God—for we have said that God raised Christ from the grave. But that can't be true if there is no resurrection of the dead. 16 And if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. 18 In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! 19 And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world. (NLT)

All of the above is very much true and extremely significant and cannot be understated in the least. However, in doing so we fail to understand in totality (or as best as we can understand) the complete transaction that occurred at the Cross at Calvary. To only know the death of Christ and its effect towards us is to only know in part. There is a dual truth if you will, and that truth is our union with His Death and Resurrection.

We must understand that there is one aspect of Christianity that utterly distinguishes our faith and our belief from all the other religions throughout all of human history. And that one characteristic of our Christian faith that sets up apart from all the others beliefs, is the fact that Jesus Christ rose from the dead in order to live His life through the body of those who believe on His Name (the church).

I perfectly understand that there aren't many believers if any, that doesn't believe Jesus rose from the dead hence the term BELIEVER. However, I do think there are a great number of believers and most likely the vast majority of believers that do not understand we were united together with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. This fact is critical to understand if the life of Christ is to be relevant to each and every one of us.

Major W. Ian Thomas wrote in his book *The Saving Life of Christ* "On the third morning after His crucifixion, the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead and appeared to His disciples. He instructed them for some forty days and then ascended to the Father. On the first day of Pentecost He returned, not this time to be with them externally--clothed with that sinless humanity that God had prepared for Him, being conceived of Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary--but now to be *in them* imparting *to them* His own divine nature, clothing Himself with *their* humanity, so that they each became "members in particular" of a new corporate body through which Christ expressed Himself to the world of their day. He spoke with their lips. He worked with their hands. This was the miracle of new birth, and this remains the very heart of the gospel!"

When the life of Christ is lived through you, this is what it means to be a "New Creation in Christ Jesus". He redeemed us at the cross, He paid the ransom for us in order that He may live His life through us. As a result, we belong to Him, we are His possession purchased by His Blood.

Unless we know and understand that this is our inheritance and is something that is already secured for us by Jesus at the cross and already given to us by God the Father, we don't have any reason to continue. Without this foundation, there is absolutely no basis to go any further in our Spiritual journey.

*1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 6:19-20* Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, *and you are not your own?* 20 *For you were bought at a price;* therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, *which are God's.*

***What do these phrases in the Bible mean "I have been crucified with Christ or I have died with Christ or we are dead in Christ": What exactly do they mean?***

There are numerous verses in Scripture with the phrases, we are crucified with Christ, have died with Christ, dead in Christ etc. Often, and almost always I presume, most of us just skim over these phrases and move on to the subsequent verses that we understand plainly. As a result, we fail to grasp the meaning of and the significance of this most important truth. As a matter of fact, I dare to say that this truth is one of the most central truths in all of Scripture and by failing to comprehend this truth leaves the believer severely lacking in spiritual substance.

***Galatians 2:20*** I am crucified with Christ...

***Galatians 5:24*** ...they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh...

***Romans 6:6*** ... that our old man is crucified with him...

***Romans 6:8*** ...we be dead with Christ...

***Colossians 3:3*** For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

What is the Lord trying to teach us by revealing us these details. The Scriptures certainly does not suggest that we must go back 2000 years and be crucified on the same cross as Jesus. Are we to physically die when God's word says that "*we are dead and our life is hid with Christ*"

Jessie Penn Lewis writes in her book *The Centrality Of The Cross* "Now let us pass on to see the cross as the center, or fixed point, for victory over sin, over the world, over the flesh, and over the Devil. For a clear unveiling of the cross as the fixed point for the Christian victory over sin, we turn to Romans chapter 6. It is the basis chapter in the whole New Testament, where the deep meaning of the death at Calvary is set forth, in language which is extraordinary in its simplicity and clearness, and marvelous in its comprehensive explanation of the Gospel. No wonder the "god of this world" has influenced so many to relegate Romans chapter 6 the theologians, so as to keep believers from understanding its simple truth, because the deceiver knows it to be the CRUCIAL MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL, from the experimental standpoint".

The message in Romans chapter 6 reveals to us how the death of Jesus on the cross deals with the individual sinner. Here is the practical, deep and vital message to the sinner, showing him the way of complete and absolute deliverance from sin, the world, the flesh, and Satan. Here is where the foundation is laid deep and unchangeable thus equipping the believer for total victory.

Therefore, let us slowing and meticulously look at all the details in Romans chapter 6 to discover and apprehend the wealth of treasures this chapter possesses. This chapter must be recognized as the bedrock of our Spiritual life and when trials and tribulation comes, our faith will be secured to the solid foundation of Jesus Christ alone and not based upon the wisdom of man.

