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Lesson One

Sin, Sins and the Power of the Blood

When it comes to “*Living the Christian Life*” it seems that everyone has his or her own opinion. Different parts of the country have various views on what Christian Living entails and what they should, and should, not do. Every denomination has its own view on what a true Christian is and how the Christian life ought to be lived. Everyone can’t be right, so where do I turn to find the truth on this matter? The only reliable source that can be counted on constantly and consistently, of course, is the Word of God. The purpose of this study is to search God’s Word to find an answer the question, “*What Does Scripture reveal concerning Christian living?*”

Whenever we read certain passages of Scripture --- for instance, like the Sermon on the Mount -- we can’t help but ask, “*Can the life that is described in God’s Word really be lived here on earth?*” The answer is, as we will see, “*The Christian life as depicted in the Bible can **only** be lived by the Son of God Himself.*”

The Apostle Paul gives the definition of the Christian life in Galatians 2:20, where he writes, “*It is no longer I, but Christ.*” Paul is not speaking of some Christian life that is unique, or rare -- some higher level of Christianity that is lived by only a few, but rather, He is presenting what *every* believer’s life should be. Listen as Paul summarizes, “*I live no longer, but Christ lives His life in me.*”

God’s Word makes it clear in that He has only one answer to every human need -- that answer is, **Jesus Christ!** In God’s dealings with man He works by *taking the person out of the way* -- and **substituting Christ** in their place. Jesus Christ died instead of man to pay the penalty for man’s forgiveness! He lives - (instead of man) -- for man’s deliverance.

We must see that Scripture teaches *two* substitutions – (1) Jesus’ Substitute on the Cross to secure our forgiveness and – (2) He Substitutes His life *within* the believer, securing personal victory!

It will help us greatly, and save us from a lot of confusion, if we keep constantly before us the fact, that God will answer all our questions in one way only, namely, *by showing us more of His Son.*

The Difference between, “Sins” and “Sin”

In the first eight chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle Paul speaks of living the Christian life. Let’s look at this passage from a *practical* -- and *experimental* -- point of view.

First, note the two divisions in these first 8 chapters of Romans. The first four-and-a-half chapters -- (from 1:1 to 5:11) -- is the first half of this unit, while the three-and-a-half chapters -- (from 5:12 to 8:39) -- the second half. Careful reading reveals that the subject matter of these two sections is not the same. In the first section the *plural* word “sins” is mentioned again and again, while in the second section the plural word, “sins” hardly occurs, but the singular word “*sin*” is used over and over and is, indeed, the subject that is mainly dealt with in this second half of the first 8 chapters of the book of Romans.

The reason for this is because the first section deals with the question of the sins one has committed – which are many and can be enumerated. However, the second section deals with the question of *sin* (single) as *a principle working in man*. No matter how many sins one commits, it is always the “*sin nature*” within that leads him to commit these sins. Of course, man needs forgiveness for sins, but he *also* needs deliverance from the *power* of *sin*. It is sins (plural) that touches a person’s conscience, however, it is the sinful nature within that touches the person’s life. One may receive forgiveness for all their sins, but because of the sinful nature, which they have, as a result of Adam’s race, there is no abiding peace.

When a person accepts the knowledge of the Good New of Jesus Christ and God's light begins to shine into his heart he seeks God for forgiveness, because he realizes he has committed sins (plural). However, once he has received forgiveness of sins, he soon makes a new discovery, namely, the discovery of the power of a sinful nature within.

Listen to what Paul has to say about his carnal nature, “[13] *Sin working death in me...* [14] *I am carnal, sold under sin.* [15] *For that which I do -- I allow not: for what I would, -- that do I not; but what I hate -- that do I.* [16] *If then I do that which I would not...* [17] *it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me.* [18] *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.* [19] *For the good that I would -- I do not: but the evil which I would not -- that I do.* [20]

Now if I do -- that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me. [21] I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. [22] For I delight in the law of God after the inward man [my spirit, within]: [23] 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. [24] O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:13-24).

The new believer soon realizes not only has he *committed sins*; he discovers something else is wrong within. He discovers that he has the *nature* of a sinner. There is an inward inclination to sin, a power within that draws him to sin. When that power breaks out he commit sins. He may seek and receive forgiveness, but then, regardless how hard he tries not too, he sins *again!* His life goes around in a vicious circle of -- sinning -- and being forgiven -- and then sinning again.

Of course, we appreciate the blessed fact of God's forgiveness, but I want us to think of something more than that. I want to talk of deliverance. We need forgiveness for what we have done, but we also need deliverance from what we are.

God's Double Remedy

These first eight chapters of Romans give *two* aspects of salvation: first, it speaks of forgiveness of our sins (plural), and second, it speaks of deliverance from *sin* (singer). With this in mind, let's notice another difference in these two sections of the first 8 chapters of Romans.

In the first part (that is, Romans 1:1 through 5:11), there are two references to the Blood of Jesus Christ -- in chapter 3:25 and in chapter 5:9. A new idea is introduced in chapter 6:6, where it states that we have been "*crucified with Christ*." The first section deals with the aspect of the work of Christ as it is represented by "*the Blood shed for our justification through the remission of sins*." This terminology is not carried on in the second section, but rather, the presentation of Christ's work centers in the aspect of His work represented by "*the Cross*," that is to say, by our union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection.

This distinction is an important one because "*the Blood*" deals with what we have done, whereas "*the Cross*" deals with what we are. The Blood disposes of our sins, while the Cross gives victory over our sinful nature, striking at the root of our capacity for sin. This second aspect is what I want us to consider in this study.

The Problem Of Our Sins

First, consider the precious Blood of the Jesus Christ and its value to us in dealing with our sins and justifying us in the sight of God. This is set forth for us in the following passages:

"All have sinned" (Romans 3:23).

"God commendeth His own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through Him [that is, through the blood of Jesus Christ]" (Romans 5:8,9).

"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, by His blood, to shew His righteousness, because of the passing over of the sins one aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the shewing, I say, of His righteousness at this present season: that He might Himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:24-26).

Later in this study we will look more closely at the nature of the fall and the way of recovery, but, at this point I just want to remind ourselves that when sin came in it found expression in an act of disobedience to God (Romans 5:19). Whenever this occurs the thing that immediately follows is guilt.

Sin enters as disobedience, and creates first of all a separation between God and man. Man is separated from God. God cannot have fellowship with him, because there is something that hinders -- it is that which is known throughout Scripture as "*sin*." It was God who said, "*They are all under sin*" (Romans 3:9). Second, there is a "*sin nature*" within man that constitutes a barrier to his fellowship with God. This estrangement from God causes man a sense of guilt.

Man, himself, because of his awakened conscience, says, "*I have sinned*" (Luke 15:18). And this isn't all -- our sense of guilt gives Satan grounds of accusation in our hearts and, also provides him with grounds of accusation before God. Satan is "*the accuser of the brethren*" (Revelation. 12:10) who says, "*You have sinned.*"

God's purpose is to redeem us -- to bring us back to God. Jesus Christ had to do something about these *three* questions of (1) sin and (2) of guilt and (3) of Satan's charge against us.

Our sins must be dealt with first, and, the precious Blood of Christ accomplished this. It is the Blood of Jesus Christ as shown in Scripture to operate effectually in these three ways, *God-ward, man-ward and Satan-ward*. Our guilt is dealt with and our guilty conscience set free as God's Word reveals the value of that Blood, and also answers any accusations of Satan.

We must appropriate these values of the Blood of Christ if we are to live victoriously. This is a first essential. We must have a basic knowledge of the fact of the death of Christ Jesus as *our* Substitute upon the Cross, and a clear comprehension of the effectiveness of Christ Jesus' Blood for our sins, for without this we have not started. Let's look then at these three matters more closely.

The Blood Is Primarily For God

The Blood "*is for atonement*" and has to do mainly with our standing before God. We need forgiveness for the sins we have committed, lest we come under judgment. God's Word assures us that they are forgiven, not because God overlooks what we have done, but rather because He sees the Blood covering our sins. The Blood is therefore not primarily for us but for God. To understand the value of Christ's Blood we must accept God's valuation of it. If we do not know something of the value set upon the Blood by God then we can never know what its value is for us. As His Holy Spirit reveals the value that God places upon the Blood -- we receive its benefits and find how precious indeed the Blood is. However, the first aspect of Christ's Blood is God-ward.

Throughout the Old and New Testaments the word "*blood*" is used in connection with the idea of atonement, over a hundred times, and it is something, first of all, for God, Himself.

In the Old Testament calendar there is one day that has a great bearing on the matter of our sins -- the day is the *Day of Atonement*. Nothing explains this question of sins so clearly as the description of that day. We go to Leviticus 16 and find that on the Day of Atonement the blood was taken from the sin offering and brought into the Most Holy Place and there it was sprinkled before the Lord *seven times*. We must be very clear about this because it is important to remember. On that day the sin offering was offered publicly in the court of the Tabernacle. Everything was there in full view and could be seen by everyone. But the Lord commanded that no man should enter the Tabernacle itself except the High Priest. He alone would take the blood and, going into *the Most Holy Place*, sprinkle the blood there to make atonement before the Lord. *Why?* It was because the High Priest was a type of Jesus Christ in His redemptive work (Read Hebrews 9:12,12), and so, in figure, the High Priest was the one who did this work. No one except he could even draw near to enter in. Moreover, connected with his going in there was but one act -- the presenting of the blood to God as something He had accepted, something in which He could find satisfaction. It was a transaction between the High Priest and God in the Sanctuary, away from the eyes of the men who were to benefit by it. This is what God required. The Blood is, in the first place, for Him!

Scripture describes even earlier than this, in Exodus 12:13, the shedding of the blood of the Passover Lamb in Egypt for Israel's redemption. This is one of the best types in the Old Testament of our redemption. The blood was put on the lintel and on the door-posts, whereas the meat, the flesh of the lamb, was eaten inside the house. God said: "*When I see the blood, I will pass over you.*" Here we have another illustration of the fact that the blood was not meant to be presented to man but to God, for the blood was put on the lintel and on the door-posts, where those feasting inside the house would not see it.

God Is Satisfied With Christ Jesus' Blood

It is God's holiness and His righteousness that demands that a sinless life be given for man. There is life in the Blood, and Christ's Blood had to be poured out for us, for our sins. God is the One who requires it to be so. God is the One who demands that

the Blood be presented, in order to satisfy His own righteousness, and it is He who says, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." The Blood of Christ wholly satisfies God.

One can have a misunderstanding at this point. It is possible for unbelievers to be wholly untroubled by their conscience -- *until the Word of God begins to arouse them*. That is because their conscience is *dead*. When, however, they believe, their awakened conscience becomes acutely sensitive, and -- this can constitute a real problem! The sense of sin and guilt becomes so great it is almost cripples them by causing them to lose sight of the true effectiveness of the Blood. It seems that their sins are so real, and some particular sin troubles them so often, that they come to the point where their sins loom larger than the Blood of Christ.

The whole trouble is that they are trying to *sense* Christ's Blood; trying to *feel* its value and to estimate *subjectively* what the Blood is for them. They cannot do it! It doesn't work that way. The Blood is **first** for God to see. We must accept God's evaluation of it. In doing so we find our evaluation. If we try to come to an evaluation by way of *feelings* we will get nothing -- we remain in darkness. It is a matter of *faith in God's Word*. We have to believe that the Blood is precious to God *because He says it is so* (1 Peter 1:18,19). If God can accept the Blood as a payment for our sins and as the price of our redemption, *then we can rest assured that the debt has been paid*. If God is satisfied with the Blood, then the Blood must be acceptable. Our evaluation of it is only according to His evaluation. Let's remember that God is holy and righteous, and that a holy and righteous God has the right to say that the Blood is acceptable in His eyes and has fully satisfied Him.

The Believer's Access To God by Way of The Blood

Scripture teaches that the Blood of Christ satisfied God, however, we need to see that it will satisfy us also. Therefore, Christ's Blood has a second value that is *man-ward* in cleansing our conscience. In Hebrews 10:22 we find that the Blood does exactly this. We are to have "*hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience*" according to.

The writer of Hebrews does not tell us that the Blood of the Jesus Christ cleanses our hearts, and then stop in his statement. It is important that we look carefully at just what he does say. In our praying, God often understands what we *mean* rather than what we *say*. It isn't completely Scripturally for us to pray, "*Lord, cleanse my heart from sin by Your Blood.*" God tells us, "*The heart is desperately wicked -- sick*" (Jeremiah 17:9), and He must do something more fundamental than cleanse it -- He gives us ***a new one!***

You don't wash and iron clothing that you are going to throw away. As we will see, the "*flesh*" is too bad to be cleansed. *It must be crucified!* The work of God within us must be something wholly new. "*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you*" (Ezekiel 36:26).

Nowhere in the Bible is it stated that the Blood cleanses our hearts. Its work is not *subjective* in that way, but wholly *objective*, before God. True, the cleansing work of

the Blood is seen in Hebrew 10 to have reference to the heart, but it is in relation to the conscience, "*Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.*" What is the meaning?

It means that there was something intervening between our *self* and God, and, as a result, we had an "*evil conscience*" whenever we sought to approach Him. It constantly reminded us of the barrier that stood between our *self* and God. But now, through the power of the precious Blood, something new has resulted. God has made this known in His Word that He has removed that barrier of our evil conscience. When we believe in and accepted that truth, our conscience is at once cleared and our sense of guilt removed, and we have no more an evil conscience toward God.

We all know what a precious thing it is to have a conscience void of offense in our dealings with God. A heart of faith and a conscience clear of any and every accusation are both essential, since they are interdependent. As soon as we find our conscience is uneasy our faith grows dim and immediately we find we cannot face God. In order to keep our fellowship with God we must realize and remember the value of the Blood. God keeps short accounts, and we are "*made nigh by the Blood*" every day, every hour and every minute. It never loses its efficacy as our grounds of access if we will but lay hold on it. When we enter the most Holy Place, on what ground dare we enter but by the Blood of Jesus Christ?

The way into the Presence of God -- Is it by the Blood or by some other means? What do we mean when we say, "*by the Blood*"? It means that the way into the Presence of God is in recognition of our sins, confessing that we have need of cleansing and of atonement, and that we come to God on the basis of the finished work of Jesus Christ. We approach God through *Christ's merit* alone, and never on the basis of any attainment on our part -- never on the ground that we have been extra good or patient, or that we have done something for the Lord. We must come by "*way of the Blood*" *every time!* The temptation to so many of us when we try to approach God is to think that because God has been dealing with us -- because He has been taking steps to bring us into something more of Himself and has been teaching us deeper lessons of the Cross -- He has thereby set before us new standards, and that only by attaining to these can we have a clear conscience before Him. **No!** A clear conscience is *never* based upon any attainment of our own. It can only be based on the work of Jesus Christ in the shedding of His Blood.

It is a mistake to think in terms such as, "*Well, today I have been very careful. I have been doing better. This morning I read God's Word in a very solemn manner, and I prayed more.*" Or, perhaps one might think, "*Today I have had difficulty with the others. I began the day feeling very gloomy and moody; I am not feeling too good about it all. It seems that there must be something wrong; therefore I cannot approach God.*"

What is our basis of approach to God? Do we come to Him on the uncertain ground of our *feeling* --- the feeling that we may have achieved something for God? Or

is our approach based on something far more secure, namely, the fact that Christ's Blood has been shed, and that God looks on that Blood and is satisfied?

If there were possible that the Blood could suffer any change, the basis of your approach to God would be less trustworthy. ***But the Blood has never changed and never will!*** Our approach to God can always be with boldness; and that boldness is ours through the Blood and never through any personal attainment of our own. Whatever be our measure of attainment, when we make a conscious move into the Most Holy Place, immediately we have to take our stand upon the shed Blood. Whether we have had a good day or a bad day, whether we have consciously sinned or not, our basis of approach is always the same -- *the Blood of Christ!* That is the ground upon which we may enter, and there is no other way!

As with many other stages of development in our Christian experience, this matter of access to God has *two phases* -- an initial and a progressive one. The initial phases is presented to us in Ephesians 2 and also here in the 10th chapter of the book of Hebrews. Initially, the Blood secures our standing with God, for we are "*made nigh in the blood of Christ*" (Ephesians 2:13). However, thereafter our ground of continual access is still by the Blood! The writer of Hebrews exhorts us, "*Having therefore...boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus...let us draw near*" (Hebrews 10:19,22). To begin with --- the Blood made us nigh, and to continue in that new relationship we come through the Blood every time! It is not that we were saved on one basis and then maintain our fellowship on another basis. *This is simply the A.B.C. of the Gospel!* The trouble with many is that they have moved away from the A.B.C. and thought they had progressed and no longer needed to come to God by way of the Blood. We can never do that! No, our initial approach to God is by the Blood, and every time we come before Him --- it is the same. Right to the end it will always and only be on the ground of Jesus Christ's Blood.

This doesn't mean that we should live a careless life -- as we will study another aspect that will show that God contemplated everything by the death of Christ. But, for now let's keep our thoughts on the Blood. That it is enough!

We may be weak, but looking at our weakness will never make us strong. No trying to feel bad and doing penance will never help us to be even a little bit more holy. There is no help for us in trying to live a victorious Christian life that way. So let us be bold in our approach *because of the Blood*. We need to pray some like, "*Lord, I do not know fully what the value of the Blood is, but I know that the Blood has satisfied You, so the Blood is enough for me, and it is my only plea. I see now that whether I have really progressed, whether I have really attained to something or not is not the point. Whenever I come before You, it is always on the ground of Christ's precious Blood.*" Then our conscience is really clear before God. No conscience could ever be clear apart from the Blood. It is the Blood that gives us boldness.

"No more conscience of sins!" These are tremendous words from Hebrews 10:2. Or, as other translations renders this phrase, *"no longer have any consciousness of sins;"* or, still another translation renders it as, *"our consciences would no longer reproach us of sin."* We are cleansed from every sin and we can truly echo the words of Paul, *"Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin"* (Romans 4:8).

Overcoming Satan, Our Accuser

In view of what we have studied so far, we can now turn to face the enemy, for there is a further aspect of the Blood that is *"Satan-ward."* Satan's most strategic activity in this day is as *"the accuser of the brethren"* (Revelation 12:10) and it is this that our Lord, Jesus Christ, confronts him with by His special ministry as High Priest *"through His own blood,"* as we read in Hebrews 9:12.

How does the Blood operate against Satan? It does so by putting God on the side of man against Satan. The Fall (man's first sin) brought something into man that gave Satan a footing *within* man -- with the result that God was compelled to withdraw Himself from sinful, disobedient man. Man is now outside the garden -- beyond reach of the glory of God (Romans 3:23) -- because he is inwardly, as a result of Adam's race, estranged from God. Because of what man has done, there is something in him that, until it is removed, renders God morally unable to defend him. But, (*hallelujah!*) the Blood removes that barrier and restores man to God and God to man! Man is in favor with God now, and because God is on his side *he can face Satan without fear.*

1 John 1:9 states, *"The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin."* This is more accurately translated as, *"every sin"* because it isn't exactly referring to *"all sin"* in the general sense, but rather, to *"every sin,"* -- every item! What does it mean? This is a marvelous thing! God is the light, and as we walk in the light with Him everything is exposed and open to that light, so that God can see it all -- *and yet* the Blood is able to cleanse from *every* sin! What a cleansing! It is not that I don't know myself and have a profound knowledge of who, and what, I am -- nor that God doesn't have a perfect knowledge of me. It is not that I try to hide something from God, or that God overlooks something. No, it is that He is in the light and as I am in the light, it is *there* that the precious Blood cleanses me from every sin. The Blood is enough!

We are tempted, at times, to be oppressed by our weakness and may be tempted to think that there are sins which are almost unforgivable. But let's remember God's Word, *"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from every sin."* That includes *"every"* sin -- big sins, small sins, sins that may be very sinful and sins that may not seem so sinful; sins that we think can be forgiven and sins that seem unforgivable -- *all* sins, conscious or unconscious, remembered or forgotten, are included in those words, *"every sin."* ***"The blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from every sin,"*** and it does so because it satisfies God!

Since God, seeing all our sins in the light, can forgive them on the basis of the Blood, what ground of accusation has Satan? Satan may accuse us before Him, but *"If*

God is for us, who is against us?" (Romans 8:31). God points him to the Blood of His Son. It is the sufficient answer against which Satan has no appeal. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Romans 8:33,34).

Again our need is to recognize the absolute sufficiency of the precious Blood. *"Christ having become a High Priest...through His own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:11,12). He was Redeemer once! He has been High Priest and Advocate for over two thousand years. He stands in the presence of God, and "He is the propitiation ["personal atonement," or, "atoning sacrifice"] for our sins" (1 John 2:1,2). Look at the words of Hebrews 9:14, "How much more shall the blood of Christ..." The New Testament writers underline the sufficiency of Christ's ministry. It is enough for God!*

What then should our attitude toward Satan be? This is important, because he accuses us not only before God but in our own conscience also. He says, *"You have sinned, and you keep on sinning. You are weak, and God can have nothing to do with you."* This is his argument. And our temptation is to look within and in self-defense to try to find in our self -- that is, in our feelings or our behavior -- some ground for believing that Satan is lying, that he is wrong! We are tempted, as well, to admit our helplessness and to yield to depression and despair. So accusations become the greatest and most effective of Satan's weapons. He points to our sins and seeks to charge us with them before God. If we accept his accusations we go down hill in our spiritual walk with God.

The reason we so readily accept Satan's accusations is, whether we realize it or not, that we still have some hope in our own righteousness. The ground of our expectation is wrong! Satan has succeeded in making us look in the wrong direction. Thereby he wins his point, rendering us ineffective. But if we learn to put no confidence in the flesh, we will not wonder if we sin, for the very nature of the flesh is to sin.

Can you understand what this means? It is because we have not come to appreciate our true nature in Christ Jesus. Because we fail to see how helpless we are -- we still have some expectation in ourselves. The result is that when Satan comes along and accuses us, we go down under his accusations.

God is well able to deal with our sins, but He cannot deal with the believer who crumbles under Satan's accusations, because such a person is not trusting in the Blood of Jesus Christ. The Blood speaks in his favor, but his is listening instead to Satan. Christ is our Advocate but we, the accused, side with the accuser. We have not recognized that we are unworthy of anything but death. (We will study later, that we are only fit to be crucified anyway!) We have not recognized that it is God alone that can answer the accuser, and that in Christ's precious Blood He has already done so.

Our salvation lies in looking to Jesus Christ and in seeing that the Blood of the Lamb has met the whole situation created by our sins and has answered it! That is the sure foundation on which we stand. Never should we try to answer Satan with our good conduct -- always with the Blood. Yes, we are sinful, but --- praise God, the Blood cleanses us from *every* sin. God looks upon the Blood whereby His Son has met the charge, and Satan has no more ground of attack. Our faith in the precious Blood and our refusal to be moved from that position can alone silence Satan's charges and put him to flight (Romans 8:33,34); and so it will be to the very end (Revelation 12:11). What an emancipation it would be if we saw from God's point of view the precious Blood of His dear Son!

Lesson Two

The Importance of The Cross of Christ

Remember, that the first 8 chapters of Romans fall into two sections:

1. **Chapters 1:1 through 5:11** speaks of the *Blood* of Jesus Christ, showing man's sinning actions! (*Man is a sinner because he sins*)
2. **Chapters 5:12 through 8:39** speaks of the *Cross*, showing, man a sinner by nature! (*Man is born a sinner. He has a nature to sin*)

The Blood of Christ is essential for forgiveness – however -- the Cross is essential for deliverance. Lesson one dealt with the first of these two sections, let's look at the second section now -- *the Cross of Christ!* Before we do, I want to draw our attention to a couple of truths in this passage that emphasizes the difference in subject matter between the two sections.

Two aspects of *Christ's resurrection* are mentioned in these two sections. Christ's resurrection is revealed in chapter 4 and, again in chapter 6. In **Romans 4:25** the resurrection of Christ is mentioned in relation to our *justification*. It states, "*Jesus our Lord...was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification.*" This verse speaks of our standing before God. However, in **Romans 6:4** the resurrection of Christ is spoken of as imparting to us *new life* and a *holy walk!* – It states, "*That like as Christ was raised from the dead...so we also might walk in newness of life.*" It has reference to our behavior. Note that Romans 4:25 speaks of the power of Christ's resurrection being for our *justification*, while Romans 6:4 speaks of the power of Christ's resurrection being for our daily behavior – or, *sanctification*.

"Peace" is also spoken of in both sections, in the 5th and 8th chapters. **Romans 5:1** tells of "*peace with God*" which comes as a result of justification by faith in His Blood. It states, "*Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" This means that we now have forgiveness of sins [Plural]. God will no longer be a cause of dread to us. We "*who were enemies to God*" have been "*reconciled... through the death of His Son*" (Romans 5:10).

It is too long before we find that we have a lot of trouble with *our self*. There is still unrest within, because within there is something that “*draws us to sin.*” There is “*peace with God,*” but there is *no peace with our self*. There is in fact *civil war* going on in our own heart.

This condition is described in Romans 7 where our flesh and our spirit are in deadly conflict within us. “*The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*” (Romans 8:7). This struggle within is described in Romans 7:15 through 20. The portrayal of this inner struggle leads us into chapter 8 – revealing God’s *inward* peace of our walk in the Spirit. “*To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace*” (Romans 8:6).

The first half of the section (Romans 1:1 through 5:11) deals, generally, with the question of *justification* (for example, see Romans 3:24-26; 4:5,25), while the second half (Romans 5:12 through 8:39) has as its main topic the corresponding question of *sanctification* (see Romans 6:19,22). As we come to realize this precious truth of “*justification by faith*” [standing before God with sins forgiven] -- (Someone adequately explained, “*justification,*” as “*Just as if I’d never sinned*”). -- Realizing this Biblical concept, we still know **only half of the story**. We still have only solved the problem of our standing before God. As we go on, God has something more to offer us, namely, the solution of *the problem of our conduct*. In each case the **second step** follows the **first**. If we only know about the first step, *justification*, we will live a defeated Christian life.

The question is, “*How then can I live a victorious Christian life?*” “*How do I attain the kind of life I read about in the New Testament?*” Of course, we must have forgiveness of sins first, we must have justification -- we must have peace with God. This is an essential foundation. But with that basis established through our first act of faith in Christ, it is still clear from Scripture that we must *move on* to something more.

We see that objectively the Blood deals with *our sins*. Jesus Christ has borne them on the Cross for us as our Substitute and has thereby obtained for us *forgiveness*, *justification* and *reconciliation*.

However, we must now go a step further in the plan of God to understand how He deals with *the sin principle in us*.

Christ’s Blood can wash away my sins, but it does not wash away my old nature – “*the old man,*” “*the flesh,*” or “*my carnal nature.*” It takes the Cross of Christ to “*crucify me.*” The Blood deals with the *sins*, but the Cross must deal with the *sinner*.

You will hardly find the word “*sinner*” in the first four chapters of Romans, because in these chapters the sinner himself is not the main subject, but rather it refers to the sin he has committed. The first time the word “*sinner*” comes into prominence is chapter 5. It is important to notice *how* the sinner is introduced there. In that chapter a

sinner is said to be a sinner because he is born a sinner -- not because he has *committed* sins!

This distinction is important. It is true that often when we want to convince someone that he is a sinner, we use Romans 3:23, where it says that, "*all have sinned.*" However, it is important to note that the teaching of Romans is not that we are "sinners because we commit sins," but rather, it teaching that "we sin because we are sinners". We are sinners by nature rather than by action. As Romans 5:19 expresses it this way, "*By one man's disobedience many were made (or `constituted') sinners.*"

Why are we sinners "*by nature?*" We are sinners because of Adam's disobedience. We do not become sinners by what we have done, but rather, because of what Adam – the father of the human race – has done and has become. In the next lesson I want to draw our attention to *what we have done* – "*all have sinned*" -- **but it is not because we have sinned that we become sinners.**

If asked, "*Who is a sinner?*" You might answer, "*One who sins.*" And, of course it is true that, one who sins is a sinner, but the fact that he sins is merely the evidence that he is already a sinner – it is not the cause! One who sins is a sinner, but it is equally true that one who does not sin, if he is of Adam's race, is a sinner also, and in need of redemption.

There are *bad* sinners and there are *good* sinners, there are *moral* sinners and there are *corrupt* sinners, but all alike are born sinners. We sometimes think that if only we had not done certain things -- all would be well. However, the trouble lies far deeper than in *what we do!* It lies in *what we are!*

To illustrate, we are born whatever *nationality* we happen to be. Someone of a particular race may be born in America -- yet unable to speak whatever nationality they may happen to be. A person is of a particular race because of his birth. *It is birth that counts!* Just so, we are all sinners, not because of our behavior, but rather, because of our parentage – we are of "*Adam's race!*" We are not sinners because we sin, we sin because we, being born of Adam's sinful race, are sinners.

We are apt to think that *what we have done* is very bad -- but that *we ourselves* are not so bad. God takes great pains to show us that we ourselves are fundamentally wrong. The root problem is the sinner, himself - he must be dealt with.

- *Our sins are dealt with by the Blood of Jesus Christ*
- *We - ourselves - are dealt with by the Cross.*

The Blood secures our pardon for what we have done; the Cross secures our deliverance from what we are.

Man's State By Nature

We come therefore to Romans 5:12-21. In this great passage, grace is brought into contrast with sin and the obedience of Christ is set against the disobedience of Adam. It is placed at the beginning of the second section of Romans (5:12 to 8:39) with which we

will now be particularly concerned. The argument found here leads to a conclusion that lies at the foundation we want to consider at this junction.

This conclusion is found in verse 19, "*For as through the one man's [Adam's] disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one [Christ] shall the many be made righteous.*" Here the Spirit of God shows first what we are, and then how we **came to be** what we are.

At the beginning of our Christian life we were concerned with our *doing*, not with our *being*. We were distressed rather by what we had *done*, and not so concerned by what we *were*. We thought that if only we could rectify certain things we would be good Christians. So, we set out to change our actions. But the result was not what we expected. We discovered to our dismay that it is something more than just a case of trouble on the outside -- *that there was in fact more serious trouble on the inside!* We tried to please the Lord, but found something *within* that did not want to please Him. We tried to be humble, but there was something in our very being that refused to be humble. We tried to be loving, but, at times, inside we felt unloving. We smiled and tried to look very gracious, but inwardly we felt decidedly ungracious. The more we tried to rectify matters on the outside the more we realized how deep-seated the trouble was within. Then we came to the Lord and said, "*Lord, I see it now! Not only what I have done is wrong -- but, it's me, oh Lord, sand in need -- **I am wrong.***"

The conclusion of Romans 5:19 begins to dawn on us. We **are** sinners! We are members of a race of people whose very "*nature*" is other than what God intended us to be. By the Fall (Adam's sin) a fundamental change took place in the character of Adam whereby he became a sinner -- one whose nature is unable to please God! The "*family likeness*" that we all share is not merely a superficial one, but extends to our inward character as well. We are "*sinners by nature.*" How did this come about? -- "*By the disobedience of one,*" states the Apostle Paul. This is not an easy concept for the natural mind to understand. Let me illustrate:

I have a common English name. (Though my grand- parents came by way of Ireland) How did I come by my name? I didn't choose it. I didn't go through the list of possible names and select one. My name in fact was not any of my doing at all. I have the name I have because of my father's name, and my father has his name because of my grandfather's name. If I act like my family name then that's who I am -- and if I *don't* act like my family name -- it still is my name. If I become President of the United States I am still me or if I become a beggar I still am me. Nothing I do -- or refrain from doing -- will makes me other than who I am.

We are all sinners not because of ourselves -- *but because of Adam!* It is not because I individually have sinned that I am a sinner but because I was in Adam when he sinned. Because by birth I come of Adam, therefore I am a part of him. What is more, I can do nothing to alter this. I cannot by improving my behavior -- make myself other than a part of Adam -- and so I was born a sinner.

There is a oneness of human life.

Our life comes from Adam. If your great-grandfather had died at the age of three, where would you be? You would have died *in* him! Your experience is bound up with his. Now in just the same way the experience of every one of us is bound up with that of Adam. None can say, "*I have never been in Eden.*" But potentially we all were there when Adam yielded to the serpent's words. So we are all involved in Adam's sin, and by being born "*in Adam*" we receive from him all that he became as a result of his sin -- that is to say, we all received the Adam-nature which is the nature of a sinner. We derive our existence from him, and because his life became a sinful life, therefore the nature that we derive from him is also sinful. So, the trouble is in our heredity, not in our behavior. Unless we can change our parentage there is no deliverance for us.

But, *hallelujah*, this is in this very same concept that we find the solution of our problem, because that is exactly how God has dealt with the situation.

As In Adam So In Christ!

In Romans 5:12 to 21 we are not only told something about Adam, we are told also something about the Lord Jesus, as well! It states, "*As through the one man's disobedience many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall many be made righteous.*" In Adam we receive everything that is of Adam, and, in Christ we receive everything that is of Christ!

The terms, "*in Adam*" and, "*in Christ*" need to be understood, and, at the risk of repetition, I will again emphasize by means of an illustration the hereditary and racial significance of the term, "*in Christ.*" This illustration is to be found in the letter to the Hebrews. In the early part of this letter the writer is trying to show that Melchizedek is greater than Levi. The author is showing that the priesthood of Christ is greater than the priesthood of Aaron who was of the tribe of Levi. In order to prove this, he has first to show that the priesthood of Melchizedek is greater than the priesthood of Levi, because the priesthood of Christ is "*after the order of Melchizedek*" (Hebrews 7:14-17), while that of Aaron is, of course, "*after the order of Levi.*" If the writer can demonstrate that Melchizedek is greater than Levi, then he has proved his point. That is the issue, and he proves it in a remarkable way.

