

Dying To Self And Living For Christ

Philippians 2:5-11, *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery 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. Wherefore God also hath 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.”*

Jesus said in John 12:24, *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”*

To live the life that God desires and expects us to live, we need to understand what the Bible teaches concerning the principle of **DEATH AND RESURRECTION**. Life comes out of death! All four Gospels teach the concept that there must be death to the believer's *soul-activity* – that is, his mind, will, and emotions.

The “*soul*” of the believer is dealt with by “*bearing his cross daily.*” There is an unending, day-by-day, need for the Cross to operate in our life! Jesus states this principle this way, *“Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it”* (Mark 8:34-35). This death and resurrection principle must abide in our life daily.

Death to the *soul*- and - Life to the *spirit*

The believer's “*soul*” is what is standing in the way the a full Life in Christ Jesus. Jesus teaches that we must “*lose*” it – in order to make way for the fullness of His Life. We live by our “*natural*” life – a slave to our temperament – are “*set in our ways*” – our emotions directing our life – then, we will never be pliable in the Lord's hands!

Our “*soul*” is the seat to our natural energy – consisting of our mind, our will, and our emotions! Only as we are willing to “*die to self,*” will we find God will then release the power of His resurrection into our life. We gain Christ's power to direct and empower us with His fresh Life, only as we are willing to “*lose*” our self life. We must go through Gethsemane and the Cross but everything will be given back in glorious resurrection life. We will gain far more than we will ever lose - if we are willing to “*lose*” *self!*

It's not that we lose use of our faculties – we still have our “*soul*” – but our soul is not now our life-spring. We no longer live by our “*self*” desires. By the help of the Holy spirit, we “*use*” our soul for God's glory. Our self-life does not “*use*” us!

The Holy Spirit makes this revealing truth very plain in Romans 6:1-14: *“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye 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 like 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 planted together 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 henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

Our "old man" is crucified with Christ when we were baptized "into the Body of Christ" at our new-birth experience. We must "reckon" – [regard yourselves – think of yourselves as dead to sin – consider yourselves as having ended your relation to sin – look upon yourselves as dead to the appeal and power of sin but alive and sensitive to the call of God] – this truth by faith!

Death to the "soul" is when we live subordinate to the Holy Spirit, giving Him dominion over our "spirit" – which was made alive at our new-birth (John3:6). Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 2:2, "I resolved to know nothing, except Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

Life From Death Taught in Each of the Gospels

Jesus teaches in Matthew 10:38-39, "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it." Note that "taking one's cross" and "following Jesus" is the same thing!

A born-again believe chooses to live according to his "soul" life, or he is willing to "lose" [die to the soul's desires] and live according to the Life of Jesus Christ within.

Mark 8:33-35, "When He [Jesus] had turned about and looked on His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind Me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God – [your mind is not on the things of God – your outlook is not God's - you are not looking at things from God's point of view] - but the things that be of men. And when He had called the people unto Him with His disciples also, He said unto them, Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it."

Reading the text of this passage, Peter had just attempted to keep Jesus from going into Jerusalem. He meant well, because he knew that Jesus might be killed. But Jesus told Peter that he was listening to his natural instinct, and not his "spirit," by which God desired to direct his actions.

Luke 17:29-30, "The same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

Jesus draws a parallel between Lot leaving Sodom and His return to this Earth. Note, verses 34-35, "I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken,

and the other left.” This passage (verses 34-35) clearly refers to Christ’s return. Let’s look at the passage between verses 29-30 and 34-35. Verses 31-33 reads, “In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away; and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot’s wife.” Note how verse 33 ties it all together, “Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.”

Clearly, this passage warns believers not to be engaged in the “*things of this world*” – [not necessarily just sinful things] – just ordinary life – marriage, planting, eating, buying and selling, etc. It refers to just becoming so occupied by the things that the “*soul*” is after, that one is not lead by the Holy Spirit, in his spirit. Jesus said it this way in His Sermon on the Mount, “*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*” (Matthew 6:21). The real question is, “*Where is your heart?*”

John 12:24-25, “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.*”

Note, again, how our “*soul*” is linked with death and dying. For a “*grain of wheat*” to be fruitful, it must die, in order to allow the life within to manufacture itself! Christ willingly gave His Life, to provide Life, so that others might live. We, too, must be “*life-imparters*” – sharing God’s Life through our life, so that others can live.

The death of Jesus Christ is emblematic of us dying to our natural life. Christ’s resurrection is an outward sign of the New Life in Christ Jesus that we are to live!

I close with the command given to us in 2 Corinthians 4:11-12, “*For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you.*” The fact is – **we are all guilty!**

There is a double meaning in the mob’s reckless willingness to accept the guilt for the blood of Jesus Christ. Little did this bloodthirsty multitude know what the blood for which they screamed would soon be shed to “wash away the sin of the world. John, the Baptism cried, “*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*” 1 John 1:7 says, “*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 cleanseth us from all sin.*”

Let’s permit that Wash Basin to mean more to us than just ordinary water from a palace pitcher. Let’s allow it be emblematic of what Scripture calls “*the washing of regeneration.*” (Titus 3:5). God can wash away all our cowardly efforts to shirk our responsibilities and give us new opportunities to be involved the way God wants us to!

There was a story in the Nashville, Tennessee Newspaper of a lady name Lila Craig who hadn’t missed attending church for 1,040 Sundays. The editor commented, “*It makes one wonder what’s the matter with Mrs. Craig. Doesn’t it ever rain or snow in her town on Sunday? Doesn’t she ever go anywhere on Saturday night so she’s too tired to get up on Sunday morning? Doesn’t she ever attend family picnics or reunions on the weekend? Doesn’t she ever have headaches, a cold, nervous spells, or read the Sunday paper? Hasn’t she ever become angry at the minister or had her feelings hurt by a member of the church or felt justified staying home to hear a good sermon on television or radio? What’s the matter with Mrs. Craig?*”

What's the matter? Mrs. Craig had learned and believed in accepting her God given responsibility that the `buck stopped here' she wasn't about to pass it on to anyone else."

For her, that Wash Basin meant - *"Take my life and let it be consecrated. Lord to Thee."*