***v.1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?***

In verse one the Apostle Paul was referring to misrepresentations about what he said earlier in Romans chapter 3:8 ..."why not say, Let us do evil that good may come"? And in chapter 5:20 "God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned

more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant". (NLT) Paul wasn't making the assumption because we are not under the law but under grace, we can continue to sin and grace would cover our sinful deeds.

This train of thought is contrary to what the Bible teaches and will lead to the path of destruction. Those who feel that you can *willfully* continue to sin without any consequence of God's judgment is woefully mistaken. As a matter of fact, the evidence of our faith is obedience to the commandment of Christ.

**Hebrews 10:26-27** For if we sin *willfully* after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a *certain fearful expectation of judgment*, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. (note that there is grace embedded here)

**1<sup>st</sup> John 2:3-4-5** ...by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. ***By this we know that we are in Him.***

**John 14:15** If you love Me, keep My commandments.

The Lord has given us a standard by which to measure our faithfulness. We don't have to wonder or guess whether or not we are walking in faith or whether we truly love Him. Jesus Himself describes those who love Him and the indicator is keeping His commandments.

**v.2 *Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?***

The point Paul is making here "how shall we *who died to sin* live any longer in it". In other words, we the believers are to be delivered from the power of sin not by conquering it, but by dying to it. Here lies the key to understanding and victory over sin, the flesh, the world, and the devil. The pivotal secret of God's redemptive plan lies in this understanding that the cross was not only the crucifixion of Jesus, but also the crucifixion of the old man as well. When Christ died on Calvary, the sinner was united with Jesus' death and died there too.

**1<sup>st</sup> John 3:9** No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. (NASB)

This is the very reason why it's virtually impossible for a *true* Christian to continuously practice sinful behavior, and persistently live in the exact sinful way in which he lived prior to being saved.

**v.3 *Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?***

The first thing to note here is that all true believers have been "baptized into Christ Jesus". In order for us to understand what this means, we must first understand the meaning of, and how the word baptized is used in this context. Kenneth S. Wuest defines the application of this word

as such "the introduction or placing of a person or thing into a new environment or into union with something else so as to alter its condition or its relationship to its previous environment or condition". In other words, when we *were* baptized *into* Christ, we became changed from the inside out. We literally became "New Creations *in* Christ".

John MacAurthur writes in his commentary of Romans "All of us, that is all Christians, have been baptized *into* Christ Jesus, thus permanently being immersed *into* Him, so as to be made *one with Him*".

Before we continue, lets revisit Paul's initial question in verse one "*Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound*" and of course the answer is absolutely not. As a result, in verses three and four, Paul expounds upon the reasons why we shall not continue with a lifestyle of sin because we die to sin.

Today's generation is blinded to the meaning of the word for baptism used in this context. When we think of baptism, we instantaneously think of the tradition of water baptism by full immersion which is the Greek word *baptō* meaning to "dip or immerse". However, many fail to realize that the word used in these verses is derived from the root word *baptizō*, which means "immerse" but also has other meanings as well. With the Greek language, when you have two words with similar meaning, the simpler word in this case *baptō*, usually communicates the most clear-cut meaning. On the other hand, the longer version of the word, in this case *baptizō* adds special emphasis and has a more specialized meaning.

The Greeks used the word *baptizō* for about six centuries in their literature up the second century AD, and the meaning of this word always signified a change that took place by one means or the other. A very good example is the dyeing of a cloth. The cloth is submerged into a liquid substance (the dye) and when it resurfaces, it come out a permanently changed cloth. The predominate theme of this word is that of a change that has taken place i.e. the cloth changing colors.

The best example we have regarding the difference between these two words *baptō* and *baptizō* comes from the Greek physician and poet Nicander . The example he gives stems from a recipe for making pickles, which is particularly helpful because he uses both words in describing the process. Nicander says "that to make a pickle, the vegetable should first be "dipped" (*baptō*) into boiling water and then "baptized" (*baptizō*) in the vinegar solution. Both verbs concern immersing the vegetable in a solution, but the first is temporary. The second, and the act of "baptizing" the vegetable, produces a permanent change".

To understand this difference is extremely helpful in our understanding of what Paul means when he speaks of baptism in these verses. Now we can recognize how the thought of the application of a water baptism by full immersion in this context is nonsense and would lead us astray with regards to its proper meaning.