He tells us in the 7th chapter of Hebrews that one day Abraham, returning from the battle of the kings (Genesis 14), offered a tithe of his spoils to Melchizedek and received from him a blessing. And because Abraham did so, Levi is therefore of less account than Melchizedek. Why? Because, of the fact that Abraham offered tithes to Melchizedek. But if that is true, then Jacob also "*in Abraham*" offered to Melchizedek, which in turn means that Levi "*in Abraham*" offered to Melchizedek. It is evident that the lesser offers to the greater (Hebrews 7:7). The whole point the author is making is, that Levi is less in standing than Melchizedek, and therefore the priesthood of Aaron is inferior to that of the Lord Jesus. **However, Levi, at the time of the battle of the**

kings, was not yet even thought of. Yet he was "*in the loins of his father*" Abraham -- so the writer of Hebrews could say, "*through Abraham*," he offered (Hebrews 7:9,10).

This illustrates the exact meaning of "*in Christ*." Abraham, as the head of the family of faith, includes the whole family in himself. When he offered to Melchizedek, the whole family offered (*in him*) to Melchizedek. They did not offer separately as individuals, but they were *in him*, and therefore in making his offering he included with himself all his seed.

So, we are presented with a new possibility. In Adam all was lost. Through the disobedience of one man we were all sinners by nature. By him sin entered and death through sin, and throughout the race sin has reigned unto death from that day on. **But here's the ray of light that is cast upon the scene.** Through the *obedience* of "*Another*" we may be constituted *righteous*. Where sin abounded grace did much more abound, and as sin reigned unto death, even so may grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 5:19-21). Our despair is in Adam; our hope is in Christ.

God's Way of Deliverance

God clearly intends that this consideration should lead to our practical deliverance from sin. Paul makes this quite plain when he opens chapter 6 of his letter with the question, "*Shall we continue in sin?*" His whole being recoils at the very suggestion -- "*God forbid*," he exclaims! How could a holy God be satisfied to have unholy, sin-fettered children? And so. Paul asks, "*How shall we any longer live therein?*" (Romans 6:1,2). God has made adequate provision that we should be set free from sin's dominion.

But the questions arise, "*Since we were born sinners, how can we cut off our sinful heredity?*" -- "*Seeing that we were born in Adam, how can we get out of Adam?*" Let me say at once, "*The Blood cannot take us out of Adam.*" There is only one way we can vacate Adam. Since we came in by *birth* we must go out by *death*.

To do away with our sinfulness we must do away with our life!

Bondage to sin came by birth -- deliverance from sin comes by death. It is just this way of escape that God has provided. Death is the secret of emancipation. "*We... died to sin*" (Romans 6:2).

But how can we die? Some of us have tried very hard to get rid of this sinful life, and found it most persistent. What is the way out? It is not by trying to kill ourselves, but by recognizing that **God has dealt with us in Christ.** This spiritual fact is summed up in the apostle's next statement, "*All we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death*" (Romans 6:3).

Since it is true that God has dealt with us *"in Christ Jesus."* then it is imperative that we *"get in Him!"* For this relationship to be effective seems like such a big problem. How are we to *"get into Christ?"* We find in Scripture that, here again, God comes to our help. The fact is that we have no way of *"getting in"* on our own, and, what is more important, we don't have to try to get in, for, *if* we are born-again, we *"are in."* What we could not do for ourselves God has done for us. ***He has put us into Christ.***

I Corinthians 1:30 states with certainty, *"Ye are in Christ."* How? The verse states, *"Of Him (that is, of God!) are ye in Christ."* Thank God, it is not left to us either to devise a way of entry or to work it out. We do not have to plan how to get in. God has already planned it. He has not only planned it but He has also ***performed*** it! *"Of Him – God, the Father -- are ye in Christ Jesus."* We are in! We don't have to *"try"* to get in. It is a Divine act, already accomplished.

Since this is true, certain things follow. In the illustration from Hebrews 7 that we looked at earlier we saw that *"in Abraham"* all Israel – and, therefore, Levi who was not yet born -- offered tithes to Melchizedek. They did not offer separately and individually, but they were *in Abraham* when he offered. His offering included all his seed. This is a true figure of our self as *"in Christ."* When Jesus Christ was on the Cross -- we all died -- not individually, for we had not yet been born -- but, being *"in Him,"* we died in Him. *"One died for all, therefore all died"* (2 Corinthians 5:14). When He was crucified all born-again believers were crucified.

Simple illustrations help us to understand deep spiritual truths. If you take a book and put a piece of paper in it, the piece of paper still has an identity of its own, quite separate from the book. Let's say, to illustrate, that you mail the book across country. You do not mail the paper, but the paper has been put in the book. So, where is the paper? Can the book go to wherever it is addressed -- and the piece of paper remain? Does the paper have a separate destiny from the book? **No!** Where the book goes the paper goes! If you drop the book, the paper goes too. Whatever you do with the book the piece of paper goes also. Whatever experience the book goes through the paper goes through with it -- because it is *"in the book."*

"Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus." God Himself has put us in Christ, and in His dealing with Christ God has dealt with the whole human race. Our destiny is bound up with Christ's. What He has gone through we have gone through, because to be *"in Christ"* is to be identified with Him in both His death and resurrection. He was crucified -- then what about us? Is it that we ask God to crucify us? *Never!* When Christ was crucified we were crucified, and His crucifixion is past, therefore ours cannot be future. There is not one text in the New Testament telling us that our crucifixion is in the future. All the references to our crucifixion are in the Greek aorist – (which is the *"once-for-all"* tense) -- the *"eternally past"* tense. (See: Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20; 5:24; 6:14). And just as no man could ever commit suicide by crucifixion – (that is a physical impossibility) so, also, in spiritual terms, God does not require us to crucify ourselves. We *were* crucified when Christ was crucified -- God put us in Him. That we have died in

Christ is not merely a doctrinal position – it is not just a theoretical – *it is an eternal fact!*

Christ's Death and Resurrection Representative and Inclusive

When Jesus died on the Cross, He shed His Blood, giving His sinless life to atone for our sin and to satisfy the righteousness and holiness of God. To do so was the prerogative of the Son of God alone! No man could have a share in that. Scripture never teaches that we shed our blood with Christ. In His atoning work before God He acted alone – no other could have a part. But Christ did not die only to shed His Blood: He died that *we* might die. He died as *our* Representative. In His death He included *you and me*.

Many use the terms "*substitution*" and "*identification*" to describe these two aspects of the death of Christ. The use of the word "*identification*" is good. However, we must understand that the identification is not something we attempt to accomplish – that we try to identify our self with the Christ. The word is true, but, as far as our Christian walk is concerned, the word, "*identification*," should be used later on. It is better to begin with the fact that the Lord included us in His death. It is an "*inclusive death*" of the Lord that puts us in a position to identify our self, not that we identify our self in order to be included. It is God's including us in Christ that matters. ***It is something God has done!*** For that reason those two New Testament words "*in Christ*" should always be dear to our heart!

The death of the Lord Jesus is inclusive.

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is alike inclusive. In I Corinthians 1:30 establishes the fact that we are "*in Christ Jesus*." In 1 Corinthians 15:45, 47 there is more of what it means to be "*in Christ Jesus*." Two remarkable names or titles are used of the Lord Jesus. He is spoken of there as "*the last Adam*" and He is spoken of too as "*the second man*." Scripture does not refer to Him as the second Adam but as "*the last Adam*;" nor does it refer to Him as the last Man, but as "*the second man*." The distinction is to be noted, for it preserve a truth of great value.

As the last Adam, Christ is the *sum total of humanity*; as the second Man He is the *Head of a new race*. So we have here two unions, the one relating to His death and the other to His resurrection. In the first place His union with the race as "*the last Adam*" began historically at Bethlehem and ended at the cross and the tomb. In it He gathered up into Himself all that was in Adam and took it to judgment and death, paying the penalty for man's sins. In the second place our union with Him as "*the second man*" begins in resurrection and ends in eternity -- which is to say, it never ends -- for, having in His death done away with the first man in whom God's purpose was frustrated, He rose again as Head of a new race of men, in whom God's purpose for man can be fully realized.

When Jesus was crucified on the cross, He was crucified as the *last Adam*. All that was in the first Adam was gathered up and done away "*in Him*." We were included

there. As the last Adam He wiped out the old race – as the second Man He brings in the new race. It is in His resurrection that He stands as the second Man, and there too we are included. “*Since we have become united with Him by the likeness of His death, we shall be also by the likeness of His resurrection*” (Romans 6:5). We died in Him as the last Adam; we live in Him as the second Man. The Cross is the power of God that translates us from Adam to Christ.

Lesson 3 Growing Spiritually – 1st Step: “Knowing”

Romans 6:1-11, “ (1) *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? (2) God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? (3) Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? (4) 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. (5) For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: (6) 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. (7) For he that is dead is freed from sin. (8) Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: (9) Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. (10) For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. (11) Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*”

Our “old life” ends with the Cross! Our “new life” begins with the resurrection. “*If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold they are become new*” (2 Corinthians 5:17). The Cross terminates the first creation, and out of death there is brought a new creation in Christ Jesus, the second Man. If we are “in Adam” all that is in Adam necessarily transfers upon us – it becomes ours involuntarily. We have to do *nothing* to get it. There is no need to make up our minds to lose our temper or to commit some other sin; it comes to us freely, despite ourselves. In a similar way, if we are “in Christ” all that is in Christ comes to us by free grace, without effort on our part but on the grounds of simple faith.

To the natural mind it seems impractical to say that all we need comes to us “in Christ” by free grace. How does it work out in practice? How does all this become a reality in my every day living experiences?

Studying chapters 6, 7 and 8 of Romans we see that the conditions of living the Christian life are fourfold. They are:

- (1) Knowing,
- (2) Reckoning,
- (3) Presenting ourselves to God, and
- (4) Walking in the Spirit,

And, these concepts are set forth in that order. If we would live what the Bible reveals about living the Christian life we must take all four of these steps – not one, not two, not three, but all four steps!

As we study each of them we trust the Lord will by His Holy Spirit to illumine our understanding; and that we seek His help to take these steps forward

Our Death With Christ is Already an Historic Fact

Looking at Romans 6:1-11, these verses make clear that the death of Christ Jesus is representative and inclusive. *In His death we all died!* None of us can progress spiritually without seeing this. Just as we cannot have *justification* if we have not seen Him bearing *our sins* on the Cross, so we cannot have *sanctification* if we have not seen Him bearing *us* on the Cross. Not only have our sins been laid on Him but we ourselves have been put *into* Him.

How did we receive forgiveness? We realized that the Lord Jesus died as our Substitute and bore our sins upon Himself, and that His Blood was shed to cleanse away our corruption. When we saw our sins taken away on the Cross what did we do? Did we say, “*Jesus, please come and die for my sins?*” **No!** We did not beseech Him to come and die for us again, because we realized that He had already done it.

But what is true of your forgiveness is also true of your deliverance. The work is done. There is no need to pray – **but only to praise!** God has put us all in Christ, so that when Christ was crucified we were crucified also. So there is no need to pray, “*I am a very wicked person, Lord, please crucify me.*” That would be wrong and unScriptural. We did not have to pray that our sins be forgiven – but merely accepted Christ’s accomplished work of redemption – and it is not necessary to intercede over our old carnal self? Christ’s Blood dealt with our sins, and His Cross dealt with our old carnal nature. These are accomplished facts! All that is left for us to do is to praise the Lord that when Christ died we died also – we died in Him! Praise Him for it and live in the light of it. “*Then believed they His words: they sang His praise*” (Psalm 106:12).

We, of course, believe in the death of Christ? Well, the same Scripture that says Christ died for us says also that we died with Him. Look at it again: “*Christ died for us*” (Romans 5:8). That is the first statement, and it is clear enough. But is any less clear when it continues to say, “*Our old man was crucified with him*” (Romans 6:6), or, “*We died with Christ?*” (Romans 6:8).

When are we crucified with Him? What is the date of our old man's crucifixion? Is it tomorrow? Yesterday? Today? To answer this it will help us to turn Paul's statement, “*Christ was crucified with (i.e. at the same time as) our old man.*”

As an illustration, let’s say that you go somewhere with a friend. You travel to this place together. You might say, “*My friend went with me,*” or, you might just as well say, “*I went with my friend.*” You can make either statement with equal truth, because

both are statements of fact. If, however, one of you goes at another time, maybe on another day, you could not say that you made the trip together.

Being "*crucified with Christ*" is an historic fact for the believer. We can say, reverently -- but with equal accuracy, "*I was crucified when Christ was crucified,*" or, "*Christ was crucified when I was crucified,*" because they are not two historical events, but one. Our crucifixion was "*with him.*"

Has Christ been crucified? The answer, of course, is a resounding, "**Yes!**" Then can I be otherwise? And if He was crucified over two thousand years ago, and I with Him, can my crucifixion be said to take place tomorrow? Can His be past and mine be present or future? Praise God, when Christ died in my stead, He bore me with Him to the Cross and, when He died I died. And if I believe in the death of Jesus, then I can believe in my own death just as surely as I believe in His.

Why do we believe that the Lord Jesus died? What is our ground for that belief? Is it that we *feel* He has died? No, we may never *feel* it. We believe it because the Word of God tells us so. When the Lord was crucified, two thieves were crucified at the same time. We do not doubt that they were crucified with Him, either, because the Scripture quite plainly says so.

We believe in the death of Jesus and we believe in the death of the thieves with Him. Now what about our own death? Our crucifixion is more intimate than theirs. They were crucified at the same time as the Lord but on different crosses, whereas we were crucified on the self same cross as He - ***for we were in Him when He died!*** How can we know? We can know for the one sufficient reason that God has said so. It does not depend on our feelings. If we feel that Christ has died, He has died; and if we do not feel that He died, He still has died. If we feel that we have died, we have died; and if we do not feel that we have died, we *still* have, nevertheless, just as surely died. ***These are Divine facts.*** That Christ has died is a fact, that the two thieves have died is a fact, and that we have died is also a fact. *We have died!* We are done with! We are ruled out! The self we loathe is on the Cross, "*in Christ.*" And "*he that is dead is freed from sin*" (Romans 6:7). This is the Gospel of Good News for the believer.

Our crucifixion can never be made effective by *will* or by *effort*, but rather, only by accepting what Jesus did on the Cross. Our eyes must be opened to see the finished work of Calvary. Some of us, prior to our salvation, may have tried to save ourselves. We read the Bible, prayed, went to Church, even gave. Then one day our eyes were opened and we saw that a full salvation had already been provided for us on the Cross. We just accepted that and thanked God, and peace and joy flowed our hearts. Now salvation and sanctification are on exactly the same basis. We receive deliverance from sin in the same way we receive forgiveness of sins.

For God's way of deliverance is altogether different from man's way. Man's way is to try to suppress sin by seeking to overcome it. God's way is to remove the sinner.

Many Christians mourn over their weakness, thinking that if only they were stronger all would be well. The idea that, because failure to live a holy life is due to one's spiritual impotence, something more is demanded. This reasoning leads to a false conception of the way of deliverance. If we are preoccupied with the power of sin and with our inability to meet it, then we naturally conclude that to gain the victory over sin we must have more power. "If only I were stronger," we say, "I could overcome my violent outbursts of temper" – (or, whatever it is that we are struggling with) – and so we plead with the Lord to strengthen us that we may exercise more self-control.

This rationalization is altogether wrong and is not the Biblical manner of Christian living. God's means of delivering us from sin is not by making us stronger and stronger, *but by making us weaker and weaker*. That surely appears to the natural mind a peculiar way of victory. But it is God's Divine way. God sets us free from the dominion of sin, not by strengthening our old man -- but by crucifying him; not by helping him to do anything but -- by removing him from the scene of action.

For some time, you may have tried fruitlessly to exercise control over yourself, and perhaps this is still your experience; but when once you see the truth you will recognize that you are indeed powerless to do anything! But, in setting you aside altogether, God has done it all. Such a revelation brings human self-effort to an end.

The First Step: "Knowing This..."

Christian living must begin with a very definite "*knowing*," – not just knowing something about the truth, nor is it understanding some important doctrine. It is not *intellectual* knowledge at all, but an opening of the eyes of the heart to see what we have in Christ.

How do you know your sins are forgiven? Is it because our pastor told us so? No, we just *know* it. If I ask you how you know, you simply answer, "I know it!" Such knowledge comes by Divine revelation. It comes from the Lord Himself. Of course the fact of forgiveness of sins is in the Bible, but for the written Word of God to become a living Word from God to you He had to give you "*a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him*" (Ephesians 1:17). What you needed was to know *Christ* in that way! So there comes a time, in regard to any new concern of Christ, when you know it in your own heart, you "*see*" it in your spirit. The Biblical way to state this fact is, "*A light has shined into your inner being and you are wholly persuaded of the fact.*" What is true of the forgiveness of your sins is no less true of your deliverance from sin. When once the light of God dawns upon your heart you *see* yourself "*in Christ.*" It is not because someone has told you, and not merely because Romans 6 says so. It is something more even than that. You know it because God has revealed it to you by His Spirit. You may not *feel* it; you may not fully understand it; but you *know* it, for you have seen it. Once you have seen yourself in Christ, nothing can shake your assurance of that blessed fact.

If you ask different believers who have accepted Christ as Savior and started living their Christian life – how they came by their experience into a deeper life with

Christ, some will answer one way and some another. Each stresses their own particular way of entering in and they can produce Scripture to support their experience. Unhappily many Christians are using their special experiences – what happened to them – and their special Scriptures to argue with other Christians on how one is saved. The fact of the matter is that, while Christians may enter into the deeper life by different ways, we need not regard the experiences or doctrines they stress as mutually exclusive, but rather complementary. One thing is certain, that any true experience of value in the sight of God must have been reached by way of a new discovery of the meaning of the *Person* and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is a crucial test and a safe one.

Here in Romans 6 Paul makes everything depend upon such a discovery. "**Knowing this**, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin" (Romans 6:6).

Divine Revelation Essential To Knowledge

Our first step is to seek from God a knowledge that comes by revelation -- a revelation, that is to say, not of our self but of *the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross*. Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, tells of the time he entered into Christian living. In his writings He tells of his struggle of learning how to live "*in Christ*," -- how to draw the sap out of the Vine (Christ, Himself) into himself. He knew that he must have the life of Christ flowing out through him and yet felt that he had not received it. He saw clearly enough that his need was to be found "*in Christ*." Writing to his sister from Chinking in 1869, he wrote, "*I knew that if only I could abide in Christ, all would be well, **but I could not.***"

The more he tried to get "*in Christ*" the more he found himself slipping out, until one day light dawned, revelation came and he saw.

He wrote, "*Here, I feel, is the secret: not asking how I am to get sap out of the Vine into myself, but remembering that Jesus is the Vine – He is the root, stem, branches, twigs, leaves, flowers, fruit, He, indeed is all.*"

The words of a friend helped him. "*It is not that I make myself a branch. The Lord Jesus tells me **I am a branch**. I am part of Him and I have just to believe it and act upon it. I have seen it long enough in the Bible, but I believe it now as a living reality.*"

It was as though something that had been true all the time had now suddenly become true in a new way to him personally, and he writes to his sister again, "*I do not know how far I may be able to make myself intelligible about it, for there is nothing new or strange or wonderful -- and yet, all is new! In a word, 'whereas once I was blind, now I see' – I am dead and buried with Christ -- aye, and risen too and ascended – God reckons me so, and tells me to reckon myself so. He knows best – Oh, the joy of seeing this truth -- I do pray that the eyes of your understanding may be enlightened, that you may know and enjoy the riches freely given us in Christ.*"

It is a great thing to see that we are “*in Christ!*” Think of the bewilderment of trying to get into a room in which you already are! Think of the absurdity of asking to be put in! If we recognize the fact that we *are* in, we make no effort to enter. If we had more revelation we would have fewer prayers of asking God to do that which He has already done – and more thanksgiving and praises. Much of our praying for ourselves is just because we are blind to what God has done.

Some may say, “*So many are living beautiful, saintly lives. I am ashamed of myself. I call myself a Christian and yet when I compare myself with others I feel I am not one at all. I want to know this crucified life, this resurrection life, but I do not know it and see no way of getting there.*” If we could only realize that we are nothing apart from Christ. We need to ask, “*If God has already given us everything, what do we need to pray for?*”

The natural mind rationalizes, “*I still lose my temper, and fail constantly in other areas as well – so I must pray more.*” We need to remind our self that just as we could do nothing for our justification, so we need do nothing for our sanctification.

Let’s use a simple illustration once more: Let’s say there’s a hammer in front of us and I ask you what is this? You answer, “*It’s a hammer.*” Let’s imagine that this hammer has the ability to pray, and that it starts praying something like this, “*Lord, I want very much to be a hammer. Please make me to be a hammer. Lord, give me grace to become a hammer. Please, God, make me a hammer!*” What would you say to this hammer?

Can you imagine a hammer being so silly? Wouldn’t it be nonsense to pray like that? It *is* a hammer! Many Christians are doing the same thing. God in times past has already included you “*in Christ.*” When He died, you died; when He lived, you lived. You cannot Scripturally, say, “*I want to die; I want to be crucified; I want to have resurrection life.*” The Lord simply looks at you and says, “*You are dead! You have new life!*” All your seeking and asking is just as absurd as that of the hammer. We do not need to ask the Lord to die, or to have new life in Christ Jesus – we merely need our eyes opened to see that He has done it all!

The point is that we do not have to *work* to die, we do not have to *wait* to die -- *we are dead!* We only need to recognize what the Lord has already done and to praise Him for it. When the light dawns we will praise God that He has already included us in Christ. *All that is His -- is ours!* What a change in our life when this revelation comes and faith lays hold of this Biblical truth!

The Cross of Christ Goes To The Root Of Our Problem

We must keep in our minds the fundamental nature of what the Lord has done on the Cross. We *must* see this truth. Let’s say that the government of our country wishes to deal drastically with the question of strong drink and decides that the whole country must go *dry*. How could the decision be carried into effect? How could we help? If we were to search every shop and house throughout the land and smash all the bottles of alcohol we came across, would that accomplish this proposal? Of course, it

would not! We might rid the land of every drop of liquor it contains, but behind those bottles of strong drink are the factories that produce them, and if we only deal with the bottles and leave the factories untouched, production will still continue and there would be no permanent solution of the problem. The drink-producing factories, the breweries and distilleries throughout the land, must be closed down if the drink question is to be permanently settled.

We are the factory! Our actions are the products. The ***Blood*** of the Lord Jesus dealt with the question of the products – *namely, our sins!* So the question of what we have done is settled, but would God have stopped there? What about the question of *what we are?* Our sins were produced by us. They have been dealt with, but ***how are we going to be dealt with?*** Do you believe the Lord would cleanse away all our sins and then leave us to get rid of the sin-producing factory? Do you believe He would put away the goods produced but leave us to deal with the source of production?

To ask this question is but to answer it. Of course God has not done half the work and left the other half undone. No, He has done away with the goods and also made a clean sweep of the factory that produces the goods.

The finished work of Christ really has gone to the root of our problem and dealt with it. There are no half measures with God. "***Knowing this,***" says Paul, "*That our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin*" (Romans 6:6). "***Knowing this!***" Yes, but *do you know it?* "*Or are ye ignorant?*" (Romans 6:3). May the Lord graciously open our eyes.

Lesson 4

Growing Spiritually - 2nd Step: "***Reckoning***"

There is been confusion of thought among some Christians concerning what follows this "*knowledge*" that we have been considering in chapter three. Romans 6:6 states, "*Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him.*" The tense of the verb is very precious because it puts the event back in the past – meaning it is final, once-for-all! The "*old man being crucified*" has been ***done*** and cannot be undone. Our old man has been crucified once and forever, and he cannot be un-crucified. This is "*knowing*" that we need to know.

Now, that we know this, what follows?

Look again at Romans 6. The next command is in verse 11, "*Even so **reckon** ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin.*" This is clearly the natural outcome to verse 6. Read them together: "***Knowing*** that our old man was crucified, ... ***reckon*** ye yourselves to be dead." That is the order. When we know that our old man has been crucified with Christ, then the next step is to *reckon* it so.

Unfortunately, in presenting the truth of our union with Christ – the emphasis has too often been placed upon this second matter of reckoning ourselves to be dead, as though that were the starting point, whereas it should rather be upon *knowing* ourselves

to be dead. God's Word makes it clear that *knowing* is to precede *reckoning*. "***Knowing this - reckon.***" The sequence is important! Our reckoning must be based on knowledge of the divinely revealed fact, for otherwise faith has no foundation on which to rest. When we know, then we reckon spontaneously.

So in teaching this matter we should not attempt to put *reckoning* before *knowing*. People try to reckon without knowing. They have not first had a Spirit-given revelation of the fact! Yet they try to *reckon* and soon they get into all sorts of difficulties. When temptation comes they begin to reckon furiously, "*I am dead; I am dead; I am dead!*" But, it may be that in the very act of reckoning they lose their temper. Then they say, "*It doesn't work. Romans 6:11 is no good.*" And we have to admit that verse 11 is no good without verse 6. So it comes to this, that unless we know for a fact that we are dead with Christ, the more we reckon the more intense will the struggle become, and the issue will be sure defeat.

There are those who, after accepting Christ as their Savior, are taught, "*to reckon themselves to be dead to sin,*" so they reckon. However, it seems that the more they reckon that they are dead to sin, the more alive they are. They simply cannot believe themselves dead and they cannot produce the death. Whenever they seek help from others they are told to read Romans 6:11, and the more they read Romans 6:11 and try to "*reckon,*" the further away death seems. They cannot seem to be unable to get it. They may fully appreciate the teaching that they must reckon, but they cannot make out why nothing results from their reckoning. They are troubled and ask the Lord something like, "*Since this seems so clear, why can't I accomplish in my life what appears to be so fundamental? I have tried everything to reckon that I am dead. I cannot seem to grasp what I read about in Your Word.*"

I pray that God, open their eyes, that they will begin to see what God, in His Word really does teach. My prayer is that they will realize the believer's oneness with Christ and see that we are all, "*in Him.*" That they will begin to see that when Christ died, we died. The question of our death is a matter of the past, not something of the future! We are just as truly dead as Christ was because we are "*in Him*" -- and died when He died! I pray that the whole truth will dawn upon them and give them such joy at this discovery that they will cry out, "*Praise God, I am dead!*"

I died!

***Christ has died and, since, I am "in Christ," therefore,
I died with Christ. My death is no less a fact than His.***

When this became real to me I longed to go out and shout the news of my discovery. "*I have been crucified with Christ!*"

I do not mean to say that we do not have to work that out. Yes, there is an outworking of the death that we will be studying later in this series, but this, "*reckoning,*" first of all, is the basis of it. *I have been crucified: it has been done!*

What, then, is the secret of reckoning? To put it in one word, it is "*revelation*". We need revelation from God Himself (Matthew 16:17 & Ephesians 1:17-18). We need to have our eyes opened to the fact of our union with Christ. This is more than "*knowing it*" as a doctrine. This revelation is not a vague, indefinite thing. Most of us can remember the day when we realized that Christ died for us – and we ought to be equally clear as to the time when we saw that *we* died with Christ. There should be nothing hazy about that, but it ought to be very definite – because it is on this basis that we can go on. It is not that I reckon myself to be dead, and therefore I will be dead. No! That's not it! It is that, because I am dead -- because I see now what God has done with me "*in Christ*" -- *therefore* I reckon myself to be dead. That is the right kind of reckoning. It is not reckoning *toward* death but *from* death.

The Second Step: "*Even So Reckon...*"

What does reckoning mean? The Greek word translated, "*reckoning*," has the meaning of, "*doing an account*," or, "*book-keeping*." Accounting is the only thing in the world we human beings can do correctly. An artist paints a landscape. Can he do it with perfect accuracy? Can the historian vouch for the absolute accuracy of any record, or the map-maker for the perfect correctness of any map? They can make, at best, fair approximations. Even in everyday speech, when we try to tell some incident with the best intention to be honest and truthful, we cannot speak with complete accuracy. It is mostly a case of exaggeration or understatement, of one word too much or too little. What then can a man do that is utterly reliable? *Arithmetic!* There is no scope for error there. One chair plus one chair equals two chairs. That is true in America and it is true in Africa. If you are in New York or San Diego it is still the same. All the world over and for all time, one plus one equals two. One plus one is two in heaven and earth – and even in hell.

Why does God say we are to reckon ourselves dead? Because we *are* dead! Let's continue with the analogy of accounting. Suppose I have fifteen dollars that I desire to deposit into my account at the bank. What do I enter in my account-book? Can I enter fourteen dollars and sixty cents? No, I must enter in my account-book that which in fact is the same exact amount that I am depositing. Accounting is the "*reckoning*" of facts – not fancies. In the same way, it is because I am really dead that God tells me to "*account it*" so. God could not ask me to put down in my account-book what was not true. He could not ask me to reckon that I am dead if I am still alive. For such mental gymnastics the word "*reckoning*" would be inappropriate. One might rather say, "*mis-reckoning!*"

Reckoning is not a form of make-believe! It does not mean that, having found that I have only twelve dollars -- I hope that by entering fifteen dollars incorrectly in my account-book such "*reckoning*" would somehow remedy the deficiency. No! If I have only twelve dollars, and try to reckon, "*I have fifteen dollars, I have fifteen dollars, I have fifteen dollars,*" do you think that the mental effort involved will in any way affect the sum that I really have? No, of course not! Reckoning will not make twelve dollars into fifteen dollars – nor will it make what is untrue true. But if, on the other hand, it is a fact that I have fifteen dollars, then with great ease and assurance I can enter fifteen dollars

in my account. God tells us to “*reckon ourselves dead,*” not that by the process of reckoning we may become dead, but because we are dead. He never told us to reckon what was not a fact.

Having said, then, that revelation leads spontaneously to reckoning, we must not lose sight of the fact that we are presented with a command -- “*Reckon ye*” There is a definite attitude we are to have. God asks us to do the account – to put down, “*I have died*” and then to abide by it. Why? Because it is a fact! When Christ was on the cross, *I was there “in Him.”* Therefore, I reckon it to be true. I reckon and declare that I have died in Him. Paul said, “*Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God.*” How is this possible? “In Christ Jesus.” Never forget that it is always and only true -- “*in Christ.*” If we look at our self we will think death is not there, but it is a question of faith not in our self but “*in Him.*” We look to the Lord, and know what He has done. “*Lord, I believe in You. I reckon upon the fact `in You’.*”

The Reckoning Of Faith

The first four-and-a-half chapters of Romans speak of *faith* and *faith* and *faith*. We are justified by *faith* in Him (Rom. 3:28; 5:1). Righteousness, the forgiveness of our sins, and peace with God are all ours by *faith*, and without *faith* in the finished work of Jesus Christ none can possess these gifts of God’s grace. But in the second section of Romans we do not find the same repeated mention of faith, and it might at first appear that the emphasis is therefore different. It is not really, however, because where the words “*faith*” and “*believe*” drop out -- the work “*reckon*” takes their place.

“*Reckoning*” and “*faith*” are here practically the same thing.

What is faith? Faith is acceptance of God's fact. It has its foundations in the past. What relates to the future is more accurately, “*hope,*” rather than “*faith.*” Even though faith often has its object or goal in the future, as in Hebrews 11. This is, no doubt, the reason the word chosen in this section of Romans is “*reckon.*” It is a word that relates *only* to the past -- to what we look back to as already something accomplished – settled! It is not looking forward to something yet to be.

Looking forward with trust and hope is the kind of faith described in Mark 11:24, where Jesus said “*All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them.*” This statement is that, if you believe that you already *have received* your requests (that is, of course, “*in Christ Jesus*”), then “*you will have them.*” To believe that you *may* get something, or that you *can* get it, or even that you *will* get it, is not faith in the sense meant here in Romans. This is faith – “*to believe that you have already received it.*” Only that which relates to the past is faith in this sense. Those who say “*God can*” – “*God may*” – “*God must*” or, “*God will*” – do not necessarily believe in the sense that is presented in Romans. Faith in this section is always, “**God has done it!**”

When, then, do I have faith in regard to my crucifixion? Not when I say God can, or will, or must crucify me, but when with joy I say, “*Praise God, in Christ I am crucified!*”

In **Romans 3** we see Jesus Christ bearing our sins and dying as our Substitute that we might be forgiven. In **Romans 6** we see ourselves included in the death whereby He secured our deliverance. When the first fact was revealed to us we believed on Him for our *justification*. God tells us to “reckon” upon the second fact for our deliverance. So that, for practical purposes, “reckoning” in the second section of Romans takes the place of “faith” in the first section. The emphasis is not any different. Christian living is lived progressively, (as it is entered initially), **by faith** in Divine fact, “in Christ” and His Cross.

Christ’s Blood and His Cross

For us, then, the two greatest facts in history are these: **(1)** All our sins are dealt with by Christ’s Blood, and **(2)** We ourselves are dealt with by Christ’s Cross.

But what now of the matter of temptation?

After we have seen and believed these facts, what should be our attitude when, we discover the old desires rising up again? Worse still, what if we fall again into known sin? What if we lose our temper, or worse? Is the whole position set forth in Romans proved false?

One of the Devil's main objects is to get us to doubt Divine facts. (Compare Genesis 3:4) After we have seen, by revelation of the Spirit of God, that we are indeed dead with Christ, and have *reckoned* it so, Satan will come and say, “*There is something that is un-Christ-like within you. What about that? Do you call this death?*” When that happens, what will be our answer? Now is the crucial test! Are we going to believe the tangible facts of the natural realm that are clearly before our eyes, or the intangible facts of the spiritual realm which are neither seen nor scientifically proved?

We must be careful. It is important for us to recall again what are facts stated in God's Word for faith to lay hold of and what are not. How does God state that deliverance is realized? In the first place, we are ***not told that sin as a principle in us is rooted out or removed***. To reckon on that will be to miscalculate altogether and find ourselves in the false position of the illustration we considered earlier, trying to make twelve dollars to be – “*fifteen dollars*” on a deposit slip. ***No, sin is not eradicated!*** It is very much there, and, given the opportunity, will overpower us and cause us to commit sin again, consciously or unconsciously. That is why we will always need to know the operation of the precious Blood of Jesus Christ.

In dealing with sins (plural) committed, God's method is *direct*, to blot them out of remembrance by means of Christ’s Blood. However, when we come to the principle of sin (singular) – (that is, our “*sin nature*”) -- and the matter of deliverance from its power – we find instead that God deals with this *indirectly*. He does not remove the sin but the sinner. It is important that we understand this – Our “*old man*” was crucified with Him, and because of this body, which before had been a vehicle of sin, is now unemployed (Romans 6:6).

Sin, the old master, is still about, but the slave who served him has been put to death and so is out of reach and his members are unemployed.

For instance, the lustful mind is unemployed, the vindictive heart is out of work, etc. -- and these members are now available to be used instead "*as instruments of righteousness unto God*" (Romans 6:13).

Now we realize that to claim, "*deliverance from sin*" is a more Scriptural idea than "*victory over sin.*" The expressions "*freed from sin*" and "*dead unto sin*" in Romans 6:7 and 11 imply *deliverance from a power that is still very present and very real* -- not from something that no longer exists. **Sin is still there**, but we "*experience*" deliverance from its power in increasing measure day by day.

This deliverance is so real that John can boldly write "*Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin ... he cannot sin*" (1 John 3:9), which is, however, a statement that, wrongly understood, can easily mislead. By it John is *not* telling us that sin is now no longer in our history and that we will not again commit sin. He is saying that to sin is not in the nature of that which is born of God. The life of Christ has been planted in us by new birth and its nature is not to commit sin. But there is a vast difference between the nature and the history of a thing. And there is a vast difference between the nature of the life within us and *our* history.

To illustrate this -- (though the illustration is an inadequate one) -- we might say that wood "*cannot*" sink, because it is not its nature to do so. Of course, in history (actuality) it can sink -- if a hand holds it under the water. The history is a fact, just as sins in our history are *historic facts*. But the *nature* is a fact also, and so is the new nature that we have received in Christ. What is "*in Christ*" cannot sin! What is in Adam can sin and will do so whenever Satan is given a chance to exert his power.

So, the real problem is a question of our choice of which facts we will live by -- the tangible facts of daily experience or the mightier fact that we are now, "*in Christ.*" The power of His resurrection is on our side, and the whole might of God is at work in our salvation (Romans 1:16), but the matter still rests upon our making real in history what is true in Divine fact.

"*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen*" (Hebrews 11:1), and "*the things which are not seen are eternal*" (2 Corinthians 4:18). Hebrews 11:1 is the only definition of faith in the New Testament, or indeed in the Scriptures. It is important that we understand that definition. We are familiar with the common English translation of these words, describing faith as "*the substance of things hoped for.*" However, the word in the Greek has in it the sense of an action, not just of some "*thing,*" -- The word translated, "*substance,*" comes from a Greek word that is very difficult to try and find a correct English word to translate its original meaning. Probably the New Translation of J.N. Darby is the best in regard to this word. It

renders, "*Faith is the substantiating of things hoped for.*" That is a better translation because it implies the making of things hoped for -- real in experience.

How do we "*substantiate*" something? We do so every day. We cannot live in the world without doing this. Do you know the difference between substance and "*substantiating*?" A substance is an object, something before us. "*Substantiating*" means that we have a certain power or faculty that makes that substance to be real to us.

Let us use a simple illustration. By means of our senses we can take things of the world of nature and transfer them into our consciousness so that we can appreciate them. Sight and hearing, for example, are two of our faculties that *substantiate* to us the world of light and sound. We have colors – red, yellow, green, blue, violet; and these colors are real things. But if we shut our eyes, then to us the color is no longer real – it is simply nothing – *to us*. It is not only that the color is there – but, that we have the power to "*substantiate*" it. We have the power to make that color true to us and to give it reality in our consciousness. That is the meaning of "*substantiating*."

If I am blind I cannot distinguish color, or if I lack the faculty of hearing I cannot enjoy music. Yet music and color are in fact *real* things. Their reality is unaffected by whether or not I am able to appreciate them. Now we are considering here the things that, though they are not seen, are eternal and therefore real. Of course we cannot *substantiate* Divine things with any of our natural senses! However, there is one faculty that can substantiate the "*things hoped for*" – the things of Christ – ***and that is faith!*** Faith makes *real* things to become real *in my experience*. Faith "*substantiates*" to me the things of Christ. Hundreds of thousands of people have read, "*Our old man was crucified with Him*" (Romans 6:6). To faith it is true – but to doubt, or to merely give mental assent apart from spiritual illumination, it is ***not*** true for that individual.

These are not just promises they are facts! The Holy Spirit reveals the promises of God to us so that we will lay hold of them. However, facts are facts and they remain facts whether we believe them or not. If we do not believe the facts of the Cross, they still remain as real as ever, but they are valueless to us. *It does not take faith to make these things real in themselves*, but faith can "*substantiate*" them and make them real in our experience.

Whatever contradicts the truth of God's Word we are to regard as the Devil's lie, not because it may not be in itself a very real fact to our senses but because God has stated a greater fact before which the other must eventually yield.

Whenever we claim a promise from God's Word, the enemy will ask, "*Where is God's promise? Where is your faith? What about all your prayers?*" God's Word is truth (John 17:17). We may ask, "*If God's Word is truth, then what about symptoms, or*

circumstances, that seem contrary?" **They must be lies!** In view of what God has said all these symptoms, or circumstances that opposes are just lies. God's Word is truth!

Of course, in some particular personal matter it is possible to deceive our self as to what God had said, but, as to the fact of the Cross, there can never be any such question. We *must* believe God, no matter how convincing Satan's arguments appear.

A skillful liar lies not only in word but also in gesture and deed; he can as easily pass a bad coin as tell an untruth. The Devil is a skillful liar, and we cannot expect him to stop at just words in his lying. He will resort to lying *signs* and *feelings* and *experiences* in his attempts to shake us from our faith in God's Word.

We cannot, of course, deny the reality of the "*flesh*" – and I will bring that subject into this study later. What I want us to consider now is Satan's attempt to move us from a revealed position "*in Christ.*" As soon as we have accepted our death with Christ as a fact, Satan will do his best to demonstrate convincingly by the evidence of our day-to-day experience that we are not dead at all - but very much alive. *We must choose.* The question is, "*Will we believe Satan's lie or God's truth?*" – "*We be governed by appearances or by what God says?*"

As way of illustration, let's say that my name is so-and-so – [fill your name in the blank to make this illustration more personal]. – I know that I am so-and so. It is a fact upon which I can confidently be assured of. It is of course possible that I might lose my memory and forget who I am, or I might dream – or imagine – that I am some other person. But whether I *feel* like it or not, when I am sleeping I am so-and-so and when I am awake I am so-and-so. When I remember it I am so-and-so and when I forget it -- I am still so-and-so.

Now of course, were I to pretend to be someone else, things would be much more difficult. If I were to try and pose as, let's say, "*Someone else.*" I should have to keep saying to myself all the time, "*I am someone else – [fill in any name you choose] –now be sure to remember that you are someone else!*" But, despite such reckoning the likelihood would be that when I was caught off guard and someone called, "*so-and-so*" – I would be caught and would answer to my own name. ***Fact would triumph over fiction***, and all my reckoning would break down at that crucial moment. But I *am So-and-so* and therefore I have no difficulty whatever in reckoning myself to be So-and-so. It is a fact that nothing I experience or fail to experience can alter.

So also, whether I feel it or not, ***I am dead with Christ.*** How can I be sure? Because Christ has died - and since "*one died for all, therefore all died*" (2 Corinthians 5:14). Whether my experience proves it, or seems to disprove it, the fact remains unchanged. While I stand upon that fact Satan cannot prevail against me! Remember that his attack is always upon our assurance. If he can get us to doubt God's Word, then his object is accomplished and he has us in his power; but if we rest unshaken in the assurance of God's stated fact, assured that *He cannot do injustice to His work or His Word*, then it does

not matter what tactics Satan adopts, we can well afford to laugh at him. No one can persuade me that I am not who I am, as long as God's Word informs me differently.

"We walk by faith, not by appearance" (2 Corinthians 5:7). You probably know the illustration of Fact, Faith and Experience walking along the top of a wall. Fact walked steadily on, turning neither to right nor left and never looking behind. Faith followed and all went well so long as he kept his eyes focused upon Fact; but as soon as he became concerned about Experience and turned to see how *he* was getting on, he lost his balance and tumbled off the wall, and poor old Experience fell down after him.

The temptation is primarily to look within – to take our eyes off the Lord and to take account of appearances. Faith is always meeting a mountain, a mountain of evidence that seems to contradict God's Word, a mountain of apparent contradiction in the realm of tangible fact -- of failures in deed, as well as in the realm of feeling and suggestion -- and either faith or the mountain has to go. They cannot both stand! The trouble is that many times the mountain stays and faith goes. That must not be. If we resort to our senses to discover the truth, we will find Satan's lies often have enough true to our experience; but if we refuse to accept as binding anything that contradicts God's Word and maintain an attitude of faith in Him alone, we will find instead that Satan's lies begin to dissolve and that *our experience is coming progressively to reckon with that Word.*

It is our occupation with Christ that has this result, for it means that *He becomes progressively real to us* on concrete issues. In a given situation we see Him as *real* holiness -- *real* resurrection life -- for us. What we see in Him objectively now operates in us subjectively -- but *really* -- to manifest Him in us in that situation. That is the mark of maturity. That is what Paul means by his words, *"I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you"* (Galatians 4:19). Faith is *"substantiating"* God's facts; and faith is always the *"substantiating"* of eternal fact -- of something eternally true.

Abiding In Him

We have already given time to this thought, but there is something more that may help to make it clearer. The Scriptures declare that we are *"dead indeed,"* but nowhere does Scripture say that we are dead *in ourselves*. We will look in vain to find death within; that is just the place where it is not to be found. We are dead not in ourselves but *"in Christ."* We were crucified with Him because we were *"in Him."*

We are familiar with the words when Jesus said, *"Abide in Me, and I in you"* (John 15:4). Let's consider them for a moment. First they remind us once again that we have never to struggle to *"get into"* Christ. We are not told to get there, for we are told to stay there – where we have been placed. It was God's own act that put us in Christ, and we are to *abide* in Him.

Even further, note that this verse lays down for us a Divine principle, which is that God has done the work *"in Christ"* and not *in us* as individuals. The all-inclusive

death and the all-inclusive resurrection of God's Son were accomplished fully and finally apart from us in the first place. It is the history of *Christ* that is to become the experience.

It is not my intention to be redundant but I do feel the need of making this thought clear. All we receive from God is "*in Christ*" and not anything in us. It is not our efforts – experiences – or merit of any kind that bring God's gifts, but rather, it is all because of Jesus Christ, His Son, and it is because we are "*in*" Him – that we receive God's blessings!

Scripture teaches that we were crucified "*with Him*," that we were quickened – [that is, "*made alive*] – raised, and set in the heavenlies by God, "*in Him*", and that we are complete "*in Him*" (Romans 6:6; Ephesians. 2:5-6; Colossians 2:10). It is not just something that is sometime in the future to be accomplished in us, but rather, it is something that has *already* been realized – *in association with Him*.

In Scripture we find that God has included us "*in Christ*" in His gracious purpose. In dealing with Christ God *has dealt with the Christian* – in dealing with the Head He *has dealt with all the members*. It is altogether wrong for us to think that we can experience anything of the spiritual life in ourselves apart from Him.

Please don't misunderstand. Experiences are real and God does allow us to have them. However, we must understand it is because we are "*in Christ*," not because of experiences that we can depend upon our spiritual growth and development!

God does not intend that we should depend upon some exclusive *personal* experience. He is not willing to bring about any spiritual blessing on our own personal merit. All the spiritual experience of the Christian life is found only "*in Christ*." Christ has already experienced it and because we are "*in*" Him, we are benefited.

What we call "our" experience is only our entering into His history and His experience.

What would you think of one branch of a grape vine trying to bear *red* grapes and another branch trying to bear *green* grapes, and yet another branch attempting to grow *dark purple* grapes – each branch trying to produce something of its own without reference to the vine. It is impossible! Unthinkable! *The vine determines the character of the branches!* Yet there are Christians who are seeking experiences *as experiences*. They think of crucifixion as something -- of resurrections as something -- of ascension as something -- and they never stop to think that the whole is related to a Person – *Jesus Christ!*

As God opens our eyes to see the *Person* we will have a true experience and discover facts "*in Christ*" and enter into His fullness. Anything that is not from Him in

this way is an experience that is going to soon fade away. What we discover “*in Christ*” is ours! We can possess it because it is “*in Christ*.” What a great thing it is to know the facts of Christ as the foundation for our experience.

God's basic principle in leading us on *experimentally* is not to *give* us something. It is **not** to *bring us through* something, and as a result to put something into us that is, “*our experience*.” It is **not** that God effects something within *us* so that we can say, “*I died with Christ on a such-and such a date,*” or “*I was risen with Him on some certain date,*” or even, “*Last Week I asked for a definite experience and I received it.*” No! That is not the way God works with us. We do not seek experiences *in themselves* in this dispensation of grace.

You ask, “*What about the experience I had?*” True, some of us have had some real and wonderful experiences in our lives. For instance George Muller wrote, “*There was a day when George Muller died*” How about that? How does this fit in with what you are saying? I am not questioning the reality of the spiritual experiences we go through, nor the importance of encounters that God brings us through in our walk with Him. The point is that God does not give individuals individual experiences. All that they have is only an entering into what God has already done. It is the “*realizing*” of these *eternal* things. The history of Christ becomes our experience and our spiritual history; *we do not have a separate history* from His. The entire work regarding us is not done in us, but “*in Christ*.” God does no separate work in individuals apart from what Christ has done. Even eternal life is not given to us as individuals – “*life is in the Son,*” and “*he that hath the Son hath the life.*” God has done all in His Son, and He has included us “*in Him.*” We are incorporated into Christ!

I do not want to cast any reflection – or in any way discount – genuine experiences with the Lord, but the point that needs to be made is that there is an important Scriptural concept of faith that says, “*God has put me `in Christ,' and therefore all that is true of Him is true of me. I will abide in Him.*”

It seem that Satan is always trying to get us to doubt that we are “*in Christ,*” to convince us that we are on our own, and because of temptations, failures, suffering, and trials, to make us feel that we are “*outside of Christ.*” Our first thought is that, if we were “*in Christ,*” we would not be in such a state, and therefore, judging by our *feelings*, we must be out of Christ. So we begin to pray, something like, “*God, put me in Christ.*”

That is not what God's command is. God's injunction is to “*abide in Christ,*” and that is the way of deliverance. But how is this done? When we learn to “*abide in Christ,*” it opens the way for God to take a hand in our lives and to work out in us whatever our particular problem may be. Holding to this truth – of “*abiding in Christ*” – allows for the operation of God's superior power -- the power of resurrection (Romans 6:4 & 9-10) -- so that the facts of Christ do progressively become the facts of our daily experience, and where before “*sin reigned*” (Romans 5:21), we now make the joyful discovery that we are truly “*no longer ... in bondage to sin*” (Romans 6:6).

As we stand steadfastly on the ground of what *Christ is*, we find that all that is true of Him is becoming *experimentally* true in us. If instead we come on the ground of what we are in ourselves -- we will find that all that is true of the old nature remains true of us. If we "*abide in Christ*" by faith -- we have everything, but if we return back we have nothing. The problem is that we go to the wrong place to find the death of self. It is "*in Christ*." We have only to look within to find we are very much alive to sin; but when we look to the Lord, God sees to it that death works, and that there's "*newness of life*" within us, as well. We are "*alive unto God*" (Romans 6:4,11).

Jesus' command was, "*Abide in Me, and I in you.*" This is a double sentence: a command coupled with a promise. That is to say, there is an objective and a subjective side to God's working, and the subjective side depends upon the objective; the "*I in you*" is the outcome of our "*abiding in Him*" -- by faith! We need to guard against being over-anxious about the subjective side of things, and become so turned in upon our self. We need to dwell upon the objective -- "*abide in Me*" -- and let God take care of the subjective. And this He has promised to do.

Let me illustrate this by an electric light. Let's say that you are in a room and it is growing dark. You would like to have the light on in order to read. There is a reading-lamp on the table beside you. What do you do? Do you watch it intently to see if the light will come on? Do you take a cloth and polish the bulb? No, you get up and cross to the other side of the room where the switch is on the wall and you turn the current on. You turn your attention to the source of power and when you have taken the necessary action there -- the light comes on here.

So in our walk with the Lord our attention must be fixed on Christ. "*Abide in Me, and I in you*" is the Divine order. **Faith in the objective facts make those facts true subjectively!** As the apostle Paul puts it, "*We all ... beholding ... the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image*" (2 Corinthians 3:18). The same principle holds good in the matter of fruitfulness of life: "*He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit*" (John 15:5). We do not try to produce fruit or concentrate upon the fruit produced. Our business is to **look away to Him**. As we do so He undertakes to fulfill His Word in us.

How do we abide in Him? Scripture teaches, "**Of God** are ye in Christ Jesus." It was the work of God to put you there and He has done it. Now *stay* there! Do not be moved back onto your own ground. Never look at yourself as though you were not in Christ. Look at Christ and see yourself in Him. *Abide in Him*. Rest in the fact that God has put you in His Son, and live in the expectation that He will complete His work in you. It is for Him to make good the glorious promise that "*sin shall not have dominion over you*" (Romans 6:14).

Lesson 5 Christ's Cross, the Great Divide

The kingdom of this world is *not* the kingdom of God, but rather, God had in His heart a world-system - a universe of His creation -- that would be headed up *in* Christ His Son (Colossians 1:16,17). But Satan, *working through man's flesh*, set up instead a rival system known in Scripture as "*the kingdom of this world*" -- a system in which every one is involved in to some extent - due to the fact that we live in this physical world - and Scripture refers to Satan as, "*the god of this world*" - this "*Satanic system*." Satan seeks to dominate all mankind through his spirit-world - his "*kingdom of darkness*." He is "*the prince of this world*" -- this "*spirit-satanic system*" -- (John 12:31).

Two Creations

As a result of Satan seeking to dominate man, God's first creation became the *old* creation, and God's primary concern is now no longer with the first creation, but rather, with a second and *new* creation. God is bringing in a new creation, a new kingdom and a new world, that is nothing of the old creation. It is a question now of these two rival realms, and of which realm we belong to.

The apostle Paul leaves no doubt as to which of these two realms is now, in fact, the believers'. He tells us that God, in redemption, "*delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love*" (Colossians 1:12,13).

In order to bring us into His new kingdom, God must do something new in us. He must make us *new creatures*. Unless we are created anew we can never fit into the new realm. "*that which is born of the flesh is flesh;*" and, "*flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption*" (John 3:16 & 1 Corinthians 15:50). However educated, cultured, or improved it be, *flesh is still flesh*. Our fitness for the new kingdom is determined by the creation to which we belong. The question is, "*Do we belong to the old creation or the new? Are we born of the flesh or of the Spirit?*" Our ultimate suitability for the new realm hinges on the question of origin. The question is not "*good*" or "*bad*" - **but** "*flesh*" or "*Spirit*." "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh,*" and it will never be anything else. That which is of the old creation can never pass over into the new.

Once we understand what God is seeking, namely, something altogether new for Himself, then we can see clearly that we can never bring any contribution from the old realm into God's new kingdom. God wanted to have us for Himself, but He could not bring us *as we were* into that which He had purposed.

**He first did away with us by the Cross of Christ,
and then by resurrection provided a new life for us!**

"*If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new*" (2 Corinthians 5:17). - [The margin reads, "*there is a new creation*"] -

Being now "*new creatures*" with a new nature and a new set of faculties, we can enter the new kingdom and the new world.

The **Cross** was the means God used to bring to an end "*the old things*" by setting aside altogether our "*old man*," and the **resurrection** was the means He employed to impart to us all that was necessary for our life in that new world. "*We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life*" (Romans 6:4).

The greatest *negative* in the universe is the Cross – because with it God wiped out everything that was not of Himself. The greatest *positive* in the universe is the resurrection – because through it God brought into being all He will have in the new sphere. So the resurrection stands at the threshold of the new creation.

It is a blessed thing to see that the Cross ends all that belongs to the first regime, and that the resurrection introduces all that pertains to the second.

Everything that had its beginning *before* resurrection must be wiped out. **Resurrection is God's new starting-point!**

We have now two worlds before us – the old and the new. In the old, Satan has absolute dominion. You may be a good person in the old creation, but as long as you belong to the old you are under sentence of death, because nothing of the old can go over to the new. The Cross is God's declaration that all that is of the old creation must die. Nothing of the first Adam can pass beyond the Cross – it all ends there! The sooner we see that, the better. Because it is by the Cross that God has made a way of escape for us from that old creation. God gathered up in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ, all that was of Adam and crucified Him. In Christ all that was of Adam was done away. Then God made, as it were, a proclamation throughout the universe saying: "*Through the Cross I have set aside all that is not of Me; you who belong to the old creation are all included in that; you too have been crucified with Christ!*" None of us can escape that verdict.

This brings us to the subject of baptism. "*Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death*" (Romans 6:3,4). What is the significance of these words?

Baptism in Scripture is associated with salvation. "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*" (Mark 16:16). Scripture does not teach, "*baptismal regeneration*," however, it does teach, "*baptismal salvation*." What is salvation? It relates, not to our sins, nor to the power of sin, but rather to the *world-system*. We are involved in Satan's world-system. To be saved is to make our exit from his world-system into God's kingdom.

In the Cross of Christ, says Paul, "*the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world*" (Galatians 6:14). This is the figure developed by Peter when he writes of the

eight souls who were “*saved through water*” (1 Peter 3:20). Entering into the ark, Noah and those with him stepped by faith out of that old corrupt world into a new one. It was not so much that they were personally not drowned, but that they were *out* of that corrupt system. ***That is salvation!***

Then Peter goes on, “*Which also after a true likeness (in the antitype) doth now save you, even baptism*” (verse 21). In other words, by that aspect of the Cross, that baptism is a figure of, we are delivered from this present evil world, and, by our baptism in water, we confirm this. It is baptism “*into His death,*” – ending one creation – however, it is also baptism “*into Christ Jesus,*” having in view a new creation (Romans 6:3). You go down into the water and your world, (in figure), goes down with you. You come up “*in Christ.*” Your world is drowned.

“*Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved,*” said Paul at Philippi, and “*spake the word of the Lord*” to the jailer and his household. And he “*was baptized, he and all his, immediately*” (Acts 16:31-34). In doing so, he and those with him testified before God, His people and the spiritual powers that they were indeed saved from a world under judgment. As a result, we read, they rejoiced greatly, “*having believed in God.*”

It is clear that baptism is an important ordinance, relating as it does both to the death and to the resurrection of our Lord; and having in view two worlds. [Missionaries, working in a foreign country, know what tremendous issues are raised by baptism.]

Burial Means An End

Peter continues in this passage to describe baptism as, “*the answer of a good conscience toward God*” (1 Peter 3:21). We cannot answer unless we have been spoken to. If God had said nothing we would have no need to answer. But He has spoken – He has spoken to us by the Cross. By it He has told of His judgment of us, of the world, of the old creation and of the old kingdom. The Cross is not only Christ's personally -- an individual's Cross. *It is an all inclusive Cross*, - a “*corporate*” Cross, a Cross that includes you and me! God has put us all “*into His Son,*” and crucified us in Him. In the last Adam He has wiped out all that was of the first Adam.

What is our answer to God's verdict on the old creation? We answer by asking for baptism. ***Why?*** In Romans 6:4 Paul explains that baptism means burial, “*We were buried therefore with Him [Christ Jesus] through baptism.*” Baptism is, of course, connected with both death and resurrection, though in itself it is neither death nor resurrection – it is burial! But who qualifies for burial? Only the dead! So if we ask for baptism we proclaim our self, “*dead*” – and fit only for the grave.

Some have been taught to look on burial as a *means* to death. They try to *die*, so to speak, by getting themselves buried. God help us to see that we *have* died “*in Christ*” and been “*buried with Him.*” One of the wonderful truths of baptism is that as we step down into the water we recognize that, in God's sight, we have *already* died. That is what we are testifying to.

God's question is clear and simple. *"Christ has died, and I have included you there. Now, what are you going to say to that?"* What is our answer? *"Lord, I believe You have done the crucifying. I say Yes to the death and to the burial to which You have committed me."* He has consigned us to death and the grave; by our request for baptism we give public assent to that fact.

A missionary tell of a certain woman whose husband died, and she became deranged by her loss and refused to have him buried. For days he lay in the house. She said, He is not dead -- I talk with him every night. She was unwilling to have him buried because she did not believe him to be dead.

When are we willing to bury our dear ones? Of course, it is only when we are absolutely sure that they have passed away. While there is the slimmest hope that they are still alive we would never bury them. One reason for baptism is I realize God's way is perfect and I deserve to die. When I am convinced that God has already crucified me, and that before God I am quite dead, then I am ready for baptism and can say, *"Praise God, I am dead! Lord, You have slain me; now let me be buried!"*

Emergency Services deal with various crises – They deal with those who are wounded in battle but are still alive, to bring them help and healing. Another service is to deal with those who are *already dead* in famine, flood or war, to give them burial.

God's dealings with us in the Cross of Christ are drastic. He does not set out to patch up the old creation. He condemns to death and burial the still living – so that they may be raised again to new life. God has done the work of crucifixion so that now we are counted among the dead. However, we must accept this and submit to the work of sealing that death with *"burial,"* of which baptism is a picture.

There is an old world and a new world, and between the two there is a tomb. God has already crucified me, but I must consent to be consigned to the tomb. My baptism confirms God's sentence, passed upon me in the Cross of His Son. It affirms that I am cut off from the old world and belong now to the new. So baptism is no small thing! It means for me a definite conscious break with the old way of life. This is the meaning of Romans 6:2, *"We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?"* Paul says, in effect, *"If you want to continue in the old world, why be baptized? Baptism means you die to the old realm and live in the new."* When we see this, we clear the ground for the new creation by our assent to the burial of the old.

In Romans 6:5, still writing to those who in verse 3, *"were baptized,"* Paul speaks of our being *"united with Him [Christ Jesus] by the likeness of His death."* For by baptism we acknowledge in a future that God has wrought an intimate union between Christ and ourselves in this matter of death and resurrection.

Think of a lump of sugar stirred in your coffee. Can you tell where the sugar is, and where the coffee is? Of course, not! You put them together and the one has become

lost in the other – they cannot now be separated. It may be a simple illustration, but it helps to see the intimacy and the finality of our union with Christ in death. It is God that has put us there.

What, in fact does this union imply? The real meaning behind baptism is that in the Cross we are “*baptized into the death of Christ,*” so that His death became ours. Our death and His became so closely identified that it is impossible to divide between them. It is to this historic “*baptism*” – (this God-wrought union with Christ Jesus -- that we assent to when we go down into the water. Our public testimony in baptism is our admission that the death of Christ two thousand years ago was a mighty all-inclusive death – mighty enough and all-inclusive enough to carry away in it and bring to an end everything in us that is not of God.

Resurrection Unto Newness Of Life

“If we have become united with him by the likeness of his death, we shall be also be the likeness of his resurrection” (Romans 6:5).

When we come to Paul’s teaching on the “*resurrection*” the figure is different. Something new is introduced. First, Paul states that we are “*baptized into His death,*” but we do not enter in quite the same way into Christ’s “*resurrection,*” because Christ’s resurrection ***enters into us*** – imparting to us new life! In the death of Christ the emphasis is solely upon the fact that we are “*in Christ.*” But, with the resurrection there is a new emphasis upon – “***Christ in us.***” How is it possible for Christ to transmit His resurrection life to us? How do I receive this new life? Paul gives a tremendous illustration with the words, “*united with Him.*” For the word “*united*” is also rendered, “*planted together,*” and carries in the Greek the sense of being “*grafted.*” It gives us a beautiful picture of the life of Christ that is imparted to us through resurrection.

“*Grafting*” is a process of a branch, or shoot, from a strong and vigorous plant being inserted, or implanted, into the stem or stock of some frail, weak, and fruitless plant, resulting in a plant that produces more luscious, abundant fruit.

Many trees, or vines, if left to follow the course of nature produce fruit that is small, seedy, and thick skinned. Through the process of “*grafting*” – these same trees, or vines, grow much larger and harvest an abundance of lush, thriving fruit.

A good illustration of this is the man, showing his orchard to friends, first showed them a tree bearing miserably, useless, poor fruit. He said, “*I left this one tree with its old shoots to show the difference between it and the trees bearing rich juicy fruit.*” He explained that the good trees had been, “*grafted.*” He continued, “*Can you understand the value of grafting? Now you can appreciate why I grow grafted trees?*” He explained, “*If these trees were left to follow the course of nature, their fruit would be about the size of a small berry, and consist mainly of thick skin and extremely seedy. See **that tree over there?** I call it the ‘father tree,’ because all the grafts for the other trees are taken from that one. This tree, from*

which the grafts for all the others are taken, bears a luscious fruit the size of a plum, with very thin skin and a tiny seed; and all these grafted trees now bear fruit like it."

He explained, *"I simply take a little of the nature of the one tree and transfer it to the others. I make a cleavage in the poor tree and insert a slip from the good one. Then I bind it up and leave it to grow."*

When asked, *"How does it grow?"* he answered, *"I don't know, it just grows."*

How can one tree bear the fruit of another? How can a poor tree bear good fruit? Only by grafting. Only by implanting into it the life of a good tree can the tree produce good fruit. But if a man can graft a branch of one tree into another, cannot God take of the life of His Son and, so to speak, graft it into us?

A woman burned her arm badly and was taken to hospital. In order to prevent serious problems with muscular tissue due to scarring it was necessary to graft some new skin over the injured area. But the doctor attempted in vain to graft a piece of the woman's own skin onto the arm. Owing to her age and lack of nourishment the skin graft was too poor and would not *"take."* Then a nurse offered a piece of skin and the operation was carried out successfully. The new skin knit with the old, and the woman left the hospital with her arm perfectly healed. However, there remained a patch of white foreign skin on her arm of a little different hue that told the tale of her past injury. You ask how the skin of another grew on that woman's arm? I do not know how it grew, but it did grow!

If an earthly surgeon can take a piece of skin from one human body and graft it on another, cannot the Divine Surgeon implant the life of His Son into us? I do not know how it is done. *"The wind blows where it will, and you hear the voice thereof, but know not where it came from, and whither it goes; so is every one that is born of the Spirit"* (John 3:8). We cannot tell how God has done His work in us, but it is done. We can do nothing and need do nothing to bring it about, but believe and accept – for by *Christ's resurrection* God has already accomplished it

God has done everything. There is only *"One"* fruitful life in the world and that has been grafted into millions of other lives. We call this the *"new birth."* New birth is the reception of a life that we did not possess before. It is not that our natural life has been changed at all – it is that another life, a life altogether new, altogether Divine, has become our life.

God has cut off the old creation by the Cross *of His Son* in order to bring in a new creation *"in Christ"* -- *by resurrection*. He has shut the door to that old kingdom of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son. Our glorying is in the fact that it has been done -- that, through the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, that old world has *"been crucified unto us, and we unto the world"* (Galatians 6:14). Our baptism is

our public testimony to that fact. By it, as by our oral witness, our “*confession is made unto salvation*” (Romans 10:10).

Lesson 6

Growing Spiritually – 3rd Step: *Presenting Ourselves to God*

We are now at the point in our study where we need to consider the true nature of “*consecration*.” We looked at the second half of Romans 6 from verse 12 to the end of that chapter. We read, “*Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof, neither present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but **present yourselves unto God**, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God*” (Romans 6:12-13). The operative word here is “*present*” – this word occurs five times – (in verses 13, 16 and 19).

Many have taken this word “*present*” to imply consecration without looking carefully into its content. That, of course, is what the word does mean, ***but not in the sense in which we so often understand it***. It is **NOT** the consecration of our “*old man*” with his instincts and resources -- our natural wisdom, strength and other gifts -- to the Lord for Him to use.

Note how verse 13 makes this thought clear with the clause, “*as alive from the dead*.” Paul writes, “*Present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead*.” This defines the point at which consecration begins. What is referred to here is not the consecration of anything of the old creation, but that, which has passed through death to resurrection.

The “*presenting*” spoken of here is the outcome of our knowing – “*the old man*” – to be crucified.

Note (1) *Knowing*, (2) *reckoning*, (3) *presenting* to God – that is the Divine order.

When I really know I am crucified with Him, then spontaneously I reckon myself dead (verses 6 and 11); and when I know that I am raised with Him from the dead, then likewise I reckon myself “*alive unto God in Christ Jesus*” (verses 9 and 11). Both the death and the resurrection side of the Cross are to be accepted by faith. When this point is reached, *giving our self to Him* follows. In resurrection He is the source of our life -- indeed He ***is*** our life; so we cannot but present everything to Him, for all is His, not ours. But without passing through death I have nothing to consecrate, nor is there anything God can accept, for He has condemned all that is of the old creation – *condemned it to the Cross*. Death has cut off all that *cannot* be consecrated to Him, and resurrection alone has made consecration possible. Presenting our self to God means that henceforth we consider our whole life as now belonging to the Lord.

The Third Step is, “*Present Yourselves ...*”

Notice that this “*presenting*” relates to the members of our body -- that body which is now unemployed in respect to sin. “*Present yourselves ... and your members,*”

writes Paul. He also writes, "*Present your members*" (Romans 6:13,19). God requires of us that we now regard all our members, all our faculties, as belonging wholly to Him.