This knowledge also gives us a better understanding of what Jesus said in **Mark 16:16** "*He who believes and is baptized will be saved*". Again, the word for baptized is the word *baptizō*, and is referring to a change that has taken place as a result of the believer being united together with

Jesus by the Holy Spirit. This scripture is frequently misunderstood as a person must be baptized (*baptō*) via full submersion in order to be saved, which we know is incorrect because the thief on the cross at the crucifixion was not baptized by the submersion of water. Jesus was saying that whoever believes in Him, and his life is changed i.e. "a new creation", will be saved.

Once we apply the proper meaning of baptism to this text, then we will fully understand what the Apostle Paul is teaching us, and that is; *2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:17* if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

The emphasis of this verse is being identified with Christ, i.e. being in union with Him. This is the predominate thought Paul is trying to convey to believers.

Please note that Paul feels what the Christian is able to comprehend is of the utmost importance, that's why he says in the beginning of the verse "do you not know". This statement of fact is something Paul is stressing to the believer. In other words, he is emphasizing, don't you know that you were united together with Jesus. One of the keys to live a Holy and sanctified life is to have knowledge of what has happened to us.

I strongly feel that the believer who surrenders his life to Jesus and receives the gift of salvation based upon the gospel message of this chapter, and consciously identifies with the death of Jesus, and experiences the power thereof, at the inception of his new life, would be less likely walk in habitual defeat and spiritual weakness. As a result, falling away, backsliding, lack of spiritual growth, indulging in known sin, and the like would be greatly diminished.

#### ***v.4a Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death.***

Having an understanding of what Paul is teaching us regarding baptism, we can now move forward with greater comprehension of the subsequent subject matter of *being* dead to sin and alive *in* Christ Jesus. This is the essence of what baptism means to the believer, we have been transformed from the old man in Adam and made and a new man in Christ.

Now, we must confront what Paul meant when he wrote "*we were buried with Him through baptism into death*". In order to gain understanding, we have to have an understanding of the significance of a burial.

James Montgomery Boice wrote in his Expository Commentary of Romans Volume II "The reason burial is an important step even beyond death is that burial puts the deceased person out of this world permanently. A corpse is dead to life. But there is a sense in which it can still be said to be in life, as long as it is around. When it is buried, when it is placed in the ground and covered with earth, it is removed from the sphere of this life permanently. It is gone. That is why Paul, who wanted to emphasize the finality of our being removed from the rule of sin and death to the rule of Christ, emphasizes it. He is repeating but also intensifying what he has already said about our death to sin. "You have not only died to it," he says. "You have been buried to it". To go back to sin once you have been joined to Christ is like digging up a dead body".

Please understand that the baptism (*baptizō*) we are talking about here is something that the believer cannot do for himself. This baptism is exclusively the work of the Holy Spirit, and is something that has been done to us. Boice also wrote "That is what you have professed if you have been baptized (*baptō*), particularly if you have been baptized as an adult. You have told the world that you are not going back, that you are going forward with Jesus.

***v.4b that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.***

Having said all of the above, the thought of most is probably, what happens if I return to my old sinful life, and in some cases the violation has already accrued, they currently practicing and living a sinful lifestyle. In response to this matter, we must consider three points:

- Your conscience will not allow us to continue in sin, if we are truly saved. That's not to say that the believer has not sinned, or will never sin again. No, the Bible teaches us that " If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us". The bottom line is that you will never be able to enjoy the practice of sin and the lifestyle of sin without the Holy Spirit convicting you of that sin in your conscience.
- The Lord will intervene to prevent you from sinning. Again, that not to say that God will actually stop you from sinning. However, He will make your life so miserable that you will beg for mercy and forgiveness while running back to Him as fast as you possibly can. Remember what is said in

***Hebrew 12:6-8*** For the LORD disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child." As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? If God doesn't discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children at all.

- Which leads us the final point, and that is, if you can continue to practice sin, and live a sinful lifestyle with a clear conscience and no discipline from God then you most likely are not truly born again. As a matter of fact, it would be better not to have even know about the gospel of truth than to know it and turn you back on it according to

***2nd Peter 2:19-21*** ...For you are a slave to whatever controls you. And when people escape from the wickedness of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and then get tangled up and enslaved by sin again, they are worse off than before. It would be better if they had never known the way to righteousness than to know it and then reject the command they were given to live a holy life.

Remember what we previously talked about in verse one:

***Hebrews 10:26-27*** For if we sin ***willfully*** after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a ***certain fearful expectation of judgment***, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.