It is a great thing when we discover we are no longer our own -- but His. If a ten-dollar bill in our pocket belongs to us, then we have full authority over it. But if it belongs to another who has committed it to us in trust, then we cannot buy what we please with it, and we dare not lose it. Real Christian life begins with knowing this. How many of us know that, because Christ is risen, we are therefore alive "*unto God*" and not unto ourselves? How many of us dare not use our time or money or talents as we would, because we realize they are the Lord's not ours? How many of us have such a strong sense that we belong to Another that we dare not squander a single cent of our money, or an hour of our time, or any of our mental or physical powers?

Paul says, "*Present your members as servants to righteousness unto sanctification [holiness]*" (Romans 6:19). Make it a definite act - "*Present yourselves to God!*"

Separated Unto The Lord

What is holiness? Many think we become holy by the eradication of something evil within. No, we become holy by being *separated unto God*. In Old Testament times, it was when a man was chosen by God to be altogether His that he was publicly anointed with oil and was then said to be "*sanctified*." Thereafter he was regarded as "*set apart*" to God. In the same manner even animals or material things -- a lamb, or the gold of the temple -- could be sanctified, not by the eradication of anything evil in them, but by being reserved exclusively to the Lord. "*Holiness*" in the Hebrew sense meant something set apart, and all true holiness is "*holiness to the Lord*" (Exodus 28:36). We give our self over wholly to Christ - that is holiness!

Presenting our self to God implies recognition that we are altogether His. This giving of our self is a definite thing. It is just as definite as *reckoning*. There must be a time in our life when we pass out of our own hands into His hands. From that day forward we belong to Him and no longer to our self. That does not mean that we consecrate our self, necessarily, to be a preacher or a missionary. Alas, many people are missionaries not because they have truly consecrated themselves to God but because, in the sense of which we are speaking, they have *not* consecrated themselves to Him. They have "*consecrated*" (as they would put it) something altogether different, namely, their own uncrucified, natural faculties to the doing of God's work! *That is not true consecration*. To what then are we to be consecrated? Not to Christian work, but *to the will of God to be and do whatever He wants*.

David had many mighty men. Some were generals and others were gatekeepers, whatever task the king had assigned them. We must be willing to be either generals or gatekeepers, selected to our function as God wills and not as we choose. If you are a Christian, then God has marked out a pathway for you -- a "*course*" as Paul writes in 2 Timothy 4:7. Not only Paul's path but the path of every Christian has been clearly marked out by God, and it is of supreme importance that each one know and walk in

their God-appointed course. We need to pray something like, “*Lord, I give myself to You with this desire alone, to know and walk in the path You have ordained.*” That is true presenting our self to God. If at the close of a life we can say with Paul, “*I have finished my course,*” then we are blessed indeed. There is nothing more tragic than to come to the end of life and know we have been on the wrong course. We have only one life to live down here and we are free to do as we please with it, but if we seek our own pleasure -- our life will never glorify God. A devoted Christian once said, “*I want nothing for myself; I want everything for God.*” Do you want anything apart from God, or does all your desire center in His will? Can you truly say that the will of God is “*good and acceptable and perfect*” to You? (Romans 12:2)

It is our will that is in question! That strong self-assertive will of ours must go to the Cross, and we must give our self over wholly to the Lord. We cannot expect a tailor to make us a coat if we do not give him any cloth, nor a builder to build us a house if we let him have no building material --- and in the same way we cannot expect the Lord to live out His life in us if we do not give Him our lives in which to live. Without reservations, without controversy, we must give ourselves to Him to do as He pleases with us. The commandment is, “*Present yourselves unto God*” (Romans 6:13).

Servant Or Slave?

If we give ourselves unreservedly to God, many adjustments may have to be made --- in family, business, and church relationships, or, even, in the matter of our personal views. God will not let anything of ourselves remain. His finger will touch, point by point, everything that is not of Him, and He will say, “*This must go.*” Are you willing?

It is foolish to resist God, and always wise to submit to Him

We have to admit, if we are honest with our self, that we still have controversies with the Lord. He wants something, while we want something else. Many things we dare not look into, dare not pray about, dare not even think about, lest we lose our peace. We can evade the issue that way, but to do so will bring us out of the will of God. It is always an easy matter to get out of His will, but it is a blessed thing just to hand ourselves over to Him and let Him have His way with us.

How good it is to have the consciousness that we belong to the Lord and are not our own! ***There is nothing more precious in the world!*** It is that which brings the awareness of His continual presence, and the reason is obvious. We must first have the sense of God's possession of us before we can have the sense of His presence with us.

When once God's ownership is established, then we dare not do anything in our own interests, because we are His exclusive property. Paul make his case this way, “*Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey?*” (Romans 6:16). The word here rendered “*servant*” in the King James Translation, really signifies a “*bondservant,*” a “*slave.*” This word is used several times in

the second half of Romans 6. What is the difference between a *servant* and a *slave*? A servant may serve another, but the ownership does not pass to that other. If he likes his master he can serve him, but if he does not like him he can give his notice and seek another master. Not so is it with the *slave*. He is not only the servant of another but he is the *possession* of another. How did I become the slave of the Lord? On His part He bought me, and on my part I present myself to Him. By right of redemption I am God's property, but if I would be His slave I must willingly give myself to Him, for He will never compel me to do so.

The trouble with many Christians is that they do not have any idea what God is asking of them. How glibly they say, "Lord, I am willing for anything. For You!" Do you know that God is asking for your very life? There are cherished ideals, strong wills, precious relationships, much-loved work that may have to go. Do not give yourself to God *unless you mean it!* God will take you seriously, even if you did not mean it seriously.

When the Galilean boy brought his bread to Jesus, what did Jesus do with it? (Matthew 14:17-19; Mark 6:38-52 & John 6:9-26) He ***broke*** it. ***God will always break what is offered to Him.*** He breaks what He takes, but after breaking it He blesses and uses it to meet the needs of others. After you give yourself to the Lord, He begins to break what was offered to Him. Everything seems to go wrong, and you protest and find fault with the ways of God. But to stay there is to be no more than just a broken vessel -- no good for the world because you have gone too far for the world to use you, and not far enough to be of any real good for God either. You are out of gear with the world, and you have a controversy with God. This is the tragedy of many a Christian.

Our giving of our self to the Lord must be an initial fundamental act. Then day by day we must go on giving to Him, not finding fault with His use of us but accepting with praise even what the flesh revolts against.

We are the Lord's and now no longer reckon our self to be our own but acknowledge in everything His ownership and authority. That is the attitude God requires, ***and to maintain it is true consecration.*** We do not consecrate our self to be a missionary or a preacher -- we consecrate our self to God to do His will where we are -- be it in school, office or kitchen, counting whatever He ordains for us to be the very best, for nothing but good can come to those who are wholly His.

May we always be possessed by the consciousness that we are not our own.

Lesson 7

God's Ultimate Purpose

We have studied of the need of (1) *revelation*, of (2) *faith* and of (3) *consecration*, if there is to be true spiritual growth in the Christian life as described in Scripture. However, unless we see ***the end*** that God has in view for us, we shall never understand

why these steps are necessary. So, before we continue with the question of inward experience, let us first look at God's great Divine goal that He has for us.

What is God's purpose in creation and what is His purpose in redemption? It may be summed up in two phrases, one from each of our two sections of Romans. It is, "The glory of God" (Romans 3:23), and "The glory of the children of God" (Romans 8:21).

In Romans 3:23 we read, "All have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God." God's purpose for man was "**glory**," however; sin frustrated that purpose by causing man to miss God's glory. When we think of sin we instinctively think of the judgment it brings. We invariably associate it with condemnation and hell. Man's thoughts are always of the punishment that will come to him if he sins. But God's thoughts are always of the glory man will miss if he sins. The result of sin is that we forfeit God's glory - the result of redemption is that we are once again qualified for glory. God's purpose in redemption is glory, glory, **glory!**

Firstborn Among Many Brethren

This consideration takes us forward into **Romans chapter 8** where the topic is developed in verses 16 to 18 and again in verses 29 and 30. Paul writes,

"We are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to usward"

(Romans 8:16-18)

and,

"Whom He foreknew, He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren: and whom He foreordained, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Romans 8:29,30).

What was God's objective? It was that His Son Jesus Christ might be the firstborn among many brethren, all who would be conformed to His image. How did God realize that objective? "*Whom He justified, them He also glorified.*" God's purpose, then, in creation and redemption was to make Christ the firstborn Son among many glorified sons. That may perhaps at first seems to convey very little, until we look into it more carefully.

In John 1:14 we are told that the Lord Jesus was God's only begotten Son, "*the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father).*" That He was God's **only begotten** Son signifies that God had no other Son but this one. He was with the Father from all eternity. But, we are told, God was not satisfied that Christ should remain the only begotten Son. He wanted also to make Him

His *first* begotten. How could an only begotten Son become a first begotten? The answer is simple – by the Father having *more* children. If you have but one son then he is your only begotten son, but if you have other children then the only begotten becomes the first begotten.

God's Divine purpose in creation and redemption was that God would have many children. As difficult as it may be for us to comprehend, Scripture teaches that **God wanted us**, and would not be satisfied without us.

In the story of the Prodigal Son, of Luke 15, most readers are impressed with all the troubles the prodigal has. They are occupied in thinking what a bad time he is having. But that is **not** the point of the parable. The heart of the story is, "*My son ... **was lost, and is found!***" It is not a question of what the son suffers but of what the Father loses. *He* is the sufferer! *He* is the loser! A sheep is lost, whose is the loss? It is the shepherd's loss. A coin is lost, whose is the loss? It was the woman's loss. A son is lost, whose is the loss? It is the Father's loss. That is the lesson of Luke chapter 15.

The Lord Jesus was the *only begotten* Son, and as the only begotten He had no brothers. But the Father sent the Son into the world in order that the only begotten might also be the "*first begotten*," and that the beloved Son have many brethren. There you have the whole story of the Incarnation and the Cross. There you have the purpose of God fulfilled in His "*bringing many sons unto glory*" (Hebrews 2:10).

In Romans 8:29 we read of "*many brethren*" – and in Hebrews 10 we read, of "*many sons*." From the point of view of Christ it is "*brethren*;" from the point of view of God the Father it is "*sons*." Both words in this context convey the idea of maturity. God is seeking full-grown sons; but He does not stop even there. Because He does not want His sons to live in a barn or a garage or a field – He wants them in His home. He wants them to share His glory! That is the explanation of Romans 8:30, "*Whom He justified, them He also glorified*." **Sonship -- the full expression of His Son** -- is God's goal in the many sons. How could He bring that about? **By justifying them and then by glorifying them**. In His dealings with them God will never stop short of that goal. He set Himself to have sons, and to have those sons, mature and responsible, with Him in glory. He made provision for the whole of Heaven to be peopled with glorified sons. That was His purpose in redemption.

The Grain Of Wheat

How could God's only begotten Son become His first begotten? The method is explained in John 12:24, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit*." Who was that grain? Jesus Christ was that grain. In the whole universe God had only one "*grain of wheat*." He had no second grain. God put His one grain of wheat into the ground and it died, and in resurrection the only begotten grain became the first begotten grain, and from the one grain there have sprung many grains.

Jesus Christ is deity -- the third Person of the Trinity (John 1:1-2) -- remaining uniquely "*the only begotten Son of God.*" Yet there is a sense in which, from Christ's resurrection onward through all eternity, He is also the "*first begotten!*" His life from that time is found in "*many brethren.*" For we, who are born of the Spirit, are made "*partakers of the divine nature*" (2 Peter 1:4), though not as of ourselves but only in dependence upon God and by virtue of our being "*in Christ.*" We have "*received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God*" (Romans 8:5,16). It was by way of the Incarnation and the Cross that Christ Jesus made this possible. Therein was the Father-heart of God satisfied, for in the Son's obedience unto death the Father has secured His many sons.

The 1st and the 20th chapters of John are in this respect most precious. In the beginning of his Gospel, John tells us that Jesus was "*the only begotten from the Father.*" At the end of his Gospel he tells us how, after the Lord Jesus died and rose again, He said to Mary Magdalene, "*Go unto My brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God*" (John 20:17). Up to this time in this Gospel Jesus speaks often of "*the Father,*" or of "*My Father.*" Now, in resurrection, He add, "... *and your Father.*" It is the eldest Son, the first begotten, speaking. By His death and resurrection many brethren have been brought into God's family, and so, in the same verse He uses this term for them, "*My brethren.*" "*He is not ashamed to call them brethren*" (Hebrews 2:11).

The Choice That Confronted Adam

God planted a great number of trees in the Garden of Eden, but "*in the midst of the garden*" -- that is, in a place of special prominence -- He planted two trees, the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam was created innocent, having no knowledge of good and evil. Think of a grown man who has no sense of right or wrong, no power to differentiate between the two! Such a man was, certainly, undeveloped. Adam was undeveloped. God places him in the garden and said, in effect, "*The garden is full of trees, full of fruits, and of the fruit of every tree you may eat freely. But in the very midst of the garden is one tree called `the tree of the knowledge of good and evil;` you must not eat of that, for in the day that you do so you will surely die. But, there is other tree close by, called `The Tree of Life`."* What is the meaning of these two trees? Adam was created morally neutral -- neither sinful nor holy, but innocent -- and God placed those two trees there so that man might exercise free choice. He could choose "*the tree of life,*" or he could choose "*the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*"

The knowledge of good and evil, (though forbidden to Adam), is not wrong in itself. Without it, however, Adam is in a sense limited in that he cannot decide *for himself* on moral issues. Judgment of right and wrong resides not in him but in God, and Adam's only course when faced with any question is to refer it to Jehovah God. Thus it was life in the garden that was *totally dependent on God*. These two trees, then, typify two deep principles; they represent two planes of life, the Divine and the human. The "*Tree of Life*" is God Himself, for God is life. He is the highest form of life, and He is also the source and goal of life. And the fruit: what is that? It is our Lord Jesus Christ. You cannot eat the tree but you can eat the fruit. No one is able to receive God -- as God, but

we can receive Jesus Christ. The fruit is the edible part, the receivable part of the tree. So -- may I say it reverently? -- Jesus is really God in a receivable form. God, "*in Christ*," we can receive.

If Adam would take of the tree of life, he would partake of the life of God and thus become a "*son*" of God, in the sense of having in him a life that would be derived from God. He would have God's life in union with man -- and -- a race of men having the life of God in them and *living in constant dependence upon God for that life*.

If, on the other hand, Adam would turn the other way and take the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, then he would develop his own manhood along natural lines apart from God. Reaching a peak of attainment as a *self-sufficient being*. He would have the power in himself to form independent judgment, - ***but he would have no life from God***

So this was the alternative that lay before him. Choosing the way of the Spirit, the way of obedience, he could become a "*son*" of God, living in dependence upon God for his life -- or, taking the natural course, he could put the finishing touch to himself by becoming a self-dependent being, judging and acting apart from God. The history of humanity is the outcome of the choice he made.

Adam's Choice The Reason For The Cross

Adam chose the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and thereby took up independent ground. In doing so he became -- (as man is now in his own eyes) -- a "*fully developed*" man. He could command knowledge; he could decide for himself; he could go or stop. From that time on he was "*wise*" (Genesis 3:6). ***But the consequence for him was death -- rather than life***, because the choice he had made involved association with Satan and brought him under the judgment of God. And for that reason access to the tree of life was forbidden to him.

Two planes of life had been set before Adam -- Divine life in dependence upon God; and human life with its "*independent*" resources. Adam's choice of independence was sin, because he alienated himself from God and aligned himself with Satan, upsetting the eternal purpose of God. He did so by choosing to develop his manhood -- to become perhaps a very fine man, and, by his standards, a "*perfect*" man -- but apart from God. The end was death, because he did not have in him the Divine life necessary to realize God's purpose in his being. He had chosen to become instead an "*independent*" agent of the Enemy. Thus in Adam we all become sinners, equally dominated by Satan, equally subject to the law of sin and death, and equally deserving of the wrath of God.

From this we can understand a little more of the Divine reason for the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We see, also, the Divine reason for true consecration -- for reckoning ourselves to be dead unto sin but alive unto God in Christ Jesus, and for presenting ourselves unto Him as alive from the dead. We must all go to the Cross -- because *what is in us by nature is a self-life*, subject to the law of sin. Adam chose a self-life

rather than a Divine life; so God had to gather up all that was in Adam and do away with it. Our "*old man*" has been crucified. God has put us all in Christ and crucified Him as the last Adam, and thus all that is of Adam has passed away.

Then Christ arose in new form, with a body still, but "*in the Spirit,*" no longer "*in the flesh.*" "*The last Adam [Christ Jesus] became a life-giving spirit*" (1 Corinthians 15:45). Jesus Christ now has a resurrected, spiritual, a glorified body, and – since He is no longer in the flesh – He can be received by all. Jesus said, "*He that eateth Me, he also shall live because of Me,*" (John 6:57). The Jews revolted at the thought of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, but of course they could not receive Him then because He was still literally in the flesh. Now that He is in the Spirit every one of us can receive Him, and it is by partaking of His resurrection-life that we are the children of God. "*As many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God ... which were born ... of God*" (John 1:12,13).

God is not out to reform our life. It is not His thought to bring it to a certain stage of refinement, because it is on a totally wrong plane. On that plane He cannot bring man to glory. He must have a "*new man*" - one born anew, born of God.

Regeneration and justification go together!

He That Hath The Son Hath The Life

There are various planes of life. Man's "*human life*" lies between the life of the lower animals and the life of God. We cannot bridge the gulf that divides us from the plane above or the plane below, and the distance that separates us from the life of God is vastly greater than that which separates us from the life of the lower animals.

For those church members who do not believe in the need for *regeneration*, but believe all that is needed is a "*social*" gospel, I would like to suggest an appropriate illustration. Let's say that you have children and, you also have a pet dog. There, of course, is a vast difference between your children and your pet dog. Your children were born into your family and bear your name – because you have communicated your life to them. Your dog may be very intelligent, well-behaved and altogether a most remarkable dog. However, the question we are interested in, for sake of our illustration, is not, "*Is he a good or a bad dog?*" The question is merely, "*Is he a dog?*" He does not need to be bad to be disqualified from being a member of your family; he only needs to be a dog.

This same principle applies to man in his relationship to God. The question is not whether he is a bad man or a good man, but simply, "*Is he a man?*" If his life is on a lower plane than that of God's life, then he cannot belong to the Divine family. Throughout the life of those who spread a "*social*" gospel, their aim is to turn bad men into good men.

But men *as such*, whether good or bad, can have no vital relationship with God.

Our only hope, as men, is to receive the Son of God, and when we do so His life in us will constitute us as "*sons of God*."

What we possess in Christ is more than Adam lost. Adam was only a developed *man*. He remained on that plane, and never possessed the life of God. But we who receive the Son of God not only receive the forgiveness of sins – we also receive the Divine life that was represented in the garden by the tree of life. By the new birth we receive something Adam never had; we possess what he missed.

They Are All Of One

God wants sons who will be joint-heirs with Christ in glory! That is His goal! But how can He bring that about? The answer . . .

Hebrews 2:10-11 says, "*It became Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.*"

There are two parties mentioned here, namely, "*many sons*" and "*the Author of their salvation*," or, in different terms, "*He that sanctifieth*" and "*they who are sanctified*." But these two parties are said to be "***all of one***." Jesus, as Man, derived His life from God, and (in another sense, but just as truly) we derive our new life from God. Jesus was "*begotten of the Holy Ghost*" (Matthew 1:20), and we were "*born of the Spirit*," - "*born of God*" (John 3:5 & 1:13). So, God says, we are all of One! The word, "*of*," in the Greek here means, "*out of*." The first begotten Son and the many sons are all (though in different senses) "*out of*" the one Source of life. Do you realize that we have the same life today that God has? The life that He has in Heaven is the life that He has imparted to us here on the earth. That is the precious "*gift of God*" (Romans 6:23). It is for that reason that we can live a life of holiness!

It is not our own life that has been changed, but the life of God that has been imparted to us.

Do you notice that, in this consideration of the eternal purpose, the whole question of sin ultimately goes out? It no longer has a place. Sin came in with Adam, and even when it has been dealt with, as it has to be, we are only brought back to the point where Adam was. But in relating us again to the Divine purpose -- in restoring to us access to the tree of life -- redemption has given us far more than Adam ever had. It has made us partakers of the very life of God Himself.

Lesson 8

Depending Entirely Upon the Holy Spirit

We have studied about God's ultimate purpose for mankind as the motive and explanation of all of His dealings with us. I want to return to our study of the phases of Christian living that is set before us in Romans, however, before we do, I want to digress a little more, in order to consider something that is at the heart of Christian living. It is the vitalizing and energizing power of effective Christian living – it is the personal presence of the Holy Spirit within the believer's life.

Let's start with two verses found in Romans. The first one is Romans 5:5, "*The love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost which was given unto us.*" Another one is Romans 8:9, "*If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.*"

God does not give His gifts at random, nor dispense them in any arbitrary fashion. They are given freely to all, but they are given on a definite basis. God has truly "*blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ*" (Ephesians 1:3), but if those blessings -- that are ours "*in Christ*" -- are to become ours in experience, we must know on what grounds we can appropriate them.

In considering the gift of the Holy Spirit it is helpful to think of this in two aspects, as the Spirit *outpoured* and the Spirit *indwelling*, and our purpose is to understand on what basis this twofold gift of the Holy Spirit becomes ours.

We need to distinguish between the *outward* and the *inward* manifestations of the working of the Holy Spirit. As we continue this study we will find this distinction to be helpful. Moreover, when we compare them, we cannot but come to the conclusion that the inward activity of the Holy Spirit is very precious. But to say this -- is not for one moment to imply that His outward activity is not also precious, because God only gives good gifts to His children (Luke 11:13). Unfortunately we are apt to esteem our privileges lightly because of their sheer abundance. The Old Testament saints, who were not as favored as we are, could appreciate more readily than we do the preciousness of this gift of the outpoured Spirit. In their day it was a gift given only to the select few -- chiefly to priests, judges, kings and prophets -- whereas now it is the portion of every child of God. Think of it! We, who are merely human beings, can have the same Spirit resting upon us as rested upon Moses – the friend of God – upon David the beloved king – and upon Elijah the mighty prophet. By receiving the gift of the outpoured Holy Spirit we join the ranks of God's chosen servants of the Old Testament dispensation. Once we see the value of this gift of God, and realize our deep need of it, we will immediately ask, "*How can I receive the Holy Spirit in this way to equip me with spiritual gifts that will empower me for service? Upon what basis has the Spirit been given?*"

The Spirit Outpoured

First let's read Acts 2:32-36, "**[32]** *This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. [33] Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear. [34] For*

David ascended not into the heavens: but he saith himself, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, [35] Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.' [36] Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified."

Verses 34 and 35 are a quotation from the 110th Psalm and are a parenthesis, between verses 33 and 36. So, in order to receive the force of Peter's argument, let's set the parenthesis aside to begin with. Looking at verse 33, Peter states that the Lord Jesus was exalted "at the right hand of God." And, what was the result? - He "received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost." Then, what followed? - **Pentecost!** Take note of the result of Christ Jesus' exaltation - "this, which ye see and hear."

What, then, was the basis upon which the Spirit was first given to the Lord Jesus to be poured out upon His people? It was His exaltation to Heaven. This passage makes it absolutely clear that the Holy Spirit was poured out because the Lord Jesus was exalted. The outpouring of the Spirit has no relation to our merits, but only to the merits of the Lord Jesus. The question of what *we* are does not come into consideration at all here, but only what *He* is. He is glorified; therefore the Spirit is poured out.

- Because the Lord Jesus died on the Cross we have received forgiveness of sins.
- Because the Lord Jesus rose from the dead, we have received new life.
- Because the Lord Jesus has been exalted to the right hand of the Father, we have received the outpoured Spirit.

All is because of Him; nothing is because of me.

Remission of sins is not based on human merit, but on the Lord's crucifixion! Regeneration is not based on human merit, but on the Lord's resurrection! and the infilling with the Holy Spirit is not based on human merit, but on the Lord's exaltation. The Holy Spirit has not been poured out on you or me to prove how great we are, but to prove the greatness of the Son of God.

Look at verse 36. There is a word here that demands careful attention - the word "therefore." This word used, not to introduce a statement, but to follow a statement that has already been made! Its use always implies that something has been mentioned before. Now what has preceded this particular "therefore?" With what is it connected? It cannot reasonably be connected with either verse 34 or verse 35, (the parenthesis), but rather, it refers obviously back to verse 33 and relate to what was written there. Peter has *just* referred to the outpouring of the Spirit upon the disciples "which ye see and hear," and then he says, "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." Peter says, in effect, to his audience, "This outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which you have witnessed with your own eyes and ears, proves that Jesus of Nazareth whom ye crucified is **now** both Lord and Christ." The Holy Spirit was poured out on earth to prove what had taken place in Heaven -- the exaltation of Jesus of Nazareth to the right hand of God. The purpose of Pentecost is to prove the Lordship of Jesus Christ!

There's an interesting story in the Old Testament concerning Jacob and his son, Joseph, whom he dearly loved. One day news reached the father of the death of his son, and for years Jacob lamented Joseph's loss. *But Joseph was not in the grave – he was in a place of glory and power!* After Jacob had been mourning the death of his son for years, it was suddenly reported to him that Joseph was alive and in a high position in Egypt. At first Jacob could not take it in. It seemed too good to believe – too good to be true! But ultimately he was persuaded that the story of Joseph's exaltation was really a fact. How did he come to believe in it? He went out, and saw the chariots that Joseph had sent from Egypt (See Genesis 45:26-28). These royal chariots convinced Jacob that his son, Joseph, was alive – then these same chariots conveyed him to Egypt to see his son.

These chariots are a wonderful type the Holy Spirit – sent both to be the evidence that God's Son is in glory and to convey us there. How do we know that Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified by wicked men nearly two thousand years ago? How do we know that He did not just die a martyr's death? How do we know He is at the Father's right hand in glory? How can we know for surety that He is Lord of lords and King of kings? We can know it beyond any doubt because He has poured out His Spirit upon us. *Hallelujah!* Jesus is Lord and Christ - *Messiah!*

The exaltation of the Lord Jesus is the basis on which the Spirit has been given. Is it possible then that *the Lord* has been glorified and *we* have not received the Spirit? On what basis did we receive forgiveness of sins? Was it because we prayed so earnestly, or because we read our Bible from cover to cover, or was it because of our regular attendance at Church? Was it because of our merits at all? *No! A thousand times, No!* On what grounds then were our sins forgiven? *“Apart from shedding of blood there is no remission”* (Hebrews 9:22). The sole ground of forgiveness is the shedding of blood; and since Christ's precious Blood has been shed, your sins have been forgiven.

Now the principle on which we receive the power of the Holy Spirit is the very same as that on which we receive forgiveness of sins.

- *The Lord has been crucified therefore our sins have been forgiven;*
- *The Lord has been glorified therefore the Spirit has been poured out upon us.*

Is it possible that the Son of God shed His Blood and that our sins have not been forgiven? *Never!* Then is it possible that the Son of God has been glorified and you have not received the Spirit? *Never!*

You may say, *“I agree with what you say, but I have never experienced it. What should I do? Shall I say I have received, when I know I have not?”* No, of course not! We should never be content with objective truths alone. We need subjective experience also! However, that experience will only come as we rest upon Divine truths. God's truths are the basis of our experience.

Let's look again to the question of justification. How were we justified? Not by doing anything at all, but by accepting the fact that the Lord had done everything. The

infilling with the Holy Spirit becomes ours in exactly the same way as justification, not by our doing anything our self, but by our putting our faith in what the Lord has already done.

If we lack the experience, we need to ask God for a revelation of this eternal fact of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as the gift of the exalted Lord to His Church.

Once we see that, effort will cease, and prayer will give place to praise. It was a revelation of what the Lord had done for the world that brought to an end our efforts to secure forgiveness of sins, and it is a revelation of what the Lord has done for His Church that will bring to an end our efforts to secure the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We work because we have not seen the work of Christ. But when once we have seen that, faith will spring up in our hearts, and as we believe, experience will follow.

Here, Again, Faith Is The Key

As for forgiveness, so it is with the coming upon us of the Holy Spirit, the whole question is one of faith. As soon as we see the Lord Jesus on the Cross we know our sins are forgiven; and as soon as we see the Lord Jesus on the Throne, we know the Holy Spirit has been poured out upon us. The basis upon which we receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit is not our praying and fasting and waiting, but the exaltation of Christ.

All spiritual blessings are given on a definite basis. God's gifts are freely given, but there are conditions that must be fulfilled on our part before the reception of them is possible.

Lesson 9

Receiving God's Free Gift of the Holy Spirit

Whenever one receives Jesus Christ into his heart as his Lord and Savior he "receives" -- (is indwelt by) -- the Holy Spirit, however, God's Word teaches that in addition to conversion there is an act of "receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit" - that Luke 24:49 refers to as being "endued with power from on high." The primary purpose of God's giving this power is to enable us to have the abundant Christian life that Jesus said He came to give us.

*"But you will receive **POWER** when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses..." (Acts 1:8)*

Scripture tells us that the Holy Spirit is promised to **YOU!**

In Matthew 3:11 John the Baptist said, "*baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come One...(Jesus)...who is more powerful than I, Whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.*"

In Luke 24:49 Jesus said, "*I am going to send you what My Father promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.*"

John 7:37-39, "On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him. By this He meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were later to receive."

In John 14:16-17 Jesus said, "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever - the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you."

In John 16:7 Jesus said, "But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him...(the Holy Spirit)...to you."

Acts 1:4-5, and 8, "On one occasion, while He...(Jesus) ... was eating with them, He gave them this command: `Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift My Father promised, which you have heard Me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'"

Acts 2:38-39, "Peter replied, `Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call.'"

Ephesians 5:18, "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit."

God shows us His pattern for receiving the Holy Spirit, by means of FIVE INSTANCES...which are recorded in the Book of Acts...of those who received the Holy Spirit:

I

On the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was given for the first time in Acts 2:1-4 "When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."

II

When the Samaritans received the Holy Spirit in Acts 8:14-20 "When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name

of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, 'Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.' Peter answered: 'May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!'"

III

When Saul of Tarsus received the Holy Spirit in Acts 9:17-18 *"Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord - Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here - has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized."*

Along with this passage, Paul...in I Corinthians 14:18... states, *"I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you."*

IV

When the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit at Cornelius' house in Acts 10:44-46 *"While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God."*

V

When the Ephesian believers received the Holy Spirit in Acts 19:1-7, *"While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' They answered, 'No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.' So Paul asked, 'Then what baptism did you receive?' 'John's baptism,' they replied. Paul said, 'John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.' On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all."*

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In the same way that there was only one Calvary...when Christ died for man's sin... there was only one Pentecost...when God gave His Holy Spirit to the Church. And just as, at Calvary, provision was made for people of all ages to be "saved," so, too, on the Day of Pentecost...with the coming of the Holy Spirit... provision was made for believers of this entire Church age to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

When God gave the Holy Spirit to His Church on the Day of Pentecost, He gave it as the Church's permanent possession during this entire, present, Church age, and He, now, waits to give each individual believer his, or her, share in Pentecost on the one condition that he...or she...apply for it *"by faith."*

**As you took forgiveness from the hand of the living Christ,  
take your share of the Pentecostal blessing  
from the hand of the living Christ!**

Because there isn't any Scripture in the Bible that teaches us that "*one must speak in tongues as a sign of receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit,*" one cannot insist, absolutely, that "*tongues*" is the only sign of one's having received the fullness of the Holy Spirit... nevertheless...in *every instance* in the Book of Acts, where the Holy Spirit was received ...and the initial external manifestation is mentioned...the external manifestation was **ALWAYS speaking in tongues.**

The only instance where "*tongues*" is not definitely mentioned is in Acts 8 where the Samaritans received the fullness of the Holy Spirit, however, there was some *external manifestation* that Simon *saw* -- because verse 18 says, "*When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, 'Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.'*" What could it have been that Simon saw that convinced him that these Samaritans had received the Holy Spirit, unless it was the same manifestation...that of speaking in tongues...that was mentioned in *every other instance* of the filling of the Holy Spirit?

In Mark 16:17, Jesus said, "*And these signs will accompany those who believe...they shall speak in new tongues.*"

Nowhere does God's Word declare, as some teach, "*that believers were to speak in tongues only up until the time that the original disciples died...or...only up until the time that the immature believers at Corinth became mature and had no more need for special manifestations.*"

In I Corinthians 14, Paul declares, "*I would like everyone of you to speak in tongues,*" (vs.5)...and..."*I thank God that I speak with tongues more than all of you,*" (vs.18)...and...in I Corinthians 12, he states, "*God hath set in the Church...(the Church Universal) ...these gifts*" (vs.28).

## **HOW MAY I RECEIVE MY PERSONAL BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?**

### **1. BELIEVE THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS WITH YOU RIGHT NOW!**

Jesus said, "*I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you FOREVER*" (John 14:16).

The Holy Spirit is near you right now!

### **2. BELIEVE THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A GIFT!**

Luke 11:11-13, "*Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though*

*you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"*

John 14:16 teaches us that God will "GIVE" the Holy Spirit to us when Jesus said, "I will ask the Father, and He will GIVE you another Counselor to be with you forever!"

### **3. BELIEVE THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT MUST BE "RECEIVED" IN BY YOU!**

God, the Father in heaven, performed the act of "giving" the gift of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost and now each believer, as a candidate for this gift, must perform the act of "receiving" God's gift of the Holy Spirit. While "receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit" is by faith in God...and in His Word...*faith, nonetheless, is ACTIVE!*

Acts 2:38 states, "...you will RECEIVE the gift of the Holy Spirit" ...and, since the word "receive" means "to accept, to take, to claim, or, to acquire." This Scripture verse teaches us that one takes an active part in the receiving of this gift!

#### **WE ARE COMMANDED TO "RECEIVE" THE HOLY SPIRIT!**

Acts 2:38, "Peter replied, `Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And YOU WILL RECEIVE the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"

Acts 19:2, " And (Paul) asked them, `Did you RECEIVE the Holy Spirit when you believed?' They answered, `No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.'"

John 7:39, "By this He meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were later to RECEIVE. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified."

John 20:22," And with that He...(Jesus)...breathed on them and said, `RECEIVE the Holy Spirit.'"

Galatians 3:2, "Did you RECEIVE the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard?" Again the question in verse 5, "Does God GIVE you His Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard...the Word?"

After Scripture tells us that the gift of the Holy Spirit was given to the Church on the Day of Pentecost, the thought of "giving" of the Holy Spirit is never mentioned again.

*The Holy Spirit has been here ever since the Day of Pentecost and He is immediately available to any believer who will receive Him!*

#### **GOD DID ALL HE COULD DO AT PENTECOST!**

Because this wonderful fullness of the Holy Spirit can be the blessed possession of any believer who will "receive" it, the first step, then...in acquiring this gift ...is for the believer to "will to receive" that which God has already given ...and made available...to him!

The Lord "moved" on the Day of Pentecost when He gave you the gift of the infilling of the Holy Spirit...*the next move is yours!*

#### **4. BELIEVE THAT THE FULLNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS "RECEIVED" BY FAITH!**

Galatians 3:2 and 5 makes it clear that one receives the Holy Spirit by faith when it asks the question, "Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard?" Verse 6 gives the answer to this question when it states, "Consider Abraham: He BELIEVED God, and it was credited to him as righteousness" ...and verse 14 goes on to say, "He (God) redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that BY FAITH we might receive the promise of the Spirit."

Scripturally, one could never teach that one must clean up his life before he can receive Jesus Christ as his Savior...well, it is just as erroneous to teach that one must reach a certain level of spiritual maturity...or have attained some superior degree of disciplined living...before he can qualify to "receive" the gift of the Holy Spirit...because ...God does not give man the gift of the fullness of the Holy Spirit because of his "good works" or because he has reached a certain spiritual stature. - No, on the contrary, because...in fact...God's gifts are received by believing faith!

Despite the fact that many want the fullness of the Holy Spirit, they have never received it because they believe that some secret sin...or their lack of spirituality...prevents them from receiving it!

Degrees of spiritual attainment...consecration...personal holiness...are, of course, vastly important, however, they have no bearing upon receiving the power from on high... because...in fact, it is the power of the Holy Spirit which enables one to live the Christ-like life! So...then...the gift of the Holy Spirit is not given as a reward for one's having reached a certain degree of holiness, but, rather, this power is given to enable one to live a holy life!

One who receives the gift of the Holy Spirit has no more Christian character the moment he receives this gift than he had the moment before he received the gift, however, he now has a divine Source of help, and ability, which cannot be over estimated!

**A "gift" is never earned as wages are!**

Scripture teaches that the righteousness of Christ is credited to one's spiritual account because of one's faith...not because of one's "good works!"

## 5. BELIEVE...BY FAITH...THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES YOU THE WORDS AND THAT YOU -- THEN MUST SPEAK THEM OUT.

The “*exercise of faith*” is when one speaks out the words that the Holy Spirit gives.

Many believe, erroneously, that, when they receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit will *take hold of their tongue and MAKE THEM speak with tongues - without their having anything whatsoever to do with it.*

Many candidates for the infilling of the Holy Spirit have a problem surrendering to the Holy Spirit simply because...when they receive...in their minds...the words that the Holy Spirit has given them...they think the words are of themselves so they hesitate to speak them out!

If, somehow, those who are hungry for the baptism of the Holy Spirit could be encouraged to exercise faith in God and speak out the words that have been given to them by the Holy Spirit, they would be wonderfully, and gloriously, filled with the fullness of the Holy Spirit!

Acts 2:4 states, “*All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and (they) began to speak in other tongues - as the Spirit enabled them.*”

In this verse lies the secret of "**HOW TO RECEIVE THE FULLNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**" and, if one believes this verse...and acts upon it...he will experience the glorious infilling of the Holy Spirit!

It is important to note that the subject of this verse (Acts 2:4) is “*they*.” It states that “*they*” were filled with the Holy Spirit and “**THEY**” began to speak in other tongues! - The Holy Spirit did NOT speak with tongues - “**THEY**” DID!

According to the Companion Bible, the original translation reads, “*They began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit was in the process of giving them the utterance.*”

A candidate for the infilling of the Holy Spirit exercises FAITH when he speaks out the words that the Spirit gives him ...even if it is only one or two words.

A modern speech translation of Acts 2:4, is, “*they began to speak with other languages AS THE HOLY SPIRIT PROMPTED THEM,*” and the Weymouth translation of Acts 2:4 is, “*they began to speak in another language as the Holy Spirit gave them words to utter.*”

I would encourage anyone who is seeking the gift...the “*baptism*” ...of the Holy Spirit to believe that the words he is receiving in his mind are supernaturally given by the Lord and, then...upon believing that...to open his mouth and speak these words out and, in the process of doing so, the Holy Spirit will give him more words to speak.

This is how the fullness of the Holy Spirit is received by "faith!"

The Holy Spirit will furnish you with the inspiration...He will give you the words to utter...however, He wants you to open your mouth and speak the words out!

The Holy Spirit does not do the speaking -**YOU DO**  
- however, that which you speak is of the Holy Spirit!

The Bible plainly teaches that man, by his own will, does the speaking, but what he speaks is supernaturally directed!

May you...by an act of your will... determine to **RECEIVE** this wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit which God has provided for you...and...may you...again, by an act of your will... determine to **speak out that which the Holy Spirit will, supernaturally, direct you to!**

## Lesson 10

### The Meaning of the 7<sup>th</sup> Chapter of Romans

Lessons 7, 8 and 9 are actually a parenthesis in our study - in order to consider two related subjects: namely, God's ultimate purpose for mankind, which is the *motive* and *goal* of Christian living - and, second, the Holy Spirit, who supplies the power and resource to bring us to that goal. In lesson 6 we left off with, "*Presenting our self to God*" - the theme of the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans. Now, in this lesson we return to our study Christian Living as described in the book of Romans.

Romans 7 is a chapter that many might say was unnecessary. And, indeed it does seem that way - if we really realized the Scriptural concept that the "*old creation*" is dead by reason of the Cross of Christ, and an entirely "*new creation*" is alive in us by His resurrection. If we were at the point where (1) we really "*knew*" that -- and (2) "*reckon*" on that -- and (3) "*presented ourselves*" on the basis of that, **then** *perhaps* we would have no need of Romans 7.

There are Bible theologians that feel that if they had written the book of Romans, they would have placed chapter 7 differently. They deem that chapter 7 belongs between chapters 5 and 6. Because at the end of chapter 6 everything seems is so perfect. Then, when you enter chapter 7, Paul cries, "*O wretched man that I am!*" It appears to be an anticlimax! The reason they speculate in that way is that they presume that Paul is speaking in chapter 7 of his unregenerate life. And, we must admit that what he describes is not the *Christian* living that is described throughout the New Testament. However, let's be honest, it does describe many Christians lives from time to time, doesn't it?

*What then is the teaching of Romans 7?*

Romans 6 deals with freedom from sin. Romans 7 deals with freedom from law. In chapter 6 Paul has told us how we could be delivered from sin, and one might just concluded that this was all that was required. So chapter 7 teaches that deliverance from sin is not enough! We also need to know deliverance from law. If we are not fully liberated from law we can never know full liberation from sin. But what is the difference between *deliverance from sin* and *deliverance from law*? It is easy to realize the value of deliverance from sin, but where is the need for deliverance from law? To appreciate that we must first understand what the law *is* and *what it does*.

### The Problem with Man's Flesh Nature

Romans 7 has an important lesson to teach us. The lesson is found in the discovery that I am "*in the flesh*" (Romans 7:5), that "*I am carnal*" (Romans 7:18).

### This goes beyond the question of sin

Romans 7 relates the matter of living the Christian life in a manner that is pleasing to God. We are dealing here not *with sin in its forms* but with *man's carnal state*. This, of course, includes sin but it goes further, leading to the discovery that in the realm of living the Christian life we are totally powerless – that "*they that are in the flesh cannot please God*" (Romans 8:8). How then is this discovery made? It is made with the help of the law.

Describing what is the experience of many, they are truly saved -- and yet bound by sin. It is not that they are necessarily living under the power of sin *all the time*, but there are certain particular sins hampering them continually. They hear the message, that Christ Jesus not only died to cleanse away their sins, but that when He died He included them sinners in His death; so that not only were their sins dealt with, but *they themselves were dealt with too*. These believer's eyes are opened and they *know* they have been crucified *with Christ*. Two things follow that revelation. In the first place they *reckon* that they have died and risen with the Lord, and in the second place, recognize the Lord's claim upon them, they *present themselves* to God as alive from the dead. They see that they have no more right over themselves. This, apparently, is the commencement of a beautiful Christian life, bringing glory to the Lord.

They begin to reason, "*I have died with Christ and am raised with Him, and I have given myself over to Him for ever; now I must do something for Him, since He has done so much for me. I want to please Him and do His will.*" So, after they have taken the step of consecration – they seek to discover the will of God, and set out to obey Him. However, they make a strange discovery. They thought they could *do* the will of God and they thought they would always *love it*, but gradually they find they do not always like it. At times they even find reluctance *within* to do it, and often when they try to do it – they find they cannot. Then they may, even, begin to question their experience. They ask themselves, "*Did I really know? -- Yes! Did I really reckon? -- Yes! Did I really give myself to Him? -- Yes! Have I taken back my consecration? -- No! Then whatever is the problem now?*" The more they try to do the will of God the more they fail. They may come to the conclusion that they never really loved God's will after all, so they pray for the desire



and the power to do it. They confess their disobedience and promise never to disobey again. But they have barely gotten up from their knees before they have fallen once more. Before they reach the point of victory they are conscious of defeat. Then they say, "*Perhaps my last decision was not definite enough. This time I will be absolutely definite.*" So they bring all their will-power to bear on the situation, only to find greater defeat than ever awaiting them the next time a choice has to be made. Then at last they echo the words of Paul, "*For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing: for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not. For the good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practice*" (Romans 7:18,19).

### What Law Teaches

Many Christians are suddenly launched into the experience of Romans 7 and they do not know why. They fancy Romans 6 is quite enough. Having grasped that, they think there can be no more question of failure, and then to their utter surprise they suddenly find themselves in Romans 7. What is the explanation?

I want to emphasize emphatically – that *the death with Christ described in Romans 6 is fully adequate to cover all our need.* It is the explanation of that death, with all that follows from it, that is incomplete in chapter 6. To take chapter 6, standing by itself, would leave us in ignorance of the truth that is set forth in chapter 7. Romans 7 is given to us to explain and make real the statement in Romans 6:14, that, "*Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace.*" The trouble is that we do not yet know deliverance from law. What, then, is the meaning of law?

- Grace means that God does something for us
- Law means that we do something for God

God has certain holy and righteous demands which He places upon us: that is *law*. Now if law means that God requires something of us for its fulfillment, then deliverance from law means that He no longer requires that from us. God, Himself, has provided deliverance from the law. Law implies that God requires me to do something for Him; deliverance from law implies that He *exempts* me from doing it – and that in grace He does it Himself. "*I – (the **carnal** man of Romans 7:14) – need do nothing for God – that is deliverance from law.* The trouble in Romans 7 is, that man "*in the flesh*" tried to do something for God. As soon as we try to please God in that way, then our place our self under law, and the experience of Romans 7 begins to be yours.

As we seek to understand our "*flesh,*" or "*carnal*" nature, let's have it understood that the fault does not lie with the Law. Paul says, "*the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good*" (Romans 7:12). There is nothing wrong with the Law! But there is something decidedly wrong with *me!* The demands of the Law are righteous, but *the person upon whom the demands are made is unrighteous!* The trouble is not that the Law's demands are unjust, but that I am unable to meet them. It may be all right for the Government to require a certain amount of my income for income tax, but it would be all wrong if I don't have sufficient money to meet that demand!

We are “*sold under sin*” (Rom. 7:14). Sin has dominion over us. For most of us, as long as others leave us alone we would, probably, to be a pretty fine type of person. However, it is when others ask us to *do* something that our sinfulness comes to light.

### Let me illustrate!

If you have a very awkward, clumsy person supposedly working for you, but he does nothing all day, his awkwardness would not be very evident. However, he would be of little use to you! (At least he wouldn't do much damage.) However, if you say to him, “*Don't idle away your time, get up and do something,*” then immediately the trouble begins! He knocks the chair over as he gets up, stumbles over a footstool a few feet further on, and then smashes some precious dish as soon as he handles it. If you make no demands upon him his clumsiness is never noticed. But, as soon as you ask him to do anything, his awkwardness is seen. The demands were all right, but the man was all wrong. He was as clumsy a man when he was sitting still as when he was working, but it was your demands that made manifest the clumsiness that was there all the time in his make-up, whether he was active or inactive.

We are all sinners, born into sinful humanity by nature. If God asked nothing of us, all may seem to go well! But, as soon as He demands something of us, the incident provides for a display of our sinfulness. *The Law makes our weakness manifest!* If we were left to sit still we would appear to be all right, but when we are asked to do anything – we are sure to spoil that thing, and if we are trusted with a second thing we would as surely spoil it too. When a holy law is applied to a sinful man, then his sinfulness comes out in full display.

God knows who we are! He knows that from head to foot we are full of sin. He knows that we are weakness incarnate; that we can do nothing of ourselves. The trouble is that “*we*” do not know it. We are willing to admit that, “*all men are sinners*” so, therefore we must be a sinner also. However, we imagine that we are not such hopeless sinners as some.

*God must bring us all to the place where we see that we are utterly weak and helpless.* We may be willing to say so, but we do not wholly believe it. So, God has to do something to convince us of that fact. Had it not been for the Law we would never have known how weak we are. Paul had reached that point. He makes this clear when he says in Romans 7:7, “*I had not known sin, except through the law: for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*” Whatever might be his experience with the rest of the Law, it was the tenth commandment, which literally translated is: “*Thou shalt not desire...*” that found him out. There his total failure and his incapacity stared him in the face!

The more we try to keep the Law the more our weakness is manifested and the deeper we get into Romans 7 – until it is clearly demonstrated to us that we are hopelessly weak. God knew it all along but we did not, and so God had to bring us

through painful experiences of recognizing of this fact. Man needs to have his weakness proved to him beyond dispute. *That is why God gave the Law.*

So we say, *reverently*, that God never gave us the Law to keep. He gave us the Law to break! He knew that we could not keep it. We are so bad that He asks no favor and makes no demands. Never has any man succeeded in making himself acceptable to God by means of the Law. Nowhere in the New Testament are men of faith told that they are to keep the Law. The New Testament does teach that the Law was given so that there should be transgression. *"The law came in ... that the trespass might abound"* (Romans 5:20). ***The Law was given to make us law-breakers!*** There is no doubt about it – we are sinners in Adam, *"Howbeit, I had not known sin, except through the law: ...for apart from the law sin is dead ... but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died"* (Romans 7:7-9). The Law is that which exposes our true nature. We are so conceited, and think ourselves so strong, that God has to give us something to test us and prove how weak we are. At last we see it and confess, *"I am a sinner through and through, and I can of myself do nothing whatever to please God."*

The Law was not given in the expectation that we would keep it. It was given in the full knowledge that we would break it. And, when we have broken it so completely that we are convinced of our utter need, then the Law has served its purpose. It has been our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that He Himself may fulfill it in us (Galatians 3:24).

### **Christ The End Of The Law**

- In Romans 6 we saw how God delivered us from sin.
- In Romans 7 we see how He delivers us from the Law.
- In chapter 6 we were shown the way of deliverance from sin in the picture of a master and his slave.
- In chapter 7 we are shown the way of deliverance from the Law in the picture of two husbands and a wife. The relation between sin and the sinner is that of master to slave. The relation between the Law and the sinner is that of husband to wife.

Notice first that in the picture in Romans 7:1-4 *Paul illustrates our deliverance from the Law there is only **one** woman, while there are **two** husbands.* The woman is in a very difficult position, for she can only be wife of only one of the two, and unfortunately she is married to the less desirable one. Let us make no mistake, the man to whom she is married is a good man; but the trouble lies here, that the husband and wife are totally unsuited to one another. He is a most particular man, accurate to a degree. She, on the other hand, is decidedly easy-going. With him all is definite and precise. With her all is vague and haphazard. He wants everything just so-so. She accepts things as they come. How could there be happiness in such a home?

The husband is so exacting! He is always making demands on his wife. And yet one cannot find fault with him. As a husband he has a right to expect something of her –

besides, all his demands are perfectly legitimate. There is nothing wrong with the man and nothing wrong with his demands. The trouble is that he has the wrong kind of wife to carry them out. The two cannot get along at all. Under this situation they have utterly incompatible natures. Thus the poor woman is in great distress. She is fully aware that she often makes mistakes, but living with such a husband it seems as though *everything* she says and does is wrong! What hope is there for her? If only she were married to that other Man all would be well. He is no less exacting than her husband, but He also helps much. She would, in a minute, marry Him, but her husband is still alive. What can she do? She is "*bound by law to the husband*" and unless he dies she cannot legitimately marry that other Man.

This picture is not given by me – but by the apostle Paul. Don't miss the point! The first husband is the Law. The second husband is Christ. We are pictured as that woman. The Law requires much, but offers no help in the carrying out of its requirements. The Lord Jesus requires just as much, (even more, according to Matthew 5:21-48) but what He requires from us He Himself carries out *in* us. The Law makes demands and leaves us helpless to fulfill them. Christ makes demands, but He Himself fulfills *within* us the very demands He makes. Little wonder that the woman desires to be freed from the first husband that she may marry the other Man! But *her only hope of release is through the death of her first husband*, and he holds on to life most tenaciously. Indeed, there is not the least prospect of his passing away. "*Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished*" (Matthew 5:18).

The Law will continue for all eternity. If the Law will never pass away, then how can I ever be united to Christ? How can I marry a second husband if my first husband simply refuses to die? There is one way out. If *he* will not die, ***I can die***, and if I die the marriage relationship is dissolved. That is exactly God's way of deliverance from the Law. The most important point to note in this section of Romans 7 is the transition from verse 3 to verse 4. Verses 1 to 3 show that the husband should die, but in verse 4 we see that in fact it is the woman who dies. The Law does not pass away. *God's righteous demands remain forever*, and if I live I must meet those demands; ***but if I die*** – the Law has lost its claim on me. It cannot follow me beyond the grave.

Exactly the same principle operates in our deliverance from the Law as in our deliverance from sin. When I have died my old master, "*Sin*," still continues to live, but his power over his slave extends as far as the grave and no further. He could ask me to do a hundred and one things when I was alive, but when I am dead he calls on me in vain. I am forever freed from his tyranny. So it is with regard to the Law. While the woman lives she is bound to her husband, but with her death the marriage bond is dissolved and she is "*discharged from the law of her husband*." The Law may still make demands, but for me its power to enforce them is ended.

Now the vital question arises, "***How do I die?***" Our Lord's work begins here, "*Ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ*" (Romans 7:4). When Christ died

His body was broken, and since God placed me “*in Him*” (1 Corinthians 1:30), I have been broken too. When He was crucified, I was crucified with Him.

There’s an Old Testament illustration that will help to make this clear. It was the veil of Temple that separated the *Holy Place* from the *Holy of Holies*, and upon it were embroidered cherubim (Exodus 26:31; 2 Chronicles:14) whose faces, by analogy from Ezekiel 1:10 and 10:14, included that of a man as representing the human head of the whole natural creation (Psalm 8:4-8). In Old Testament days God dwelt *within* the veil and man *without*. Man could look upon the veil, but could not enter beyond the veil. That veil symbolized our Lord's flesh, His body (Hebrews 10:20). So in the Gospels men could only look upon the outward form of our Lord. They could not – save by Divine revelation (Matthew 16:16,17) – see the God who dwelt within. But when the Lord Jesus died, the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51) as by the hand of God, so that man could gaze right into the Holy of Holies. Since the death of the Lord Jesus, God is no longer veiled but seeks to reveal Himself (1 Corinthians 2:7-10).

When the veil was rent asunder, what happened to the cherubim? God rent only the veil, it is true, but the cherubim were there in the veil and were one with it, for they were embroidered upon it. It was impossible to rend the veil and preserve them whole. When the veil was rent the cherubim were rent with it. And, in the sight of God, when the Lord Jesus died the whole living creation died too.

“*Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ*” (Romans 7:4). That woman's first husband may be very well and strong, but if she dies he may make as many demands upon her as he likes, but it will not affect her in the slightest. Death has set her free from all her husband's claims. We were in Christ Jesus when He died. That inclusive death of His has forever freed us from the Law. ***But our Lord did not remain in the grave!*** On the third day He rose again; and since we are still in Him we are risen also. The body of the Lord Jesus speaks not only of His death – but of His resurrection, for His resurrection was a bodily resurrection. Thus, “*through the body of Christ*” we are not only “*dead to the law*” but, “*alive unto God.*”

God's purpose in uniting us to Christ was not merely *negative* – it was gloriously *positive* – “*that ye should be joined to another*” (Romans 7:4). Death has dissolved the old marriage relationship, so that the woman, driven to despair by the constant demands of her former husband, who never lifted a little finger to help her carry them out, is now set free to marry the other Man, who with every demand He makes becomes in her the power for its fulfillment.

The issue of this new union is, “*That we might bring forth fruit unto God*” (Romans 7:4). By being a part of the body of Christ that woman, who had been bound by the Law, has died. Now, being united to Him in death, she is united to Him in resurrection – and, in the power of resurrection life, she bring forth fruit unto God.

The risen life of the Lord in her empowers her for all the demands that God's holiness makes upon her. The Law of God is not annulled, but rather, perfectly fulfilled, for the risen Lord now lives out His life in her, and His life is always well-pleasing to the Father.

What happens when a woman marries? She no longer bears her own name but that of her husband; and she shares not his name only but his possessions too. So it is when we are joined to Christ. When we belong to Him, all that is His becomes ours, and with His infinite resources at our disposal we are well able to meet all His demands.

### **Our End Is God's Beginning**

Now that we have settled the doctrinal side of the question we must come down to *practical* issues, staying a little longer with the negative aspect and keeping the positive for the next lesson. *What does it mean in everyday life to be delivered from the Law?* It means that from henceforth I am going to do nothing whatever for God; I am never going to try to please Him. You probably are saying something like, *"I must be reading this wrong! What kind of doctrine is that? It must be heresy! You cannot possibly mean that we are not to try and please God!"*

Remember, if I try to please God *"in the flesh,"* immediately I place myself under the Law. I broke the Law and the Law pronounces the death sentence. The sentence was executed, and now, *by death, I* -- the carnal *"I"* (Romans 7:14) -- have been set free from all its claims! There is still a Law of God, and now there is in fact a *"New commandment"* that is infinitely more exacting than the old. But, Praise God, its demands are being met, for it is Christ who now fulfills them. It is Christ who works in me what is well-pleasing to God. *"I came ... to fulfill the law"* were His words (Matthew 5:17). And, Paul, from the ground of resurrection, said, *"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure"* (Philippians 2:12, 13).

*"It is God that worketh in you."* Deliverance from law does not mean that we are free from doing the will of God. It certainly does not mean that we are going to be lawless. But the reverse! What it does mean, however, is that we are free from doing that will *as of ourselves*. Being fully persuaded that we cannot do it, we cease trying to please God *from the grounds of the old man*. Having at last reached the point of utter despair in ourselves so that we cease even to try, we put our trust in the Lord to manifest His resurrection life in us.

Let's say a certain laborer who works in a salt mine, and the limit of weight he can physically carry is 100 pounds of salt. Along comes a load of 150 pounds. Now, he knows perfectly well he can't carry that much, and, if he is wise he will say, *"I won't try to carry it because I know that I can't carry that much weight."* But, human nature being what it is, the temptation to try and carry the 150 pounds. So, even though he knows he cannot possibly carry that much weight, he still tries. Eventually, he will have give up and make way for the man who can carry that much weight.

The sooner we too give up trying, the better off we will be. If we continue to try in our own strength and ability, there will not be room for the Holy Spirit to do the work in us. But if we say, “*I can't do it, so I'll trust You, Lord, to do it for me,*” then we will find that a Power stronger than ourselves is carrying us through.

One minister wrote, “*Unfortunately, the message of Romans 7 is seldom sounded nowadays. I can remember the day I was delivered from “**the Law!**” It was a day of Heaven on earth for me. After being a Christian for a number of years I was still trying my best to please God, but the more I tried the more I failed. I regarded God as a greatest Demander and I found myself unable to fulfill the least of His demands. Suddenly one day, as I read Romans 7, light dawned and I saw that I had not only been delivered from sin but **from the Law** as well. In my amazement I jumped up and said: ‘Lord, are you really making no demands on me? Then I need do nothing more. You’ve already done it all!’”*

God's requirements have not altered, but **we are not the ones to meet them!** Praise God, He is the Lawgiver on the Throne, and He is the “*Lawkeeper*” in my heart. He who gave the Law, Himself keeps it. He makes the demands, but He also meets them. We would probably jump up and shout when we find we have nothing to do, but rely on Christ Jesus’ life within. And all who make a like discovery will surely do the same. As long as we are trying to do *anything*, He can do nothing. It is because of our trying that we fail – and fail – and fail! God wants to demonstrate that we can do nothing at all, and until that is fully recognized our disappointments and disillusionments will never cease.

One Christian who was trying his best to struggle into victory, remarked, “*I do not know why I am so weak.*” When told, “*The trouble with you is that you unless you realize that you are too weak to ever do the will of God, you will never accomplish God's will in your life. You, evidently, fail to realize that you must quit trying to do it in your own strength and turn the whole matter over to God. When you are reduced to utter weakness and persuaded that you can do nothing whatsoever, **then** God will do everything!*”

We all need to come to the point where we say, “*Lord, I am unable to do anything for You, but I trust You to do everything in me.*”

One man tells of an experience where he went with some other men for a plunge in the river. On one occasion one of the men had cramp in his leg, and was sinking fast. The man tells how he motioned to an expert swimmer, to hurry to his rescue. He writes, “*To my astonishment he made no move.*” He said, “*I grew desperate and shouted vigorously, ‘Don't you realize the man is drowning?’”* But this good swimmer didn’t move. He remained where he was, calm and collected. It seemed that he was just postponing an unpleasant task. Meantime the voice of the poor drowning man grew fainter and his efforts feeble. The man telling the story said, “*In my heart, at that moment, I hated that man who was a strong swimmer! Think of it – his letting a man drown before his very eyes and not going to the rescue!*”

However, as the man was actually sinking, with a few swift strokes the swimmer was at his side, and both were safely ashore. The story-teller stated, "When I got an opportunity I told the swimmer what I thought." I said to him, "I have never seen anyone who loved his life quite as much as you do," I said. "Think of the distress you would have saved that man if you had considered yourself a little less and him a little more." But, the story teller writes, "the swimmer knew his business much better than I did. He replied, 'Had I gone earlier, he would have clutched me so fast that both of us would have gone under. A drowning man cannot be saved until he is utterly exhausted and ceases to make the slightest effort to save himself.'"

Do you see the point? When *we* give up, realizing that we cannot live the demands Scripture gives for Christian living, and trust totally and completely trust in the work that Jesus Christ has wrought, and is working, "*in us*" - then *God* will take over. He is waiting until we are at an end of our resources and can do nothing more for ourselves. God has condemned all that is of the "*old creation*" and consigned it to the Cross. The flesh profits *nothing!* If we try to do anything "*in the flesh,*" we are virtually renouncing the Cross of Christ. God has declared us to be fit *only for death!* When we truly believe that, then we confirm God's verdict by giving up all our fleshly efforts to please Him. Our every human effort to do His will - "*by means of the flesh*" - is a denial of His declaration of the Cross of our utter worthlessness. Our continued efforts are a misunderstanding on the one hand of God's demands and on the other hand of the Source of our supply.

We see the Law and we think that we must meet its demands, but we need to remember that, though the Law in itself is all right, it will be all wrong if it is applied to the wrong person. The "*wretched man*" of Romans 7 tried to meet the demands of God's law all by *himself*, and that was the cause of his trouble. The repeated use of the little word "**I**" in this chapter gives the clue to the failure. "*The good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practice*" (Romans 7:19). There was a fundamental misconception in this man's mind. He thought God was asking *him* to keep the Law, so, of course, he was trying to keep it. But God was requiring no such thing of him. What was the result? Far from doing what pleased God, he found himself doing what displeased Him. In his very efforts to do the will of God he did exactly the opposite of what he knew to be His will.

### I Thank God!

Romans 6 deals with "*the body of sin*" - Romans 7 with "*the body of this death*" (6:6 & 7:24). In chapter 6 the whole question is sin - in chapter 7 the whole question is death. What is the difference between the body of sin and the body of death? In regard to sin (that is, to whatever displeases God) I have a body of sin -- a body, that is to say, which is actively engaged in sin. But in regard to the Law of God (that is, to that which expresses the will of God) I have a body of death. My activity in regard to sin makes my body a body of sin. My failure, in regard to all that is wicked, worldly and Satanic I am, "*in my nature,*" wholly positive; but in regard to all that pertains to holiness, I am wholly negative.



The question is, “*Have we discovered the truth of this in our life?*” It is not enough to simply discover it in Romans 6 and 7. Have we discovered that we carry the burden of a lifeless body in fulfilling God's will? We have no difficulty in speaking about worldly matters, but when we try to speak for the Lord, do we feel tongue-tied? When we try to pray, do we feel sleepy? When we try to do something for the Lord, do we feel not at your best? It seems that we can do anything except that which is related to God's will. There is something in this body that does not harmonize with the will of God.

What does “*body of death*” mean? Perhaps 1 Corinthians 11:30 will help us to grasp this truth. It states, “*For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep*” Death is weakness – *produced to its extremity* - weakness, sickness, death! Death means utter weakness. It means our weakness is at such a point that we cannot become weaker. That we have “*a body of death in relation to God's will*” means that we are so weak in regard to serving God, so utterly weak, that we are reduced to a point of dire helplessness. Paul cries out in Romans 7:24, “*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?*” It is good when anyone reaches the point of crying out as Paul did. There is nothing more musical in the ears of the Lord. This cry is the most spiritual and the most Scriptural cry a man can utter. He only utters it when he knows he can do nothing, and gives up making any further resolutions. Up to this point, every time he failed he made new resolutions and doubled and redoubled his will-power. At last he discovers there is no use in his making up his mind any more, and he cries out in desperation, “*O wretched man that I am!*” Like a man who suddenly wakes up to find himself in a burning building, his cry is now for help, because he is at the point where he despairs of himself.

We must despair of our own ability. Do you think that if you read and pray more you will be a better Christian? Bible-reading and prayer are not wrong, and God forbid that we should suggest that they are. But *it is wrong to trust even in them for victory*. Our help is in Christ Jesus Who is the object of our reading and prayer. Our trust must be in Christ alone. Happily the “*wretched man*” does not merely abhor his wretchedness, but asks, “*Who will deliver me?*” **Who?** Up to now he has looked for some thing, now his hope is in a Person. Up to now he has looked within for a solution to his problem, now he looks beyond himself for a Savior. He no longer puts forth self-effort, all his expectation is now in Another – Christ Jesus!

How did we obtain forgiveness of sins? Was it by reading, praying, giving, and so on? No, we looked to the Cross, believing in what the Lord Jesus had done. Deliverance from sin is ours on exactly the same principle – and, also the question of pleasing God. In the matter of forgiveness we look to Him on the Cross. In the matter of deliverance from sin and of doing the will of God we look to Him *in our hearts*. For the one we depend on what He *has done*; for the other we depend on what He *will do* in us. In regard to both, our dependence is on Him along. **He is the One who does it all!**

At the time when the Epistle to the Romans was written a murderer was punished in a peculiar and terrible manner. The dead body of the one murdered was

tied to the living body of the murderer, head to head, hand-to-hand, foot-to-foot, and the living one was bound to the dead one till death. The murderer could go where he pleased, but wherever he went he had to carry the corpse of that murdered man with him. Could punishment be more appalling? Yet, this is the illustration Paul now uses. It is as though he were bound to a dead body and unable to get free. Wherever he goes he is hampered by this terrible burden. At last he can bear it no longer and cries, "*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me ...?*" And then, in a flash of illumination, his cry of despair changes to a song of praise. He has found the answer to his question. "*I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord*" (Romans 7:25).

We know that *justification* is ours through the Lord Jesus and requires no work on our part, but, for some reason, we get the idea that *sanctification* is dependent on our own efforts. We know we can receive forgiveness only by entire reliance on the Lord – yet we believe we can obtain deliverance by doing something ourselves. We fear that if we do nothing, nothing will happen! After salvation the old habit of "*doing*" reasserts itself and we begin our old self-efforts again. Then God's word comes afresh to us; when Jesus declared, "*It is finished*" (John 19:30). He has done everything on the Cross for our forgiveness and He will do everything in us for our deliverance. In both cases *He is the doer. "It is God that worketh in you."*

The first words of the delivered man are very precious – "*I thank God*" (Romans 7:25). If someone gives you a cup of water you thank the person who gave it, not someone else. Why did Paul say "*Thank God?*" Because God was the One who did everything. Had it been Paul who did it, he would have said, "*Thank Paul.*" But he saw that Paul was a "*wretched man*" and that God alone could meet his need; so he said, "*Thank God.*" God wants to do it all, for He must have all the glory. If we do some of the work, then we will get some of the glory; but God must have it all Himself, so He does all the work from beginning to end.

What we have studied in this lesson might seem negative and unpractical if we were to stop at this point, as though the Christian life were a matter of sitting still and waiting for something to happen. Of course that is very far from being so. All who truly live a successful Christian life know it to be a matter of very positive and active faith in Christ and in an altogether new principle of life – "*the law of the Spirit of life!*" We are now going to look at the effects of this new life principle.

## Lesson 11

### Walking In The Spirit

Romans 8 summarize the argument of the second section of the letter -- chapter 5:12 to chapter 8:39 -- in two phrases, each expression containing a contrast and each marking an aspect of Christian experience. They are:

- Romans 5:12 to 6:23: "*In Adam*" & "*in Christ.*"
- Romans 7:1 to 8:39: "*In the flesh*" & "*in the Spirit.*"

We need to understand the relationship of these four things. The first two are *objective* and set forth our *position*. The statement, "*In Adam*" declares what we were by nature and the statement, "*in Christ*," declares how we now are -- *by faith* in the redemptive work of Christ. The second two statements, -- "*in the flesh*" and "*in the Spirit*," -- are *subjective* and relate to our *walk* as a matter of practical experience.

The first two -- ("*in Adam*" and "*in Christ*") -- give us only a part of the picture -- the second two -- ("*in the flesh*" and "*in the Spirit*") -- are required to complete the picture of Christian living! We may think that it is enough to be "*in Christ*," however we need to learn that we must also "*walk in the Spirit*" (Romans 8:9). The frequent occurrence of "*the Spirit*" in the early part of this 8<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans emphasizes this further important lesson of Christian living.

### The Flesh And The Spirit

The *flesh* is linked with Adam -- the *Spirit* with Christ. Having settled the question of whether we are "*in Adam*" or "*in Christ*," we must ask ourselves, "*Am I living in the flesh or in the Spirit?*"

To "*live in the flesh*" means to do something "*of myself*" -- (on my own) -- as in Adam. It has the meaning of deriving strength from the old natural source of life that I inherited from Adam, so that "*my flesh*" enjoys in experience all Adam's provision for sinning -- that all of us have found so effective. Now the same is true of what is "*in Christ*." To enjoy by experience what is "*in Christ*," we must learn to "*walk in the Spirit*."

It is an historic fact that "*in Christ*" my old man was crucified., It is also a present fact that I am blessed "*with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ*" (Ephesians 1:3). But, if I do not *live in the Spirit*, then my life may be quite a contradiction of the fact that I am in Christ, - for what is true of me "*in Him*" is not expressed in me. I may recognize that I am in Christ, but I may also have to face the fact that my old temper (or, whatever my problem may be) is very much in evidence.

What is the trouble? It is that I am holding the truth merely *objectively*, whereas what is true objectively must be made true *subjectively*; and that is brought about as I live in the Spirit. That is, I realize the Gospel truth that since I have accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior, I am "*in Christ*" -- my mind and my heart tells me that this fact from God's Word is absolutely true -- however, in reality, I realize that I am not "*walking in the Spirit*" -- living daily by the Holy Spirit's control and guidance.

Not only, a believer, am I "*in Christ*," but, "*Christ is in me*." And just as physically a man cannot live in water but must have air to live, so spiritually Christ dwells and manifests Himself -- not in "*flesh*" -- but in "*spirit*." So, if I live "*after the flesh*," I find that what is mine, "*in Christ*," is held within me.

Though in fact I am "*in Christ*," yet if I live "*in the flesh*" -- that is, in my own strength and under my own direction -- then *in experience* -- my day-by-day living -- I

find to my dismay that it is what is “*in Adam*” that manifests itself *in me*. If I would know in experience all that is “*in Christ*,” then I must learn to live in the Spirit.

***Living in the Spirit means that I trust the Holy Spirit to do in me what I cannot do myself!*** Christian living is completely different from the life I would naturally live of myself. Each time I am faced with a new demand from the Lord, “*living in the Spirit*” means that I look to Him to do *in* me what He requires of me. It is not a case of trying but of trusting. It is not struggling but of resting in Him. If I have a hasty temper, impure thoughts, a quick tongue or a critical spirit, I will not set out with a determined effort to change myself, but rather, “*reckoning myself dead in Christ*” – and to accomplish true Christian living, I look to the Spirit of God to produce in me the needed purity or humility or meekness. This is what it means to “*stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will work for you*” (Exodus 14:13).

To illustrate this concept, no doubt some have had an experience something like the following. You have been asked to go and see a friend, and you knew the friend was not very friendly, but you trusted the Lord to see you through. You told Him before you set out that in yourself you with all probably would fail, and, so you asked Him for all that was needed. Then, to your surprise, you did not feel at all irritated, though your friend was far from gracious. On your return you thought over the experience and marveled that you kept so calm, and wondered if you would be just as calm next time. You were amazed at yourself and sought an explanation. This is the explanation – *the Holy Spirit carried you through*.

Unfortunately, it seems that we only have this kind of experience once in while, but it should be a way of life -- a constant experience. When the Holy Spirit takes things in hand there is no need for strain on our part. It is not a case of clenching our teeth and thinking that we have controlled ourselves beautifully and have had a glorious victory. No, where there is a real victory there is no *fleshly* effort. The Lord has gloriously carried us through.

*The object of temptation is to get **us** to do something in the flesh!*

During the first months of the Japanese war in China a lot of China's tanks were lost and China was unable to deal with the Japanese tanks. That is, until a scheme was devised. A single shot would be fired at a Japanese tank by a sniper in ambush. After a brief period of time had elapsed after the first shot, it would be followed by a second shot -- then, after a further silence, by another shot -- until the tank driver, eager to locate the source of the disturbance, would pop his head out to look around. The next shot, carefully aimed, would put an end to him.

As long as the tank driver remained under cover he was perfectly safe. The whole scheme was devised to bring him out into the open. In the same way, Satan's temptations are not primarily to make us do something particularly sinful, but merely

to cause us to act in our own energy; and as soon as we step out of our hiding-place to do something on that basis, he has gained the victory over us.

**If we do not move, if we do not come out of  
the cover of Christ into the realm of the flesh,  
then Satan cannot get us.**

The Divine way of victory does not sanction *our doing anything* at all -- anything, that is to say, outside of Christ! This is because as soon as we move -- we run into danger, for our natural inclinations taking us in the wrong direction.

### **Where, then, are we to look for help?**

Turn now to Galatians 5:17: "*The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.*" In other words, the flesh does not fight against us but against the Holy Spirit, "*for these are contrary the one to the other,*" and it is He, not we, who meets and deals with the flesh. What is the result? "*That ye may not do the things that ye would.*"

I believe many misunderstood that last clause of this verse -- in a wrong sense. Let's consider what it means. What would we do *naturally*? We would move off on some course of action dictated by our own instincts and, with all probability, apart from the will of God. The effect then of our refusal to act out from ourselves is that the Holy Spirit is free to meet and deal with the flesh in us, with the result that we will not do what we naturally would do -- that is, we will not act according to our natural inclinations; we will not go off on a course and plan of our own -- but will find instead our satisfaction in *His* perfect plan. So, we have the principle, "*Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh*" (Galatians 5:16). If we live in the Spirit -- if we walk by faith in the risen Christ, we can truly "*stand aside*" while the Spirit gains new victories over the flesh every day. The Holy Spirit has been given to us to take charge of this work. Our victory lies in hiding in Christ, and in counting on simple trust on the Holy Spirit to overcome in us -- our fleshly lusts -- with Christ's own new desires. The Cross has been given to procure salvation *for* us -- the Spirit has been given to us to produce salvation *in* us. Christ risen and ascended is the basis of our salvation --- Christ in our hearts by the Spirit is its power.

### **Christ Our Life**

After his cry, "*O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death,*" Paul concludes the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans by answering his own question with the words, "*I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!*" (verse 25). That exclamation of Paul's is fundamentally the same as his words in Galatians 2:20, "*live; and yet no longer I, but Christ.*"

It is clear that the discovery Paul has made is this, that *the life we live is the life of Christ alone!* **Christian living** is a "*changed life,*" a "*substituted life,*" and Christ is our Substitute within. "*I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me.*" This life is not something that we ourselves have to produce. ***It is Christ's own life reproduced in us.***

Notice how prominent is the word “**I**” throughout Paul’s argument in Romans 7, culminating in the agonized cry, “*O wretched man that I am!*” Then follows the shout of deliverance, “*Thank God...through Jesus Christ!*”

How many Christians believe in “*reproduction*” as something more than regeneration? *Regeneration* means that the life of Christ is planted in us by the Holy Spirit at our new birth. “*Reproduction*” goes further – it means that new life grows and becomes manifest ***progressively*** in us, until the very likeness of Christ begins to be reproduced in our lives. That is what Paul means when he speaks of his travail for the Galatians “*until Christ be formed in you*” (Galatians 4:19).

God does not give *humility* or *patience* or *holiness* or *love* as separate gifts of His grace. He is not a retailer dispensing grace in doses, measuring out some patience to the impatient, some love to the unloving, some meekness to the proud, in quantities that we take and work on as kind of capital. He has given only one gift to meet all our need - - ***His Son Christ Jesus***, and as we look to Him to live out His life in us, He will be humble and patient and loving and everything else we need -- in our stead.

Remember the word in the first Epistle of John: “*God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life*” (1 John 5:11,12). The life of God is not given as a separate item; the life of God is given in the Son. It is “*eternal life **in** Christ Jesus our Lord*” (Romans 6:23). Our relationship to the Son is our relationship to the life.

What a blessed thing it is to discover the difference between Christian graces and Christ – knowing the difference between meekness and Christ – between patience and Christ – even, between love and Christ. Remember in 1 Corinthians 1:30, “*Christ Jesus ... was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.*”

The common belief among Christians seems to be that sanctification is that every item of the life should be holy – but that is not holiness! That is the fruit of holiness! Holiness is Christ! It is our being made over into Christ-like individuals – to be ***righteous, sanctified and redeemed***. So you can add anything there – *love, humility, power, or self-control*. Today there may be a call for patience – ***He is our patience!*** Tomorrow the call may be for purity – ***He is our purity!*** He is the answer to every need. That is why Paul speaks of “*the fruit* – [singular] – *of the Spirit*” as one (Galatians 5:22) and not of “*fruits*” – [plural] – as separate items. God has given us His Holy Spirit, and when love is needed the fruit of the Spirit is love; when joy is needed the fruit of the Spirit is joy. It is always true. It does not matter what your personal deficiency, or whether it is a hundred and one different things, God has one sufficient answer -- His Son Jesus Christ, and He is the answer to every human need.

How can we know more of Christ in this way? The only way to know more of Christ is increasing awareness of our need. Some are afraid to discover deficiency in them self and so they never grow. Growth “*in grace*” is the only sense in which we can

grow, and grace is God doing something for us. We all have the same Christ dwelling within, but revelation of some new need will lead us spontaneously to trust Him to live out His life in us in that particular area. Greater capacity means greater enjoyment of God's supply. Another letting go, a fresh trusting in Christ, and another stretch of land is conquered. "*Christ my life*" is the secret of enlargement.

We have spoken of *trying* and *trusting* – and the difference between the two. Believe me, it is the difference between Heaven and hell. It is not something just to be talked about as a good thought, but rather, it is stark *reality*. We need to pray something like, "*Lord, I cannot do it, so I will no longer try to do it.*" This is the point where most fail. We must pray, "*Lord, I cannot; therefore I will take my hands off; and from this moment on I will trust You.*" I refuse to act, I depend on God to act and then I enter fully and joyfully into the action His capability. It is not passivity; it is a most active life, trusting the Lord like that; drawing life from Him, taking Him to be my very life, letting Him live out His life in me.

### The Law Of This Spirit Of Life

*"There is therefore now no condemnation to them that 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 hath made free from the law of sin and death"* (Romans 8:1,2).

In Romans 8 Paul presents in detail the positive side of life in the Spirit. He begins with "*There is therefore now no condemnation.*" This statement may at first seem out of place here. Was not all condemnation met by Christ's Blood through which we found peace with God and salvation from wrath (Romans 5:1,9).

However, there are two kinds of condemnation: (1) that before God -- and (2) that before our self (just as earlier we saw there are two kinds of peace) The second kind of condemnation may seem to us even more awful than the first. When I see that the Blood of Christ has satisfied God, then I know my sins are forgiven, and there is for me no more condemnation before God. – Yet I may still be knowing defeat, and the sense of inward condemnation on this account may be very real, as Romans 7 shows.

**However, if I have learned to live by Christ as my life, then I have learned the secret of victory, and, praise God "*there is therefore now no condemnation.*"**

*"The mind of the spirit is life and peace"* (Romans 8:6), and this becomes my experience as I learn to walk in the Spirit. With peace in my heart I have no time to feel condemned, but only to praise Him who leads me on from victory to victory.

What lay behind my sense of condemnation? Was it not the experience of defeat and the sense of helplessness to do anything about it? Before I saw that Christ is my life, I labored under a constant sense of handicap – limitation dogged my steps – I felt

disabled at every turn. I was always crying out, "I cannot do this! I cannot do that!" Try as I might, I found that "I cannot please God" (Romans 8:8). But there is no, "I cannot" in Christ. Now it is, "I can do all things in him that strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

How can Paul be so daring? On what grounds does he declare that he is now free from limitation and "can do all things?" The answer - "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death" (Romans 8:2). Why is there no more condemnation? "**For**" (meaning "because") - there is a reason for it! There is something definite to account for it. The reason is that there is a law called "**the law of the Spirit of life**" and it has proved stronger than another law called "*the law of sin and death.*" What are these laws? How do they operate? And what is the difference between "sin" and "*the law of sin,*" and between "death" and "*the law of death?*"

Let's ask, "What is a law?" A law is a generalization examined until it is proved that there is no exception! We might define it more simply as, "*something that happens over and over again.*" Every time the thing happens -- it happens in the same way. We can illustrate this both from legal and from natural law. For example, in this land, if I drive a car on the left hand side of the road the police will stop me. Why? Because, it is against the law of the land. If *you* do it you would be stopped too. Why? For the same reason that I would be stopped -- it is against the law and the law makes no exceptions. It is something that happens repeatedly and unfailingly. Or again, we all know what is meant by gravity. If I drop a book in California it falls to the ground. That is the effect of gravity. But the same is true if I drop it in New York or any where in the world. No matter where I let it go, gravity operates, and it always produces the same results. Whenever the same conditions prevail the same effects are seen. That's why is called the "*law*" of gravity.

Now what of the law of sin and death? Let's say that someone passes an unkind remark about me, at once something happens inside me that causes me to be upset. That is sin! However, what makes it "*the law of sin*" is that these same wrong feelings inside me continue over and over -- I discern a law within - "*a law of sin.*" Like the law of gravity, it is something constant. It always works the same way.

It is also the "*the law of death.*" Death, we have said, is *weakness produced to its limit*. Weakness is "*I cannot.*" Now if when I try to please God in this particular matter I find I cannot, then I discern a law at work. There is not only sin in me - but, a *law* of sin; there is not only death in me - but, a *law* of death.

Not only is gravity a law in the sense that it is constant, admitting of no exception, but, unlike the rule of driving on the right side of the road, it is a "*natural*" law and not the subject of discussion and decision -- but of discovery. The law of gravity is there, and the book *naturally* drops by itself without any help from me. And the "*law*" discovered by the man in Romans 7:23 is just like that. It is a law of sin and of death, opposed to that which is good, and crippling the man's will to do good. He *naturally* sins according to the "*law of sin*" in his members. He wills to be different, but



that law in him is relentless and no human will can resist it. So this brings me to the question, "*How can I be set free from the law of sin and death?*" I need deliverance from sin, *and still more*, I need deliverance from death, but most of all, I need deliverance from the *law* of sin and of death. How can I be delivered from the constant repetition of weakness and failure? In order to answer this question let us illustrate it.

How can the law of gravity be annulled? With regard to the book the law of gravity is at work clearly enough, pulling it down. However, if I place my hand under the book it doesn't drop. Why? The law is still there. I do not deal with the law of gravity; in fact I *cannot* deal with the law of gravity. Then why does the book not fall to the ground? Simply, because there is a power keeping it from doing so! The law of gravity is there. But another law - superior to it - is in operation to overcome it, namely the law of life. Gravity can do its utmost but the book will not drop, because another law is working against the law of gravity to maintain it.

We have all seen a tree that was once a small seed fallen between the slabs of a pavement, and grew until the heavy concrete was lifted by the power of the life within the seed. That is what we mean by the triumph of one law over another law.

In like manner God delivers us from one law by introducing another law. The law of sin and death is there, but God has put another law into operation - *the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*. That law is strong enough to deliver us from the law of sin and death. You see, it is a law of *life in Christ Jesus* -- the resurrection life that in Him has met death in all its forms and triumphed over it (Ephesians 1:19,20). The Lord Jesus dwells in our hearts in the person of His Holy Spirit, and if we let Him have His way and commit ourselves to Him we will find that He will keep us from the old law. We will learn what it is to be kept, *not by our own power*, but "*by the power of God*" (1 Peter 1:5).

### **The Manifestation Of The Law Of Life**

We need to make this practical. We studied earlier concerning our will in relation to the things of God. Even older Christians sometimes fail to realize that will-power does not play the exclusive, superior place in their lives. That was part of Paul's trouble in Romans 7. His will was good, but all his actions contradicted it, and however much he made up his mind and set himself to please God, it led him only into worse darkness. "*I would do good,*" but "*I am carnal, sold under sin.*" That is the point. Like a car without gasoline, that has to be pushed and that stops as soon as it is left alone, many Christians endeavor to drive themselves by will-power, and then think Christian living a most exhausting. When believers force themselves to do "*Christians things*" just because others do them, at the same time admitting they have no meaning to them - they force themselves to be what they are not! - Their Christian life is like trying to make water run up-hill.

Will-power is not enough - "*The spirit may be willing, but the flesh is weak*" (Matthew 26:41).

- What I *already am* – I do not long to be.
  - If I “*would*” – it is because I am not!

If we have to *exert* so much effort in our Christian living, it simply says that we are not really ourselves at all. We shouldn't have to force ourselves in Christian living any more than we would have to force ourselves to speak our native language. The fact is that we only have to exert “*will-power*” in order to do things we ***do not do naturally***. We may do what we feel are Christian things to do for a time, but the “*law of sin and death*” wins out in the end. We may be able to say, “*To will is present with me, and I perform that which is good for maybe a few weeks,*” but eventually we will have to confess, “*How to perform it I know not.*”

Why do men use will-power to try to please God? There are possibly two reasons. They may, of course, never have experienced the new birth, in which case they have no new life to draw upon – or, they may have been born again and the life be there, but they have not learned to trust in that life. It is this lack of understanding that results in habitual failure and sinning, bringing them to the place where they almost cease to believe in the possibility of anything better.

However, because we have not believed fully, that does not mean that the feeble life we intermittently experience is all God has given us. Romans 6:23 states that, “*the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord!*” In Romans 8:2 we read that “*the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*” has come to our aid. So Romans 8:2 speaks not of a new gift but of the life already referred to in Romans 6:23. In other words, it is *a new revelation of what we already have*. I cannot emphasize this too much. It is not something fresh from God's hand that we need, but rather, a new unveiling of what He has already given! It is a new discovery of a work already done in Christ, because the words “*made me free*” are in the ***past tense***. If I really see this and put my faith in Christ Jesus, there is absolutely no necessity for Romans 7 to be repeated in me -- either the experience or the conduct, and certainly not the tremendous display of will-power.

If we will let go of our own wills and trust Christ, we will not fall, except to fall into a ***different law – the law of the Spirit of life!*** For He has given us not only life, but a *law* of life. And just as the law of gravity is a natural law and not the result of human legislation, so the law of life is a *natural law*, similar in principle to the law that keeps our heart beating or that controls the movement of our eyelids. There is no need for us to think about our eyes, or to decide that we must blink every so often to keep them cleansed – still less do we bring our will to bear upon our heart. Indeed to do so might rather harm than help. No, so long as it has life it works spontaneously. Our wills only interfere with the law of life.

You don't mean to say that we shouldn't read the Bible? Of course, that is not what I am saying. We should read God's Word or our spiritual life will suffer. But that does not mean *forcing* ourselves to read. There is a new law in us that gives us a hunger for God's Word. *Then* – half an hour can be more profitable than five hours of forced

reading. It is the same with giving, with witnessing, with attending church services. Forced Christian activity is apt to result in warm activity, but cold hearts.

If we will let ourselves live in the new law we will be less conscious of the old law. It is still there, but it is no longer governing and we are no longer in its grip. That is why the Lord says in Matthew 6, "*Behold the birds . . . Consider the lilies.*" If we could ask the birds whether they were not afraid of the law of gravity, how would they reply? They might say, "*We never heard Newton's law and we know nothing about it. We fly because it is the law of our life to fly.*" Not only is there in them a life with the power of flight, but that life has a law that enables these living creatures quite spontaneously and consistently to overcome the law of gravity. Yet gravity remains. If you find a dead sparrow in your yard, you are reminded of the persistence of the law of gravity. But while birds live they overcome it, and the life within them is what dominates their consciousness.

God has graciously given us this new "*law of the Spirit,*" and for us to "*fly*" is no longer a question of our will – but of His life. Have you noticed how difficult it is for an impatient Christian to be patient? To require patience of him is enough to make him depressed. God does not tell us to force ourselves to be what we are not naturally – or, to try "*by taking thought*" to add to our spiritual stature. Jesus said worrying never added one inch to a person's height. "*Be not anxious,*" are His words. "*Consider the lilies, ... they grow.*" He is directing our attention to the new law of life in us. Oh, for a new appreciation of the life that is ours!

What a precious discovery this is! It can make altogether a new person out of us, because it operates in the smallest things as well as in the larger ones.

If anyone is willing to live by "*the law of the Spirit of life,*" they will become truly gracious toward others. The **law of the Spirit of life** has the power to make a person a perfect lady, or a perfect gentleman. Sometimes people are excused because someone says, "*You can't blame them for the way they act because they are just backward folk who haven't had educational advantages.*" But, for Christians, the question is, "*Do they have the life of Christ within?*" **That** life can say to them, "*Your too loud,*" – "*Your uncouth,*" – "*Your laughter was inappropriate,*" or, "*Passing that remark was unkind.*" In a thousand little details the "*Spirit of life*" can tell us how to act, producing true refinement. There's, certainly, no such inherent power like that in education!

It is the "*law of the Spirit of life*" that makes the Christian life a spontaneous life. It manifests itself in love for the unlovely -- for that individual whom on natural grounds we would not like and certainly could not love. It works on the basis of what the Lord sees of possibility in them. We say, "*Lord, You see they are lovable and You love them. Love them, through me!*" And this law of the Spirit of life manifests itself in reality of life -- in a true genuineness of moral character. There is too much hypocrisy, and too much play-acting in the lives of some Christians. Nothing takes away from the effectiveness of Christian witness as does a pretense of something that is not really there, for the man in

the street unfailingly penetrates such a disguise in the end and finds us out for what we are. Yes, pretense gives way to reality when we trust the law of life.

### ***"Walk ... After The Spirit"***

*"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:34).*

Reading these verses carefully we see that there are two things presented. They are, first, what the Lord Jesus has done *for* us, and second, what the Holy Spirit will do *in* us. "The flesh" is "weak," consequently the ordinance of the law cannot be fulfilled in us "after the flesh." (Remember, here it is not a question of salvation but of pleasing God.) Now, because of our inability - God took two steps. In the first place, He intervened to deal with the heart of our problem. He sent His Son in the flesh - Who died for sin and in doing so "condemned sin in the flesh." That is to say, He took death, representatively, that belonged to the old creation in us, whether we speak of it as "our old man" - "the flesh" - or - *the carnal I.*" God struck at the very root of our trouble by removing the fundamental grounds of our weakness. This was the first step.

However, "the ordinance of the law" still remained to be fulfilled "*in us*". How could this be done? It required God's further provision of the indwelling Holy Spirit. It is He who is sent to take care of this thing *within* us, and He is able to do so, we are told, as we "walk ... after the Spirit."

What does it mean to "walk after the Spirit?" It means two things. First, it is not a work - *it is a walk!* Praise God, the burdensome and fruitless effort I involved myself in when I sought "in the flesh" to please God gives place to a blessed and restful dependence on "His working, which works in me mightily" (Colossians 1:29). That is why Paul contrasts the "works of the flesh" with the "fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:19,22).

Second, to "walk after" implies subjection. Walking after the flesh means that I yield to the dictates of the flesh, and the following verses in Romans 8:5-8 make clear where that leads me. It only brings me into conflict with God. To "walk after the Spirit" is to be subject to the Spirit. There is one thing that the man who walks after the Spirit cannot do, and that is be independent of the Holy Spirit. I *must* be subject to the Holy Spirit. The initiative of my life must be with Him. Only as I yield myself to obey Him Will I find the "law of the Spirit of life" in full operation and the "ordinance of the law" (all that I have been trying to do to please God) being fulfilled -- no longer *by* me but *in* me. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Romans 8:14).

We are all familiar with the words of the benediction in 2 Corinthians 13:14, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." The love of God is the source of all spiritual blessing. The grace of the Lord Jesus has made it possible for that spiritual wealth to become ours. The communion of

the Holy Ghost is the means whereby it is imparted to us. Love is something hidden in the heart of God – *grace is love expressed* and made available in the Son – communion is the importation of that grace by the Spirit. What the Father has devised concerning us – the Son has accomplished for us, and now the Holy Spirit communicates it to us. When we discover something fresh that the Lord Jesus has secured for us in His Cross, let us, for its realization, look in the direction that God has indicated, and, by our steadfast attitude of subjection and obedience to the Holy Spirit, keep wide open the way for Him to impart it to us. That is His ministry. He has come for that very purpose – that He may make real in us all that is ours in Christ.

When leading a soul to Christ, we must be very thorough, because it just may be that he will not have the help of other Christians to help him in his walk with the Lord. We need to make it clear to a new believer that, when he has asked the Lord to forgive his sins and to come into his life, his heart has become the residence of a living Person. The Holy Spirit is now within him, to open to him the Scriptures that he may find Christ there, to direct his prayer, to govern his life, and to reproduce in him the character of his Lord.

Christ is our life! The Spirit of God is resident in us, but this fact, often, has little effect upon the believer's behavior. The question is, do we know Him as a living Person, and do we know Him as our "Lord" – "Master" – or -- "Boss?"

## Lesson 12

### All Believers – One Body In Christ

I believe it would be of great help to review some of the ground we have covered and summarize the steps suggested before taking up the next subject. In these lessons I have endeavored to present Biblical truths on "*Christian Living*" as clearly as I can, attempting to explain from a Scriptural point of view the experiences the believer passes through in living the Christian life.

The discoveries that we make as we live the Christian life are many, and we must be careful to avoid the temptation to over-simplify the work of God. To do so could lead us into serious confusion.

There are those who believe that all our salvation – (including the matter of living a holy life) – lies only in an appreciation of the precious Blood of Christ. They emphasize the importance of keeping short accounts with God over known, specific sins – and this, of course, in itself is not wrong! They stress the continual efficacy of the Blood in dealing with sins they have committed. *However, they think of the Blood as accomplishing everything!* They believe in a holiness that is separation of the individual from his past – that is, through an up-to-date blotting out of any wrong he has done – on the grounds of the shed Blood. It is true that God separates a man out of the world to be His, and *this is holiness* – the problem is – to stop there. To stop short of God's basic demands, is to come short of the full provision that God has made.

*Hopefully, this study reveals the inadequacy of this.*

There are those who go still further in their Christian living, realizing that God has, indeed, included them in the *death* of His Son on the Cross – delivering them from *sin* and *law* by dealing with the “*old man*” - (their old carnal nature). They exercise faith and glory in Christ and have ceased to put confidence in the flesh (Philippians 3:3). *In them God has a foundation on which to build.* From this starting-point, many have gone further still and recognized that *consecration* -- (using this word in the right sense) -- means giving themselves *without reservation* to Christ and following Him all the way.

These first steps are a starting. We have already touched upon other phases of experiences set before the believer by God – experiences enjoyed by many! It is essential to remember that, while each of these experiences are precious fragments of truth, no single one of them is by itself the whole of truth. These come to us as the fruit of the work of Christ on the Cross - we must not ignore any!

### A Gate And A Path

Recognizing these phases in the experiences of Christian living, we must emphasize that these phases do not necessarily occur in a fixed, precise order. However, they seem to be marked by certain recurring steps or features. What are these steps? Remember that first there is *revelation!* This “*knowing*” precedes *faith* and *experience*. Through His Word God opens our eyes to the truth concerning His Son. Then, in *faith* we accept that fact for our self and it becomes an actual experience in our life.

Look at it this way:

1<sup>st</sup> Revelation (*Objective*).

2<sup>nd</sup> Experience (*Subjective*).

Such experiences usually take a two-fold form: First, a crisis – Second, leading to a continuous process.

It is helpful to think of this in terms of John Bunyan's, “*Pilgrim Progress*,” as he pictured the “*wicket gate*” -- [or small gate] -- through which Christian entered to walk a “*narrow path*.” Our Lord Jesus spoke of such a gate and a path leading unto life (Matthew 7:14), and our experiences harmonizes with this. So we have:

1<sup>st</sup> Revelation (*Objective*)

2<sup>nd</sup> Experience (*Subjective*)

(a) Entering the “*Wicket gate*” (Crisis)

(b) Walking a “*narrow path*” (Process)

Let's look at some of the subjects we have studied and see if this will not help us to understand them. Taking first – our *justification* and *new birth*. It begins with a *revelation* of the Lord Jesus in His atoning work for our sins on the Cross.

Then, follows the crisis of ***repentance*** and ***faith*** (the wicket gate), whereby we are initially “*made nigh*” to God (Ephesians 2:13); leading us into a walk of ***maintained fellowship*** with Him (the narrow path) – the grounds of our day-to-day access is the precious Blood of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 10:29,22).

We come to the subject of ***deliverance from sin***, and again we have these three steps: (1) the Holy Spirit's work of ***revelation***, or “*knowing*” (Romans 6:6); (2) the crisis of ***faith***, or “*reckoning*” (Romans 6:11); and (3) the continuing process of ***consecration***, or “*presenting ourselves*” to God (Romans 6:13) on the basis of a walk in newness of life.

### The Gift of the Holy Spirit

Let's continue with consideration of *the gift of the Holy Spirit*. This too begins with a “*seeing*” of the Lord Jesus as exalted on the throne – issuing in the dual experience of the Spirit *outpoured* and the Spirit in *dwelling*. Going further, in this matter of *pleasing God*, we find the need for spiritual ***illumination***, to see the values of the Cross in regard to “*the flesh*” – (the self-life of man). Our acceptance of this by faith leads to a “**wicket gate**” *experience* (Romans 7:25), in which we initially cease from “*doing*” and accept by faith the mighty working of the life of Christ – letting His life within us satisfy God's practical demands in us. This leads us into the “**narrow path**” of a walk in obedience to the Spirit (Romans 8:4).

We need to beware of attempting to force any rigid pattern upon the Holy Spirit's working because experiences are not identical in each case. However, any new experience will come to us, more or less, along these lines. There will certainly always be first an opening of our eyes to some new aspect of Christ and His finished work – “*knowing*” – and then *faith* will open a gate into a pathway.

Remember, our division of Christian experience into various subjects: ***justification, new birth, the gift of the Spirit, deliverance, sanctification, etc.***, is for our clearer understanding. It does not mean that these stages will always follow one another in a certain prescribed order. In fact, if a full presentation of Christ and His Cross is made at the very outset of one's born-again experience, they may well step into a great deal of experience from the first day of their Christian life, even though a greater understanding of it may follow later.

One thing is certain, that *revelation* always precedes *faith*. We see something that God has *done* in Christ – our natural response is, “*Thank you, Lord!*” and faith follows spontaneously. Revelation is always the work of the Holy Spirit, who is given to be a helper – “*to come along-side*” and, by opening the Scriptures to us, to guide us into all the truth (John 16:13). Count upon Him, for He is here for that very purpose; and when such difficulties as lack of understanding or lack of faith confront you, address those difficulties directly to the Lord. Praying something like, “*Lord, open my eyes. Make this new thing clear to me. Lord, help my unbelief!*” He will not fail you.

### The Fourfold Work Of Christ In His Cross

Let's continue further still and consider how great a range is compassed by "*the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.*" In the light of Christian living -- for the purpose of analysis -- it will help if we recognize four aspects of God's redemptive work. But in doing so it is essential to keep in mind that the Cross of Christ is *one Divine work* -- not many. Once two thousand years ago the Lord Jesus died and rose again, and He is now "*by the right hand of God exalted*" (Acts 2:33). The work is finished and need never be repeated, nor can it be added to.

Of the four aspects of the Cross that we will mention, we have already dealt with three in some detail. The last will be considered in the two succeeding lessons of our study. They may be briefly summarized as follows:

1. *The Blood of Christ* to deal with *sins* and *guilt*.
2. *The Cross of Christ* to deal with *sin*, *the flesh* and *the natural man*.
3. *The Life of Christ* made available to *indwell*, *re-create* and *empower* man.
4. *The Working of Death* in the natural man that that *indwelling Life may be progressively manifest*.

The first two of these aspects are remedial, or "*corrective.*" They relate to the undoing of the work of the Devil and the undoing of the sin of man. The last two are not remedial but positive, and relate more directly to the securing and accomplishing of the purpose of God. The first two are concerned with recovering what Adam lost by the Fall. The last two are concerned with bringing us into, *and bringing into us*, something that Adam never had. Thus we see that the achievement of the Lord Jesus in His death and resurrection comprises both a work that provided for the redemption of man and a work that made possible the realization of the purpose of God.

We have studied in earlier lessons that the two aspects of Christ's death -- represented by the *Blood* for man's *sins* and *guilt* -- and the *Cross* for man's sin and the flesh. In studying God's eternal purpose we looked briefly at the third aspect -- that represented Christ as the grain of wheat -- and in the last lesson, consideration of Christ as *our life*. We have seen something of its practical outworking. However, before passing on to the fourth aspect, which I call, "*bearing the cross,*" I want to say a little more about the third point, namely, "*the release of the life of Christ in resurrection for man's indwelling -- and empowering for service.*"

We studied the purpose of God in creation, realizing that it embraced far more than Adam ever came to enjoy. **What was that purpose?** God wanted to have a race of men whose members were gifted with a spirit whereby communion would be possible with Himself, who is Spirit. That race, possessing God's own life, was to co-operate in accomplishing His purposed end by defeating every possible uprising of the enemy and undoing all his evil works. That is God's great plan. How will it now be effected? The answer is again to be found in the death of the Lord Jesus. It is a mighty death. It is something positive and purposive, going far beyond the recovery of a lost position,



because, by it, not only are sin and the old man dealt with and their effects annulled, but something more, something infinitely greater is introduced.

### The Love Of Christ

Two passages of the Word will help us here. One from Genesis 2 and one from Ephesians 5, - both are of great importance in this connection.

*"And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, which the Lord God had taken from the man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And the man said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman (Hebrew, ishshah), because she was taken out of Man (Hebrew, ish)" (Genesis 2:21-23).*

*"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:25-27).*

In Ephesians 5 we have the only chapter in the Bible that explains the passage in Genesis 2. What we have presented to us in Ephesians is indeed remarkable, as we reflect upon it. I refer to what is contained in those words, "Christ ... loved the church." There is something very precious here.

We have thought, only, of ourselves as sinners needing redemption. This has been instilled into us, and we praise the Lord for that as our beginning; but it is not what God has in view as *His end*. God speaks here rather of "*a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but ... holy and without blemish.*" All too often we have thought of the Church as being merely so many "*saved sinners.*" It is that - but we have made the terms almost equal to one another, as though it were *only* that, which is not the case! Saved sinners -- with that thought you have the whole background of sin and the Fall - but in God's sight the Church is *a Divine creation in His Son!* The one is largely individual, the other corporate. With the one the view is *negative*, belonging to the past; with the other it is *positive*, looking forward. The "*eternal purpose*" is something in the mind of God from eternity concerning His Son, and it has as its objective that the Son should have a Body to express His life.

**Viewed from that standpoint**  
 - from the standpoint of the heart of God  
 - the Church is something that is beyond sin - *pure and holy!*

Ephesians is an aspect of the death of the Lord Jesus given more clearly than any other place in Scripture, while in Romans things are viewed from the standpoint of

fallen man. Beginning with “*Christ died for sinners – enemies -- the ungodly*” (Romans 5), we are led progressively to “*the love of Christ*” (Romans 8:35).

In Ephesians, we are presented God “*before the foundation of the world*” (Ephesians 1:4), and the heart of Ephesians is, “*Christ ... loved the church, and gave Himself up for it*” (Ephesians 5:25). Thus, in Romans it is “*we sinned,*” and the message is of God's love for sinners (Romans 5:8) – while in Ephesians the message is, “*Christ loved the Church,*” – and the love is likened unto the love of husband for his wife. That kind of love has fundamentally nothing to do with sin as such. What is in view in this passage in Ephesians is not atonement for sin but the creation of the Church, for which end it is said that Christ “*gave Himself!*”

In Ephesians, is an aspect of the death of Jesus Christ that is altogether *positive* – and a matter particularly of love to His Church – where the question of sin and sinners does not directly appear. To bring this fact home Paul refers to the incident of Genesis 2 as illustration. This is one of the most marvelous things in God's Word, and if can understand this, how we would thank God for His goodness to us!

From the early stages of Genesis onwards – from the “*coats of skins*” to “*Abel's sacrifice,*” – and on from there throughout the whole Old Testament, there are numerous types that set forth the death of our Lord Jesus Christ as an atonement for sin. Yet the apostle does not refer here to any of those types of His death, but to this one in Genesis 2. We must notice that, Paul's reference before sin came in.

There is one type of the death of Christ in the Old Testament that has ***nothing to do with sin***, because it is not subsequent to the Fall but prior to it, and that type is here in Genesis 2.

Adam was put to sleep for the express purpose that something might be taken out of him to be made into someone else, not because of any sin! This took place, of course, before Eve was even created. *There were as yet no moral issues involved and no problems at all.* Adam's sleep had nothing to do with sin – but for her ***existence!*** **That is what is taught in these verses.** This experience of Adam had as its object the creation of Eve, as something determined in the Divine counsels. God wanted an “*ishshah.*” He put the man (“*ish*”) to sleep, took a rib from his side and made it into “*ishshah,*” – a woman, and brought her to the man. That is the picture that God is giving. It foreshadows an aspect of the death of the Lord Jesus that is not primarily for atonement, but is pictured in the sleep of Adam in Genesis 2.

I am not suggesting that Jesus Christ did not die for purposes of atonement – (*God forbid!*) – Praise God, He did! However, we must remember that we are, in fact, in Ephesians 5 and not in Genesis 2. Ephesians was written *after* the Fall, to men who had suffered from its effects, and in it we have – not only the purpose of Creation – but also the scars of the Fall -- or there would need to be no mention of “*spot or wrinkle.*” Because we are still on the earth and the Fall is a historic fact -- “*cleansing*” is needed.

But we must always view redemption as an interruption – an “*emergence measure,*” made necessary by a catastrophic break in the straight line of the purpose of God. Redemption is big enough, wonderful enough, to occupy a very large place in our vision, *but* God is saying that we should not make redemption to be *everything* – *as though man was created to be redeemed!* The Fall is indeed a tragic dip downwards in that upward straight line of God’s purpose, and the atonement is a blessed recovery whereby our sins are blotted out and we are restored – *but* when it is accomplished there yet remains a work to be done to bring us into possession of that which Adam never possessed, and to give God that which His heart desires. God has never forsaken that straight line of purpose. Adam was never in possession of the life of God as presented in “*the tree of life.*” However, because of the one work of Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection (and we must emphasize again that it is all one work) His life was released to become ours by faith, and we have received more than Adam ever possessed. Our receiving Christ as our life brings the very purpose of God within reach of fulfillment.

In Genesis 3 sin entered into the world and death through sin – but Adam's sleep *preceded* man’s sin. So the type of the Lord Jesus here is not like other types on the Old Testament. In relation to sin and atonement there is a lamb or a bullock slain – but here Adam was not slain, but only put to sleep *to awake again!* Thus he prefigures a death that is not because of sin, but rather, has in view resurrection. Then too, we must note that Eve was not created as a separate entity by a separate creation, parallel to that of Adam. Adam slept, and Eve was created out of Adam. *That is God's method with the Church!* God's second Man – (Jesus Christ) – has awakened from His “*sleep*” and His Church is created *in* Him and *of* Him, to draw her life *from* Him and to *display* that resurrection life.

God has a Son who is known to be “*His only begotten Son,*” and God is seeking that the only begotten Son should have “*many brethren*” (Romans 8:29). From the position of “*only begotten*” He will become the “*first begotten,*” and instead of the Son alone God will have “*many sons.*”

One grain of wheat has died and many grains will spring up. The first grain was once the only grain – now it is changed to be the first grain of many. The Lord Jesus laid down His life, and that life emerged into many lives. These are the Biblical figures we have used hitherto in our study to express this truth.

Now, in the figure, the singular takes the place of the plural. The outcome of the Cross is a single person – a Bride for the Son. “*Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for it.*”

### **One Living Sacrifice**

The aspect of the death of Christ presented to us in Ephesians 5 is different from that which we have been studying in Romans. Yet, this aspect of Christ’s death is the

very end to which Romans has been moving – and to this end Romans is leading, because redemption leads us back into God's original line of purpose.

In Romans 8 Paul speaks of Christ as the “*firstborn Son among many Spirit-led sons of God*” (Romans 8:14). “*For whom He – [God, the Father] – foreknew, He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son – [Jesus Christ] – that He might be the firstborn among many brethren: and whom He foreordained, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified*” (Romans 8:29-30). Here justification is seen to lead on to glory, a glory that is expressed not in one or more individuals but in a plurality – in many who manifest the image of One. And this object of our redemption is further set forth, as we have seen, in “*the love of Christ for His own,*” which is the subject of the last verses of Romans 8 (verses 35-39). But what is implicit here in chapter 8 becomes explicit as we move into chapter 12, the subject of which is “*the Body of Christ.*”

After the first eight chapters of Romans, which we have been studying, there follows a parenthesis – (Chapters 9, 10 and 11) – in which God's sovereign dealings with Israel are taken up and dealt with, before the theme of these first chapters is resumed. So, for the purpose of our study, the argument given in chapter 12 follows that of chapter 8. To summarize these first chapters of Romans:

- Our sins are forgiven (chapter 5),
- We are dead with Christ (chapter 6),
- We are by nature utterly helpless (chapter 7),
- Therefore we rely upon the indwelling Spirit (chapter 8).

After this, and as a consequence of it: “*We ... are one body in Christ*” (chapter 12). It is as though this were the logical outcome of all that has gone before, and the thing to which it has all been leading.

Romans 12, and the following chapter, contain some very practical instructions for Christian living. These are introduced with an emphasis once again on consecration. In chapter 6:13 Paul has said, “*Present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*” However, now in chapter 12:1, the emphasis is a little different, “*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*” This new appeal for consecration is made to us as “*brethren,*” linking us in thought to the “*many brethren*” of chapter 8:29. It is a call to us for a united step of faith, the presenting of our bodies as one “*living sacrifice*” unto God.

This, “*presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice unto God,*” is something that goes beyond the individual, for it implies contribution to a whole. The “*presenting*” is, of course, personal, however, the sacrifice is corporate – it is one sacrifice.

Intelligent service to God is service. The believer need never feel his contribution is not needed, because if it contributes to *the* service, God is satisfied. It is through this

kind of service that we prove “*what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God*” (Romans 12:2), in other words – ***realize God's eternal purpose in Christ Jesus***. So Paul's appeal “*to every man that is among you*” (12:3) is in the light of this Divine fact, that “*we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another*” (12:5), and it is on this basis that the practical instructions follow.

The vessel through which Jesus Christ can reveal Himself in this generation is not the individual – but the Body (the Church). “*God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith*” (12:3). However, that “*measure of faith*” alone, in isolation, can never fulfill God's purpose. It requires a *complete Body* to attain to the stature of Christ and to display His glory!

So, verses 3 through 6 of Romans 12 uses the figure of the human body and the various parts' inter-dependence upon the other members to teach us an important lesson. Individual Christians are not the Body – but are *members of the Body*. And, as in a human body, “*all the members have not the same office.*” The ear must not imagine itself to be an eye. No amount of prayer will give sight to the ear -- but the whole body can see through the eye. So – (speaking figuratively) – I may have only the gift of hearing, but I can see through others who have the gift of sight. Perhaps I can walk but cannot work, so I receive help from the hands. An all-too-common attitude to the things of the Lord is that, “*What I know, I know; and what I don't know, I don't know, and can do quite well without it.*” But in Christ, the things we do not know – others do, and we may know them and enter into the enjoyment of them through others.

This is not just a lovely thought – it is a vital factor in Christian living. We cannot get along without one another. That is why fellowship is so important. Prayer together brings in the help of the Body (Matthew 18:19,20). Trusting the Lord all by myself may not be sufficient. I must trust Him *with others*. I must learn to pray, “***Our*** Father...” on the basis of oneness with the Body, for without the help of the Body I may not get through. In the sphere of service this is even more apparent. Alone I cannot serve the Lord effectively, and He will spare no pains to teach me this. He will bring things to an end, allowing doors to close and leaving me ineffectively knocking my head against a blank wall until I realize that I need the help of the Body as well as of the Lord. For the life of Christ is the life of the Body, and His gifts are given to us for work that builds up the Body.

The Body is not just an illustration – it is a fact! The Bible does not say that the Church is *like* a body – but Scripture emphatically states that the Church ***is*** the Body of Christ. “*We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another.*” All the members together *are* one Body, for all share His life -- as though He were Himself distributed among His members.

It can be very difficult to comprehend how that the “*Body*” can be one, when all believers are separate individuals who made it up. A fitting illustration could be the bread of the Lord's Supper. The loaf is whole, however, it is broken, distributed, then

eaten by all the believers present. – Even though it was inside all of them it was still *one loaf* -- *not many!* This may be a crude, inadequate, illustration because the loaf was divided, and Christ is not divided – even in the sense in which that loaf was. **He is still one Spirit in us, and we are all one in Him.**

This is the opposite of man's condition by nature. In Adam I have the life of Adam, but that is essentially individual. There is no union, no fellowship in sin, but only self-interest and distrust of others. As I go on with the Lord I soon discover, not only that the problem of sin and of my natural strength has to be dealt with, but that there is also a further problem created by my “*individual*” life – **a life that is sufficient in itself and does not recognize its need for and union in the Body.** I may be over the problems of sin and the flesh, but still be a confirmed *individualist*. I want holiness and victory and fruitfulness for *myself* personally and apart from the others, and have the purest motives – however, if such an attitude ignores the Body, it cannot provide God with satisfaction. God will deal with us concerning this matter, or we will remain in conflict with His ultimate purpose. God does not blame us for being an individual, but for our individualism. His greatest problem is not the outward divisions and denominations that divide His Church but our own individualistic hearts.

The Cross must do its work, reminding us that in Christ we have died to that “*old life*” of independence that we inherited from Adam, and that in resurrection we have become not just an individual believer in Christ but “*a member of His Body.*” There is a vast difference between the two. When we realize this, we will be done with independence and will seek fellowship. The life of Christ in us will gravitate to the life of Christ in others. We will no longer be able to take an individual line. Jealousy will go. Competition will go. Private work will go. Our interests, our ambitions, our preferences, all will go. It will no longer matter which of us does the work. All that will matter will be that “*the Body*” – [the Church – the “*Body of Christ*”] – grows.

There is the great need to *see* the Body of Christ as another great Divine fact – to have this Biblical truth break in upon our spirits by heavenly revelation that “*we, who are many, are one body in Christ.*” Only the Holy Spirit can bring this home to us in all its meaning, but when He does it will revolutionize our life and work.

### **More Than Conquerors Through Him**

Many only see history back to the Fall. God sees it from the beginning. There was something in God's mind *before* the Fall – and in the ages to come – that thing is to be fully realized! Of course, God knew all about sin and redemption, yet in His great purpose for the Church set forth in Genesis 2, there is no view of sin. It is as though God leaps in thought right over the whole story of redemption and sees the Church in future eternity, having a ministry – and a future history – that is altogether apart from sin and wholly of God. It is the Body of Christ in glory, expressing nothing of fallen man but only that which is the image of the glorified Son of man. **This** is the Church that has satisfied God's heart and has attained dominion.

To examine Ephesians 5 is to stand within the history of redemption, and yet through grace we still have this eternal purpose of God in view as expressed in the statement that He will *“present unto Himself a glorious Church.”* Of course, we realize that the water of life and the cleansing Word are needed to prepare the Church – (now marred by the Fall) – for presentation to Christ in glory! For now, there are defects to be remedied and wounds to be healed. Yet, how precious is the promise and how gracious are the words used of her:

- *“not having spot”* -- the scars of sin, whose very history is now forgotten
- *“or wrinkle”* -- the marks of age and of time lost, for all is now made up and all is new; and
- *“without blemish”* -- so that Satan, demons, or men can find no ground for blame in her.

This is where we are now. The age is closing, and Satan's power is greater than ever. Our warfare is with angels and principalities and powers (Romans 8:38 & Ephesians 6:12) who are set to withstand and destroy the work of God by laying many things to the charge of God's elect. Alone we could never be their match, but what we alone cannot do – *the Church can!* Sin, self-reliance and individualism is Satan's master-stroke at the heart of God's purpose in man, and *“in the Cross”* God has undone them. As we put our faith in what He has done -- in *“God that justifieth”* and in *“Christ Jesus that died”* (Romans 8:33,34) -- we present a front against which the very gates of Hades cannot prevail. We, His Church, are *“more than conquerors through Him that loved us”* (Romans 8:37).

### Lesson 13

#### The Soul Life

God has provided full provision for man's redemption in the Cross of Christ --- **but He has not stopped there!** In that Cross God has made secure that eternal plan that Paul speaks of as having been from all the ages *“hid in God who created all things.”* That plan God has now proclaimed *“to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Ephesians 3:9-11).

I like Phillips translation on this:

*“To make plain to all men the meaning of that divine secret which He who created everything has kept secret from the creation until now. The purpose is that all the angelic powers should now see the complex wisdom of God's plan being worked out through the Church, in conformity to that timeless purpose which He centered in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Ephesians 3:9-11).

We studied concerning the work of the Cross, that it has two consequences that bear directly upon our realizing its purpose in us. **(1)** It issued the release of Christ's life in order to find expression in our life through the indwelling Spirit. **(2)** It made possible

the “*bearing the cross*” – that is, our co-operation in the daily working of Christ’s death within us to provide a way for the manifestation of His new life, through submitting our “*natural man*” progressively to subjection to the Holy Spirit.

Clearly these are the *positive* and the *negative* sides of one thing. Equally clearly we are now touching more particularly on the matter of progress in Christian living. Up to now, in dealing with the Christian living, our study has placed emphasis on the crisis by which the Christian life is entered. However, now we enter more definitely with the walk of the believer, having particularly in view the believer’s training as a disciple, or servant, of God. It is of this diligent and sincere believer that the Lord Jesus said, “*Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple*” (Luke 14:27).

I want us to consider the *natural man* and the “*bearing of the cross.*” To fully understand this we must go back once more to Genesis and consider what it was that God sought to have in man at the beginning --- and how His purpose was frustrated. If we can understand that, we will be able to grasp the principles by which our Christian living can come to live in line with that purpose.

### **The True Nature Of The Fall – The First Sin of Mankind**

When we begin to receive a revelation of the plan of God we see the word “*man.*” We cry with the Psalmist, the question, “*What is man, that thou art mindful of him?*” The Bible makes it clear that what God desires above all things is a man -- a man who will be after His own heart.

*“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, [body] and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life [spirit] and man became a living **soul**” (Genesis 2:7).*

|                                                                                                                     |
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| New Testament verses such as 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and Hebrews 4:12 confirm this threefold character of man's being. |
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In Genesis 2:7 we see that Adam was created a *living soul*, with a *spirit* inside to commune with God and with a *body* outside to have contact with the material world. With his spirit Adam was in touch with the spiritual world of God – with his body he was in touch with the physical world of material things. He gathered up these two sides of God's creative act into himself to become a personality – an entity living in the world, moving by itself and *having powers of free choice*. Viewed thus as a whole, he was found to be a self-conscious and self-expressing being --- “*a living soul!*”

We studied earlier that Adam was created perfect -- by that we mean that he was without imperfections -- but he was not yet *perfected*, not mature, not fully developed! He needed a finishing touch. God had not yet done all that He intended to do in Adam. There was more in view, God’s ultimate intention for man was something to be completed by future growth. God was moving towards the fulfillment of His purpose in creating man, a purpose that went beyond man himself, for it had in view the



securing to God of all His rights in the universe through man's being instrumental in accomplishing this! Only by co-operation on man's part, that springs from a *living* union with God. God was seeking to have not merely a race of men of one blood upon the earth, but a race that had, in addition, *His* life resident within its members. Such a race would eventually be the source of the downfall of Satan and bring to fulfillment all that God had set His heart upon. It was *that* that was in view with the creation of man.

Adam was created neutral. He had a *spirit* that enabled him to hold communion with God – but as man he was not yet, so to speak, finally orientated – he had powers of choice and he could, if he so choose, turn the opposite way. God's goal in man was “*sonship*” --- the expression of His life through human beings! That Divine life was represented in the garden by the “*tree of life*,” bearing a fruit that could be accepted, received, taken in. If Adam, created neutral, were voluntarily to turn that way and, choosing dependence upon God, were to receive of the tree of life (representing God's own life), God would then have that life in union with men. Man would have realized “*sonship*.” However, if instead Adam should turn to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would as a result be “*free*” to develop himself on his own lines apart from God. This latter choice implicated involvement with Satan, putting Adam beyond reaching, or attaining, his God-appointed goal.

### **The Root Problem --- The Human Soul**

[Man's soul consists of: mind, emotion and will]

Standing between the two trees, Adam yielded to Satan and took of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. This determined the lines of his development. From then on he could command a knowledge – he “*knew*.” But -- and here we come to the focal, key, point -- the fruit of the tree of knowledge made man *over- developed in his soul*.

The emotion was touched, because the fruit was “*pleasant to the eyes*,” making him “*desire*” -- the mind with its reasoning power was developed, for he was “*made wise*” -- and the will was strengthened, so that in the future he could always decide which way he would go. The whole fruit ministered to the expansion and development of the soul, so that not only was the man “*a living soul*,” but from henceforth man would *live by the soul*. It is not merely that man has a soul, but, from that day on, the soul, with its independent powers of free choice, takes the place of the spirit as the living power of man.

We must distinguish between two things, because the difference is important. God does not mind -- in fact He intends that we should have a soul such as He gave to Adam. But what God has set Himself to do is to reverse something. There is something in man today which is not just the fact of having a soul, but which constitutes a “*living by the soul*.” It was this that Satan brought about in the Fall. He trapped man into taking a course by which he could develop his soul so as to derive his very life from it.

We must be careful here, however, and keep in mind that to remedy this difficulty does not mean that we are going to extinguish the soul altogether. We cannot do that. When the work of the Cross is working in us, we do not become lifeless, insensitive, characterless. No, we still possess a soul, and whenever we receive something from God the soul is still used in relation to it, as an instrument, a faculty, in true subjection to Him. But the question is, "*Are we keeping within God's appointed limit -- within the bounds set by Him in the Garden at the beginning -- with regard to the soul, **or** are we getting outside those bounds?*"

What God is now doing is the pruning work of the vinedresser. In our souls there is an uncontrolled development, an untimely growth that needs to be checked and dealt with. God must cut off this unneeded, wild, growth. So there are two things before us to which our eyes must be opened:

- On the one hand God is seeking to bring us to the place where we live by the life of His Son.
- On the other hand He is doing a direct work in our hearts to undo that other natural resource that is the result of the fruit of knowledge.

Every day we are learning these two lessons: a rising up of the life of Jesus Christ, and a checking and a handing over to death of our soul-life. These two processes are going on all the time, because God is seeking the fully developed life of His Son in us in order to manifest Himself, and to that end He is bringing us back (as far as our soul is concerned) to Adam's starting-point. So Paul says, "*We which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh*" (2 Corinthians 4:11).

***What does this mean?*** It simply means that I will not take any action without relying on God. I will find no sufficiency in myself. I will not take any step just because I have the power to do so. Even though I have that inherited power within me, I will not use it. I will put no reliance in myself.

By taking the fruit, Adam became possessor of an inherent power to act, but a power that played right into Satan's hands. You need to lose that power that acts outside of God's will when you come to know the Lord. The Lord will cut it off and you will find you should no longer act on your own initiative. You have to live by the life of Another and draw everything from Him.

I think we all know ourselves in some measure, but many times we do not realize the choices we are making. We may, in a manner of courtesy to God, say, "*I will only do what the Lord does through me!*" However, in reality, our subconscious thought is I can do it quite well all by myself, even if God does not empower us for it.

Too often, situations cause us to think, decide, and to assume power to act, apart from God. Many Christians today have over-developed souls. They have grown too

big in themselves. They have become “*big-souled.*” When they are in that condition, the life of the Son of God in them is confined and almost crowded out of action!

### Natural Energy In The Work Of God

The power – the energy of the soul is present in all of us. The Lord would have us to repudiate that as a life principle --- to refuse to live by it --- to not let it reign, nor even allow it to be the power behind the work of God. There are believers who have not yet learned this secret and rely upon it, utilize it, and think it is the power.

Let’s use an obvious illustration of this. Many Christians in the past have reasoned as follows, “*Here is an agreeably, good-natured man, with a clear brain, splendid managing powers and sound judgment.*” So, they reason, “*If that man could be a Christian, what an asset he would be to the Church! If only he were the Lord's, how much it would mean to the cause of Christ!*”

But, where did that man's good nature come from? Where did he get those splendid managing powers and that good judgment? Not from “*new birth,*” for he is not yet “*born-again.*” We have all been “*born of the flesh,*” and need a new birth. Jesus had something to say about this, He said, in John 3:6, “*That which is born of the flesh is flesh.*” ***Everything which comes not by new birth but by natural birth is flesh*** and will only bring glory to man, not God! That statement doesn’t seem very palatable, but it is true!

We are speaking of “*soul-power*” or “*natural energy.*” What is this natural energy? It is simply what “***I***” can do, what “***I***” am of myself, what “***I***” have inherited of natural gifts and resources. None of us are without the power of the soul, and the best thing we can do, is to recognize it for what it is.

Take for example the human mind. You may have by nature a keen mind. Before your new birth you had it naturally, as something developed from your natural birth. But the trouble arises here. You become converted – you are born anew, a deep work is effected in your spirit, and essential union with God has been set up in your spirit, but at the same time you carry over with you something that you derive from your natural birth. Now what are you going to do about it?

The natural tendency is this. Formerly you used to use your mind to pour over history, over business, over chemistry, over questions of the world, or literature, or poetry. You used your keen mind to get the best out of those studies. But now your desire has been changed, so henceforth you employ the same mind in the things of God. *You have therefore changed your subject of interest, **but** you have not changed your method of working.* That is the whole point. Your interests have been utterly changed (praise God for that!), but now you utilize the same power to study Corinthians and Ephesians -- [and the rest of the Bible] -- that you used before to pursue history and geography. But that power is not of God --- and God will not allow that! The trouble with so many of us is that we have changed the channel into which our energies are directed, but we have not changed the source of those energies.

There are many such things that we carry over into the service of God. Consider the matter of eloquence. There are some who are born orators. They can present a case very convincingly. Then they become converted, and, without asking them self where they really stand in relation to spiritual things, the church puts them on the platform and make preachers of them. We encourage them to use their natural powers for preaching, and again it is a change of subject --- but the same power! We forget that, in the matter of our resource for handling the things of God, it is a question not of comparative value but of *origin* -- of where the resource comes from. It is not so much a matter of what we are doing, but of *what powers we are employing to do it*. We think too little of the source of our energy and too much of the end to which it is directed, forgetting that with God the end never justifies the means.

Let's imagine a hypothetical case -- to test the truth of our argument. Mr. A. is a very good speaker: he can talk fluently and most convincingly on any subject, but in practical things he is a very bad manager. Mr. B., on the other hand, is a poor speaker: he cannot express himself clearly but wanders all round his subject, never coming to a point; yet on the other hand he is a splendid manager, most competent in all matters of business. Let's say that both these men are converted, and both become earnest Christians. Let's suppose that both of them are called on speak at a convention, and that both accept.

What will probably happen? The same thing is asked of both men, however, who do you think will pray the most over the situation? Certainly Mr. B. Why? Because, he is no speaker! In the matter of eloquence he has no resources of his own to depend upon. He would probably pray something like, "*Lord, if You do not anoint me for this, I can never do it.*" Of course Mr. A. will pray too, but probably, not in the same way as Mr. B. because he has something of natural resource upon which to rely.

Let's suppose that, instead of asking them to speak, they both are asked to take charge of the practical side of affairs at the convention. What will happen? The position would probably be reversed. Now it would be Mr. A's turn to pray hard, because he knows full well that he has no organizing ability. Mr. B. of course will pray too, but perhaps without quite the same urgency, for though he knows his need of the Lord he is not nearly so conscious of his need in business matters as is Mr. A.

Do you see the difference between *natural* and *spiritual* gifts? Anything we can do without prayer and without an utter dependence upon God comes from that spring of *natural* life. We must see this clearly. Of course, it is not true - and we are not saying -- that the only ones suited for a particular work, are those who lack the natural gift for it. (That would be ridicules!) The point is that, whether naturally gifted or not, they must know the touch of the Cross in death upon all that is of their own nature, and their complete dependence upon the God of resurrection! All too readily do we envy our neighbor who has some outstanding natural gift, and fail to realize that our own possession of it, apart from such a working of the Cross, may easily prove a barrier to the very thing that God is seeking to manifest in us.

**How many teachers today are teaching others largely in the strength of their carnal equipment!**

I would like to tell you of a woman I meet many years ago – a back-woods sister in the Lord, living in the hills of Arkansas. She was what many would call illiterate, never having received a formal education. But, despite her illiteracy, she had an intimate knowledge of the Lord. I could not help but marvel at her knowledge of the Bible that she could only haltingly read. It was sheer pleasure listening to her “*bits of country wisdom*” that were actually the very principles of God’s Word put in simple words. And she knew, well, the One of whom the Bible speaks. On the other hand, I have meet many with advanced education, well versed in the Scriptures, who considered themselves capable of instructing others, however, they depended much on the flesh – their own ability.

I recall one young man – that is to say, “*young*” in years -- who had learned a good deal of the Lord. The Lord had brought him through much tribulation to gain that knowledge of Himself. He said, “*One thing I have learned and that is that I can do nothing apart from the Lord.*” Then, he added, “*Oh, I don’t mean that I can’t do anything, I can do many things. In fact that has been just my trouble. I have always been so confident in myself. I know I am well able to do lots of things. But, what I mean is that the Lord has shown me that I can do anything, but that He has said, ‘Apart from Me ye can do nothing.’ So it comes to this, that everything I have done and can do apart from Him is nothing!”*”

That is the valuation of our own ability that I speak of. I do not mean to say we cannot do a lot of things, for we can! We can attend and ministry in meetings, build churches, go to the ends of the earth building missions, and we can *seem* to bear fruit -- but remember that the Lord says, “*Every plant which My heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up*” (Matthew 15:13). God is the only legitimate Originator in the universe (Genesis 1:1). Anything that *we* plan and do has its origin in the flesh, and it will never reach the realm of the Spirit. But, if we earnestly seek God's blessing on it, it will last – and “*the gates of hell will not prevail against it!*” Even then, the temptation may be to think we can adjust here and improve there and maybe bring it to a better plane, but it cannot be done, unless it is by the Spirit of the Lord!

**Origin determines destination!** What is “*of the flesh*” originally will never be made spiritual by any amount of improvement. “*That which is born of the flesh is flesh,*” and it will never be otherwise. Anything for which we are sufficient in ourselves is *nothing* in God's estimate, and we have to accept His estimate and write it down as nothing. “*The flesh profiteth nothing!*” It is only what comes from above that will abide.

Some Biblical, spiritual, concepts cannot be fully received simply because one has been told it. God must teach us what is meant, by putting His finger on something that He sees and saying, “*This is natural --- this has its source in the old creation --- this cannot abide!*” And, until He does so, we may agree in principle by what we read, or hear, but

we can never really *comprehend* it. We may assent to it, and even enjoy the teaching, but we can never truly loathe ourselves apart from the strength of the Holy Spirit.

However, the day will come when God opens our eyes. Facing a particular issue we will have to say, by revelation, "*This is unclean, that is impure - Lord, I see it!*"

The word "*purity*" is a blessed word. It is associated with the Spirit. Purity means something altogether of the Spirit. Impurity means mixture. When God opens our eyes to see that the natural life is something He can never use in His work. We find we loathe our ability for the impurity that is in it. When that point is reached, God begins His work of deliverance. We are going to study the provision God has made for that deliverance in the next lesson, but for a little while longer it is important that stay with this matter of *revelation*.

### **The Light of God -- and Knowledge**

If we do not set out to follow the Lord whole-heartedly, we will not feel the necessity for light. It is only when we have been apprehended by God, and seek to go forward with Him, that we find how necessary light is. There is a fundamental need of light in order for us to know the mind of God -

- to know what is of the spirit and what is of the soul
- to know what is Divine and what is merely of man
- to discern what is truly heavenly and what is only earthly
- to understand the difference between things which are spiritual and things which are carnal
- to know whether God is really leading us or whether we are walking by our feelings, senses or imaginations.

It is when we have reached a position where we desire to follow God *fully* that we find light to be the most necessary thing in the Christian life.

One question that comes up among believers again and again is, "*How can I know that I am walking in the Spirit? How do I distinguish what is prompting within me -- is from the Holy Spirit and from myself?*"

I dare say that every sincere, earnest believer has asked these questions, if not aloud, at least to himself. And, some have even gone further than just inquiring concerning this area of interest, but have looked within themselves, to analyze and find an answer. However, in doing so they brought themselves into deeper bondage. This is a situation that can be dangerous to one's Christian living. Looking inward to find spiritual knowledge only leads to the barren path brought on by self-analysis. "*Examining one's self*" as commanded in Scripture is not the psychoanalysis many think of in our day and age.

God's Word does not instruct us to examine our inward condition.

There are two apparent exceptions to this – **(1)** 1 Corinthians 11:28,31 that calls upon us to “*discern*” ourselves as to whether we recognize the Lord's body or not -- given in relation to the Lord's Supper, not to *self-knowledge* as such. **(2)** Paul's command of 2 Corinthians 13:5 is to examine ourselves to see whether or not we are “*in the faith.*” It is a question of the existence of a fundamental faith in us --- whether we are Christians, or not. These two passages in no way relate to our daily walk in the Spirit, or to self-knowledge.

We are to allow the Holy Spirit, in a solemn and holy atmosphere to “*examine our self-life*” (1 Corinthians 11:28), but, attempting to self-analyze, psychological introspective examining our inter most feelings from a natural stand point, will only end in uncertainty, vacillation and despair. Of course, there is a place for self-knowledge. We have to know what is going on within. To ignore our inner self is to live in a fool's paradise – to fail to “*examine our self*” before the Lord, is altogether wrong – the danger would be to deceive our self, thinking that we are pursuing the will of God. Self-knowledge does not come by our turning *within* -- by analyzing our feelings and motives and everything that is going on inside -- then trying to discern whether we are walking in the flesh or in the Spirit. This would be equally wrong.

There are passages throughout the Psalms that illumine this point. One is in Psalm 36:9, “*In Thy light shall we see light*”. This is one of the best verses in the Old Testament. There are two lights there. There is “*Thy light,*” -- [that is, “*God's light*”] -- and then, when we have come into that light, we shall “*see light.*”

Now those two lights are different. We might say that the first is *objective* and the second *subjective*. The first light is the light that belongs to God – but is shed upon us. The second is the knowledge imparted by that light. “*In Thy light shall we see light*” – we will know something; we will be clear about something; we will *see*. No turning within, no introspective self-examination will ever bring us to that clear place. No, it is when there is light coming from God that we see.

It is really quit simple. If we want to satisfy ourselves that our face is clean, what do we do? Do we feel it carefully all over with our hands? No, of course not. We find a mirror and we bring it to the light. In that light everything becomes clear. No sight ever came by feeling or analyzing. Sight only comes by the light of God coming in, and when once it has come, there is no longer need to ask if a thing is right or wrong. We know!

In Psalm 139:23 the writer says, “*Search me, O God, and know my heart.*” What does it mean, “*Search me?*” It is not referring to me search myself. The Psalmist, praying to God, says, “**You** search me!” That is the way of illumination. It is for God to come in and search -- it is not for me to search. Of course that does not mean that I go carelessly on, blind to my true spiritual condition. That is not the point. The point is that however much my self-examination may reveal in me that needs putting right, such searching

never really gets below the surface. The true knowledge of my self comes not from my searching myself but from God searching me.

Someone may ask, "*What does it mean in practice for us to come into the light? How does it work? How do we see light in His light?*" Again let's turn to the Psalmist for help, Psalm 119:130 reads, "*The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.*" When it comes to understanding spiritual things, we are all "*simple*" – don't you agree? We must be dependent upon God to give us understanding, and especially is this matter of knowing our own true nature. It is here that God's Word operates. In the New Testament the passage that states this most clearly is in the Epistle to the Hebrews – "*The word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do*" (Hebrews 4:12,13). It is the Word of God – the penetrating Scripture of Truth – that settles our questions. It is that which discerns our motives and defines for us their true source in soul or spirit.

Let's move on from the *doctrinal* to the *practical* side of things. Many of us, I am sure, are living quite honestly before God. We have been making progress, and, let's say that we are not aware of anything much wrong with us. Then one day, as we go on, we meet with a fulfillment of the Word, "*The entrance of Thy words giveth light.*" Perhaps, some Christian brother or sister, a message – (we read, or hear) – or, maybe in our own devotion time the Holy Spirit spoke softly to us, and God has used this situation to confront us with His living Word, and that Word has made an entrance into us.

Perhaps, as we were waiting before God and, perhaps from our memory of Scripture, God's Word came to us in power. We "*see*" something that we never saw before. We were convicted. We knew we had been wrong, and we look up and confess, "*Lord, I see it. There is impurity there. There is mixture. How blind I was! Just imagine for so many years I have been wrong there and have never known it!*" Light comes in and we see light. The light of God brings us to see the light concerning ourselves, and it is an abiding principle that all knowledge of *self* comes to us in that way.

This "*light of God to you,*" may not always come from the Scriptures – it must, of course, be in agreement with God's Word, however, there are time when a fellow believer, who really knows the Lord, and by praying with them or talking with them, the light of God radiating from them, we see something that we have never seen before. I have met some whom I think of as a "*lighted*" Christian. Just to be with them brought an immediate sense of God.

We can have plans, beautiful thoughts, schemes for the Lord to sanction, that we think would be marvelous if they were all brought to fruition. When we bring them before the Lord to try to persuade Him – to tell Him that this or that was the thing to do. However, at times some saint of the Lord will say a few words -- and the light



dawns! Our “*doing*’ is all so natural, so full of our self, then, something happens and we are brought to a place where we can say, “*Lord, my mind is set only in fleshly activities – but here is someone who is lead by the Spirit.*” If you find a good, solid, Spirit-led believer who has but one motive, one desire, in life – and that is to please God, they can be a tremendous help in “*seeing*” God’s light for your life. Their motto is, “*Lord, I want nothing for myself,*” They live for God alone, and when that is the case, you will find that such a one walks in the light – and that light illuminates others.

Light has one law – *it shines wherever it is admitted!* That is its only requirement. We can shut it out of ourselves. If we throw our self open to God, He will reveal the light. The trouble comes when we have “*closed*” areas – locked and barred places in our hearts – where we think with pride that *we* are right. Our defeat lies then not only in our being wrong, but also in our ***not knowing that we are wrong.*** Wrong may be a question of natural strength – ignorance of it is a question of light. Many can see the natural strength in others but they cannot see it themselves. We must be sincere and humble, and open our self before God! Those who are *open* can see. God is light, and we cannot live in His light and be without understanding. Let’s read Psalm 43:3 again, “*O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me.*”

Thanks God when sin is brought to our notice, when the eyes of Christians are opened to see that victory over sins is important in Christian living. The consequence of seeking deliverance and discovering victory over sin comes from a closer walk with the Lord. Praise God for any “*light*” that brings us back to real holiness unto God, however, even that is not enough. There is something else that needs to be realized, and that is the importance of the life of the man, himself – not just his sins! *The question of the personality of the man, of his soul-power, is the heart of the matter.* To make the question of sins to be everything is still to be on the surface. Holiness, if you only regard sins, is still something on the outside, still superficial. You have not yet touched the root of the evil.

Adam did not let sin into the world by committing murder – That came later! Adam let in sin by choosing to have his *soul* developed to a place where he could go on by himself – apart from God. When God secures a race of men who will be to His glory, and who will be His instrument to accomplish His purpose in the universe, they will be a people whose life -- whose very breath -- is dependent upon Him. He will be the “*Tree of life*” to them.

What we need, more than anything else, is to seek real revelation of ourselves from God. Not that we should be forever looking in on ourselves and asking concerning our decisions, “*Now, is this soul or is it spirit?*” That will never get us anywhere – that would only bring darkness. No, Scripture shows us how the saints were brought to self-knowledge. It was always by light from God, and that light ***is*** God Himself. Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Peter, Paul, John, all came to a knowledge of themselves because the Lord flashed *Himself* upon them, and that flash brought revelation and conviction. (Read: Isaiah 6:5; Ezekiel 1:28; Daniel 10:8; Luke 22:61, 62; Acts 9:3-5 and Revelation 1:17).

We can never know the hatefulness of sin and the hatefulness of our own carnal life unless there is that light of God upon us. I am not speaking of some sensation but of an inward revelation of the Lord Himself through His Word. It does for us what doctrine alone can never do.

***Christ is our light!*** He is the living Word, and we read the Scriptures that life in Him brings revelation. John 1:4 says, "*The life was the light of men.*" Such illumination may not come all at once, but gradually. This light will be more and more clear and searching, until we see ourselves in the light of God and all our self-confidence is gone. For light is the purest thing in the world. It cleanses. It sterilizes. It kills what should not be there. In its radiance the "*dividing asunder of joints and marrow*" becomes to us a fact and not just mere teaching. We come to know hatred and revulsion of sin as we recognize the corruption of man's nature, the hatefulness of our own carnal life, and the real threat to the work of God of our unrestrained soul-life and energy. As never before, we know how much we need God's drastic dealing if He is to use us, and we know that, apart from Him, as servants of God we are finished.

Here the Cross, in its all inclusive meaning, comes to our help again, and we seek to examine an aspect of its work that meets and deals with our problem of the human soul.

For only a thorough understanding the Cross can bring us to that place of dependence that the Lord Jesus Himself voluntarily took when He said, "*I can of Myself do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is righteous; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me*" (John 5:30).

## Lesson 14

### Bearing the Cross

We previously studied concerning the matter of service for the Lord -- let's now take a look at the *provision* that God has made to meet the problem created by the "*soul-life*" of man. Let's approach this problem by considering the principles that govern our work for God, from which all who serves Him can never deviate. The basis of our salvation, as we well know, is the fact of Christ's death and resurrection -- but the conditions of our service are no less definite. Just as the fact of the death and resurrection of the Lord is the grounds of our acceptance with God, so also is the *principle* of death and resurrection the basis of our life and service for Him.

### The Basis Of All True Ministry

No one can be a true servant of God without knowing the principle of death and resurrection. Even Jesus Himself served on that basis. You will find in Matthew 3 that, before His public ministry ever began, Jesus was baptized in water. He was baptized not because He had any sin, or anything that needed cleansing. No, baptism is a figure of "*death and resurrection.*" The ministry of the Lord did not begin until He was on that

foundation. After He had been baptized and had voluntarily taken the symbol of death and resurrection, the Holy Spirit came upon Him, and then He ministered.

What does this teach us? Jesus was a sinless Man. None but He has trodden this earth and known no sin. Yet, as Man, He had a separate personality from His Father. We must tread very carefully here – but remember His own words, *“I seek not Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.”* What does this mean? It certainly does *not* mean that the Lord had no will of His own. He had a will, as His own words show. As Son of man He had a will, but He did not live by it – *He came to do the will of the Father!* That is the point. That thing in Jesus that distinguishes Him from the Father is the human soul, which He assumed when He was *“found in fashion as a man.”* Being a perfect Man our Lord had a soul, and of course a body, just as you and I have a soul and a body, and it was possible for Him to act *from the soul* -- that is, from Himself.

You remember that immediately after the Lord's baptism, and before His public ministry began, He was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil? (Matthew 4:1) Satan came and tempted Him. He tempted Him, first, to satisfy His essential needs by turning stones to bread – then, to secure immediate respect for His ministry by appearing miraculously in the temple court, and, finally, to assume without delay the world dominion destined for Him. Do you wonder why Satan tempted Him to do such strange things? We might wonder, *“Why didn't Satan tempt Him to sin in a more outlandish manner?”* Satan knew better. He only said, *“**If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.**”* What did it mean? The implication was this, *“If You are the Son of God You must do something to prove it. Here is a challenge. Some will certainly raise a question as to whether Your claim is real or not. Why do You not settle the matter finally now by coming out and proving it?”*

The whole subtle object of Satan was to get the Lord to **act for Himself** -- that is, to act from the **soul** -- and, by the stand He took, Jesus absolutely repudiated such action. In Adam, man had acted from himself – apart from God. That was the whole tragedy of the garden. Now in a similar situation the Son of man takes another pathway. Later He defines it as His basic life-principle -- the original Greek renders it, *“The Son can do nothing **out from Himself**”* (John 5:19). **That total denial of the soul-life was to govern all His ministry!**

We can safely – and Scripturally – say that all the work that Jesus did on earth, prior to His actual death on the cross, was done with the principle of *“death and resurrection”* as basis – even though, as an actual event, Calvary still lay in the future. Everything He did was on that foundation. Since this is so -- if the Son of man has to go through death and resurrection (in figure and in principle) in order to work, **can we do otherwise?** No servant of the Lord can serve Him without himself knowing the working of that principle in his life. The Lord made this very clear to His disciples when He left them. He had died and risen, and told them to wait in Jerusalem for the Spirit to come upon them. What is this power of the Holy Spirit, this *“power from on high”* of which He spoke? **It is nothing less than the virtue of His death, resurrection and ascension!**

To use another figure, the Holy Spirit is the Vessel in whom all the values of the death, resurrection and exaltation of the Lord are deposited, that they may be brought to us. He is the one who “contains” those values and mediates them to men. That is the reason why the Spirit could not be given before the Lord had been glorified. Then *only* could He rest upon men and women that they might witness. Without the values of the death and resurrection of Christ no such witness is possible.

In the Old Testament we find the same thing. Look at a familiar passage in the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of Numbers. The matter of Aaron's ministry had been contested. There is a question among the people as to whether Aaron is truly the chosen of God. Some of the Israelites had entertained a suspicion, and said, in effect, “*Whether that man is ordained of God or not, we do not know!*” God sets out to prove who is His servant and who is not. How does He do this? Twelve dead rods are put before the Lord in the sanctuary within the Holy of Holies, and left for the night. In the morning, the Lord indicates His chosen minister by the rod that *buds, blossoms and bears fruit*.

The budding rod speaks of resurrection. It is death and resurrection that marks God-recognized ministry. Without that we have nothing. The budding of Aaron's rod proved him to be on a true basis, and God will only recognize as His ministers those who have come through death to resurrection.

The death of the Lord works in different ways and has different aspects. We studied how His death worked in regard to the forgiveness of our sins. Our forgiveness is based upon the shed Blood, and that without the shedding of Blood there is no remission. Then, in Romans 6, we studied how death works to meet the power of sin – our old man has been crucified in order that we should not serve sin. We praised the Lord that His death has worked also for our deliverance. The question of human *self-will* rises, and the need for consecration is apparent; and we find death works there, bringing about in us a willingness to let go of our own wills and obey the Lord. This constitutes a starting point for whatever God has planned for our particular ministry, but still may not touch the core of the problem because it is possible for there to still be a lack of knowledge, on our part, of what is meant by “*the soul*.”

So, another phase is presented to us in the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans where the question of holiness of life is in view – *living a constant, continual life of personal holiness!* Here we see a true man of God trying to please God in righteousness under law and the law finds him out. He is trying to please God by using his own carnal power, so the Cross must bring him to the place where he says, “*I cannot do it. I cannot satisfy God with my powers. I can only trust the Holy Spirit to do that in me.*” Some of us have passed through deep waters to learn this, and to discover the value of the death of the Lord working in this way in our life.

There is a great difference between “*the flesh*,” as spoken of in Romans 7 in relation to holiness of life – and the working of the *natural energies* of the soul-life in the service of the Lord. With all that we have studied so far -- and known by experience --

there still remains another area that the death of the Lord must enter before we are actually of use to Him in service. Even with all these experiences we are still unsafe for Him to use until this further thing is affected within us. How many of God's servants are used by Him to build a wall, only, when they have done so, to undo it all by themselves pulling it down? One can be used in a sense, but at the same time destroy their own work, and sometimes that of others also, because of there being somewhere something "*undealt*" with by the Cross.

Let's see how the Lord sets out to deal with the soul, and then more particularly how this affects the question of our service for Him.

### The Working Of The Cross And The Soul

Four passages, taken from each of the four Gospels will be of great help here. They are: **Matthew 10:34-39**; **Mark 8:32-25**; **Luke 17:32-34**; and **John 12:24-26**. These four passages have something in common. In each the Lord Himself speaking concerning the soul-activity of man, and in each a different aspect or manifestation of the soul-life is touched upon. In these verses Christ makes it clear that the soul of man can be dealt with in one way - *and in one way only*, and that is by our bearing the cross daily and following Him.

We find something about the "*soul-life*" - (or natural life) - in these Gospel passages that speaks of something more concerning the "*old man*" - (or the flesh) than is taught in the passages we have already studied. In respect to our "*old man*," God emphasizes the thing He has done *once for all* in crucifying us with Christ on the Cross. We have seen that three times in the Epistle to the Galatians the "*crucifying*" aspect of the Cross is referred to as a thing accomplished - while, in Romans 6:6 is the clear statement that, "*our old man was crucified*," and, if the tense of the word means anything, we could paraphrase, "*Our old man has been finally and for ever crucified.*" It is something *done* --- to be apprehended by Divine revelation -- and then appropriated by faith.

But, there is a further aspect of the Cross, implied in the expression "*bearing his cross daily.*" ***The Cross has borne me*** --- now ***I must bear it!***

This bearing of the Cross is an *inward* thing. It is this that we mean when we speak of "*the subjective working of the Cross.*" It is a daily process --- a step by step following after Christ. This is brought before us in relation to the soul!

The emphasis here is not the same as Scriptures dealing with the "*old man*." There is not the "*crucifixion*" of the *soul* itself, in the sense that our natural gifts and faculties, our personality and our individuality, are to be put away altogether.

If that were so it could hardly be said of us, as Hebrews 10:39 states, that we are to "*have faith unto the saving of the soul.*" (Compare also 1 Peter 1:9; Luke 21:19.) No, we

do not lose our souls in this sense, for to do so would be to lose our individual existence completely. The soul is still there with its natural endowments, but the Cross must be brought to bear upon it --- to bring those natural endowments into death -- and, as God pleases, to give them back to us in resurrection.

In this sense Paul, expressing the desire *“that I may know Him [Jesus Christ], and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming conformed unto His death”* (Philippians 3:10). The mark of death is upon the soul all the time to bring it to the place where it is always subordinate to the Spirit and never independently assert itself. Only the Cross, working in such a way, could cause a man of the caliber of Paul, and with the natural resources hinted at in Philippians 3, so distrust his own natural strength that he could write to the Corinthians, *“I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God”* (1 Corinthians 2:2,3).

The soul is the seat of the affections, and these influence a great part of our decisions and actions. There is nothing deliberately sinful about them; it is simply that there is something in us that can react in natural affection and, as a result, can influence wrongly our whole course of action.

In the first of the four passages the Lord says, *“He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that doth not take his cross and follow after Me, is not worthy of Me”* (Matthew 10:37,38). To follow the Lord by way of the Cross is set before us as normal Christian living --- Christ’s only way for us! Note, what immediately follows Christ’s statement here, *“He that findeth his soul shall lose it; and he that loseth his soul --- for My sake shall find it”* (Matthew 10:39).

The unseen danger lies in that subtle working of the affections to turn us away from the pathway of God. The key to the matter is the *“soul.”* The Cross must deal with our soul. We have to *“lose”* our soul in the sense the Jesus means by these words.

What does it mean to lose our soul? It means that we can no longer fulfill *its* desire --- cannot give in to *it* --- we cannot gratify *it* --- *that* is the *“loss”* of our soul. We go through a painful process to discourage what the soul is asking for. Many times it is *not* any definite sin that is keeping us from following the Lord all the way. We are held up because of some secret love somewhere, some perfectly natural affection diverting our course. Affection plays a great part in our lives, and the Cross has to come in and do its work.

The next reference is the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter of Mark. This is a most important passage. Our Lord has just taught His disciples at Caesarea Philippi that He was going to suffer death at the hands of the elders of the Jews, and then Peter, with all his love for his Master, came up and rebuked Him and said to Him, *“Lord, do not do it; pity Thyself: this*

*shall never come to Thee!"* Out of his love for the Lord he appealed to Him to spare Himself, but the Lord rebuked Peter, as He would rebuke Satan, for caring for the things of men and not the things of God. And then to all present the word was spoken once more, *"If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his soul shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his soul for My sake and the gospel's shall save it"* (Mark 8:34,35).

The question at issue is again that of the soul, and here it is particularly of the soul's desire for self-preservation. There is that clever working of the soul that says, *"If I could be allowed to live I would do anything – be willing for anything – but I must be kept alive!"* You have the soul crying out for help, saying, *"Am I Going to the Cross to be crucified? – oh, that is too much! Have mercy on yourself; pity yourself! Do you mean to say you are going against yourself and going with God?"* In order to go on with God we must go against the voice of our soul- our own or other people's -- and to let the Cross come in to silence that appeal for self-preservation.

Are we afraid of the will of God? Do we want the will of God? These are tremendous questions. The important question is not always, *"Do we do the will of God?"* --- but, *"Do we like the will of God?"* That question cuts deeper than anything else.

At times we know what the Lord wants, and *"in our heart"* we want it too. However, it is difficult, nonetheless. At times like that we need to pray something like, *"Lord, I confess that I don't like it, but please do not give in to me. Just wait, Lord – and `I' will give in to You."* Or, as Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, *"Father, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."*

At times we come to the place where we are willing to let go of things we think to be good and precious -- maybe, even the very things of God -- that His will may be done. There is no question that Peter's concern was for his Lord, but he was dictated by his natural love. Peter had a marvelous love for his Lord, sufficient even for him to dare to rebuke Him. Only a strong love could bring one to attempt that! But, when there is purity of spirit without that mixture of soul, we will not be led into Peter's mistake. We will recognize the will of God and we will find that *that* is what our heart delights in. We will no longer shed a tear in sympathy over the flesh. The Cross cuts deep, and we see how utterly it has to deal with the soul.

Jesus deals with this matter of the soul in the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of Luke, and it is in relation to His return. Speaking of, *"the day that the Son of man is revealed,"* Jesus draws a parallel between that day and *"the day that Lot went out from Sodom"* (verses 29-30). A little later He speaks of His return to earth in the words, *"One shall be taken, and the other shall be left"* (verses 34-35). But between His reference to the calling of Lot out of Sodom and this allusion to His return to earth, Jesus says these remarkable words, *"In that day, he which shall be on the housetop, and his goods in the house, let him not go down to take them away: and let him that is in the field likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife"* (verses 31-

32). *Remember Lot's wife!* Why remember Lot's wife? Because, "*whosoever shall seek to gain his soul shall lose it: but whosoever shall lose his soul shall save it alive*" (verse 33).

Jesus is here speaking of our reaction to His return to earth. On the basis of our His return to earth, Christ gives a most urgent appeal for us to be ready (compare Matthew 24:42). In that moment we will discover our heart's real treasure. If it is the Lord Himself, then there will be no backward look. A backward glance decides everything. *It is so easy to become more attached to the gifts of God than to the Giver* -- and even, to the *work* of God, rather than to *God Himself!*

### **It is a question of living by our soul – or by our spirit!**

Here in this passage in Luke, we have depicted the soul-life in its engagement with the things of the earth -- and, *not sinful things either*. Jesus mentions marrying, planting, eating, selling -- *all perfectly legitimate activities with which there is nothing essentially wrong*. But it is occupation with them, **so** that our heart is occupied with them -- that is enough to absorb our life.

The way out of *that* danger is by "*losing the soul*." There is beautifully illustrated in the action of Peter when he recognized the risen Lord by the lake-side. Though with the others he had returned to his former employment, there was now no thought of the ship, not even of the net full of fish so miraculously provided. When he heard John's cry of recognition, "*It is the Lord*," we read, "*he cast himself into the sea*."

That is true detachment. The question at issue is always, "*Where is my heart?*" The cross has to work in us a true spiritual detachment from anything and anyone outside of the Lord Himself.

However, even this is only dealing with the outward aspects of the soul's activity. The soul giving rein to its affections -- the soul asserting itself and trying to manipulate things -- the soul becoming preoccupied with things on the earth -- these are still small things, and do not touch the real heart of the matter. There is something even deeper yet.

### **The Cross And Fruitfulness**

John 12:24,25 says, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit. He that loveth his life (Greek `soul', as in the above passages) loseth it; and he that hateth his life ( soul) in this world shall keep it unto life eternal*."

Here is presented the inward working of the Cross -- *the losing of the soul* -- likened to the aspect of the death of Jesus Christ depicted in the grain of wheat, namely, His one death bringing life to many. The end is fruitfulness. There is a grain of wheat with life in it, but "*it abideth alone*." It has the power to impart its life to others, but to do so it must go down into death.



Jesus passed into death, and, His life emerged in many lives. The Son died, and came forth as the first of "*many sons*." He died that we might receive His life. It is in this aspect of His death that we are called to die. Jesus makes clear the value of conformity to His death, that is -- that we lose our own natural life, (our soul), in order that we may become *life-imparters*, sharing with others the new life of God that is in us. This is the secret of ministry, the path of real fruitfulness to God. As Paul says, "*We which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you*" (2 Corinthians 4:11,12).

If we have received Christ -- there is new life in us! We all have that precious possession, the treasure in the vessel. *Praise the Lord for the reality of His life within us!* But why is there so little expression of that life? Why is there an "*abiding alone?*" Why is it not overflowing and imparting life to others? Why is it scarcely making itself apparent in our lives? The reason why there is so little sign of life where life is present is that the soul in us is enveloping and confining that life (like the husk envelopes the grain of wheat) so that it cannot find outlet. We are living in the soul! We are working and serving in our own natural strength, and not drawing from God. It is the *soul* that stands in the way of the springing up of life. Lose it --- it's the only way for fullness!

### **A Dark Night -- A Resurrection Morn**

Remember the Aaron's almond rod? It was brought into the Sanctuary for a night -- a dark night -- and then in the morning it budded. Here we have set forth the death and resurrection, the life yielded up and the life ascended, and a ministry attested. But, how does this work out in practice? How do we recognize that God is dealing with us in this way?

First we must be clear about one thing -- the soul, with its fund of natural energy and resource, will continue with us until its death. Till then there will be an unending day-by-day need for the Cross to operate in us -- dredging deeply into that well-spring of nature. This is the *life-long condition* of service that is laid down in Jesus' words, "*Let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me*" (Mark 8:34). We can never get past that. He who evades it, Jesus said, "*is not worthy of Me*" (Matthew 10:38); he "*cannot be my disciple*" (Luke 14:27). Death and resurrection must remain an abiding principle of our lives for the losing of the soul and the uprising of the Spirit.

It may take a crisis, but, once reached and passed, will transform our whole life and service for God. It is a "*wicket gate*" by which we enter an entirely new pathway. Such a crisis occurred in the life of Jacob at Peniel. It was the "*natural man*" in Jacob that was seeking to serve God and to attain His end. Jacob knew well that God had said, "*The elder shall serve the younger,*" but he was trying to bring about that end through his own ingenuity and resource. God had to cripple that strength of nature in Jacob, and He did so when He touched the sinew of Jacob's thigh. Jacob continued to walk, but he continued to be lame. He was a different Jacob, as his change of name implies. He had his feet and he could use them, but the strength had been touched, and he limped from an injury from which he would never quite recover.

God must bring us to a point where, through a deep and dark experience, our natural power is touched and fundamentally weakened, so that we no longer dare trust ourselves. He has had to deal with some of us very harshly, and take us through difficult and painful ways, in order to get us there. Our own ambitions and dependence upon our ability ceases, (we lose our “*soul*” capacity – the skills of our mind, will and emotion) --- then, hallelujah, *God can begin to use us.*

The Lord may graciously allow you to go on a long while in whatever ministry (or talent) you are involved with -- with a fair measure of blessing -- until one day that natural force impelling you is touched, and from then on you no longer minister for “*self,*” -- but for *the Lord!*

Before that experience you “*performed*” for the satisfaction you got from serving God in that way, and yet at times the Lord could not move you to do the thing that *He* wanted done. You were living by the “*natural life,*” -- a life that varies a good deal. You were a slave to your temperament. When emotionally you felt like doing His ministry, you go ahead at full speed, but when if your emotions are directed in another direction you are reluctant --- even when duty calls. You were not pliable, or adjustable, in the Lord's hands. He has to weaken our strength of preference -- of like and dislike – in us, until we will do a thing simply because He wants it and not because we like it! We may enjoy it or we may not, but we will do it just the same. It is not that we derive a certain satisfaction from doing this or that for God – we just do it! We do it because it is the will of God, regardless of whether or not it gives us conscious joy. The true joy you know in doing His will lies deeper than your variable emotions.

God is bringing us to the place where He has but to express a wish and we respond instantly. That is the spirit of the Servant (Psalm 40:7-8), but such a spirit does not come *naturally* to any of us. It comes only when our soul, the seat of our natural energy and will and affections, has known the touch of the Cross. Yet such a *servant-spirit* is what He seeks and would have in us. The way may be a painful, long-drawn-out process with some of us, or it may be just one stroke -- but God has His ways and we must have regard to them.

Every sincere believer must know at some time a disabling from which he can never recover, from which he will never be the same again. There need be established in us that that causes us to forever after have a fear of dependence upon our “*self*” --- a fear to do anything “*of our self,*” -- for, like Jacob, we will know what kind of sovereign dealing we will incur if we do it. We will know what a bad time you will have in our own heart before the Lord if we move out on the impulse of our *soul!* We all have known something of the chastening hand of a loving God upon us, a God who “*deals with us as with sons*” (Hebrews 12:7). The Spirit Himself bears witness in our spirit to that relationship, and to the inheritance and glory that are ours -- “*if so be that we suffer with Him*” (Romans 8:16-17); and our response to the “*Father of our spirits*” is, “*Abba, Father.*”

When this is really established in us, we will have arrived at a new place as, "*resurrection ground!*" Death, in principle, has to be formed in a crisis in our natural life --- but when it has --- we find God releases us into *resurrection!* We discover that what we have lost is coming back -- though not the same as before. The principle of *life* is now at work in us -- something that empowers and strengthens us, something that animates us, giving us life. From this time on --- what we have lost will be brought back --- but now under discipline, under control!

I want to make this quite clear again, I am not speaking of self-inflicted penitence, some catastrophe or tragedy, brought upon our self - consciously or unconsciously! To be a spiritual person, there is no need to "*amputate our hands or feet*" - literally, or figuratively! And, even if we did, we would still have our body - and still have our "*old carnal nature.*"

In the same way, we can have our soul, with the full use of its faculties; and yet the soul is not now our life-spring. We are no longer living by its demands, no longer drawing from it and living by it --- we simply *use* it!

When the body becomes our life we live like beasts. When the soul becomes our life we live as rebels and fugitives from God -- gifted, cultured, educated, no doubt, but alienated from the life of God. But, when we begin to live our life in the Spirit and by the Spirit, though we still use our soul faculties --- just as we do our physical faculties -- *they are now the servants of the Spirit!* When we have reached that place, God can really use us.

The difficulty with many of us is "*that dark night.*" There may be times when the Lord graciously takes us aside for a period of time - maybe even months --- and puts us, spiritually, into "*utter darkness.*" It can seem as though God has forsaken us -- almost as though nothing is going on and we come to the end of everything. Then, by degrees, God brings things back again. The temptation is always to try to help God by taking things back ourselves; but remember, there must be a "*full night*" in the sanctuary -- a full night in darkness. It cannot be hurried, God knows what He is doing.

We would like to have death and resurrection put together within one hour of each other. We cannot face the thought that God will keep us aside for so long a period of time. We cannot bear to wait! I cannot tell you how long God will take, but in principle I think it is quite safe to say this, that there will be a definite period when He will *keep you there*. It will seem as though nothing is happening --- everything you value is slipping from your grasp. There confronts you a blank wall with no door in it. Seemingly everyone else is being blessed and used, while you have been passed by and are losing out. *Lie quiet!* All is in darkness, but it is only for a night. It must indeed be a full night - God's "*night*" - whatever period of time He chooses. Afterwards you will find that everything is given back to you in glorious resurrection, and nothing can measure the difference between what was before and what now is!

### Just What Does the Cross Stand For?

The cross is a symbol of *death!* It stands for the abrupt, violent end of a human being. In Roman times, the man who took up his cross and started down the road was not coming back. He was not going out to have a life redirected -- *he was going out to have it ended!* The cross did not try to keep on good terms with its victim. It struck cruel and hard, and when it had finished its work, the man was no more.

Every member of Adam's race is under a death sentence. God cannot approve any of the fruits of sin. In coming to Christ we do not bring our old life up onto a higher plane -- we leave it at the Cross. Thus God salvages the individual by liquidating him and then raising him again to newness of life!

What a blessed thing it is when we know the Lord has met us and touched us in that fundamental way, and that His disabling touch has been received!

The Lord knows what He is doing with His own, and He has left no aspect of our need unmet in His Cross -- that the glory of the Son may be manifested in the sons. Believers who have gone this way can truly echo the words of the apostle Paul, who could claim to serve God, "*in my spirit in the gospel of His Son*" (Romans 1:9). They have learned, as he had, the secret of such a ministry, "*We ... worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh*" (Philippians 3:3).

Has any follower of Christ lived a more active life than Paul's? To the Romans he puts it on record that he has preached the Gospel from Jerusalem to Illyricum (Romans 15:19) -- [this included Montenegro, Albania and Dalmatia -- or -- modern Yugoslavia] -- and that he is ready now to go on to Rome (1:10) and thence, if possible, to Spain (15:24,28). Yet in all this service, embracing as it does the whole Mediterranean world, his heart is set on one object only -- the uplifting of the One who has made it all possible. Paul writes, "*I have therefore my glorying in Christ Jesus in things pertaining to God. For I will not dare to speak of any things save those which Christ wrought through me, for the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deed*" (Romans 15:17,18). **That is spiritual service!**

May God make each of us, as truly as he was, "*a bondservant of Jesus Christ.*"

### Lesson 15

#### The Purpose of the Gospel

Mark 14:3, "*And while He [Jesus] was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster cruse of ointment of spikenard very costly; and she brake the cruse, and poured it over his head*" Verse 9 continues telling us that Jesus said, "*Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever the gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.*"

This incident in Mark 14 occurs under the very shadow of the Cross -- a happening that, in its details, is at once historic and prophetic.

Jesus declares that this story of Mary anointing Him with costly ointment would always accompany the story of the Gospel. What Mary did would always be coupled with what Christ was to do. That is Jesus' own statement.

**"What is the lesson that Jesus intends that we should understand by it?"**

We all are familiar with the story of Mary's action. We read from the details of this same event given in John chapter 12 that this incident follows shortly after Lazarus' (her brother) restoration to life. It appears that the family was not necessarily a wealthy one. The sisters had to work in the house themselves, for we are told that at this feast "*Martha also served*" (John 12:2 compared with Luke 10:40). No doubt every penny mattered to them, yet one of the sisters, Mary, having among her treasures an alabaster cruse containing three hundred pence' worth of ointment - "*very costly*" - spent the whole thing on the Lord. Human reasoning said this was really too much - it was giving the Lord more than His due. That is why Judas took the lead, (and the other disciples supported him) in voicing a general complaint that Mary's action was a wasteful one.

**A Lesson On Waste**

*"But there were some that had indignation among themselves, saying, 'To what purpose hath this waste of the ointment been made? For this ointment might have been sold for above three hundred pence and given to the poor.' And they murmured against her" (Mark 14:4-5).* These words bring us to what the Lord would have us consider, namely, that which is signified by the little word "*waste*."

What is waste? Waste means, among other things, giving more than is necessary. If a dollar will do and you give five dollars, it is a waste. If two table spoons will do and you add a cup, it is a waste. If three days will suffice to finish a task and you take five days or a week, it is a waste. Waste means that you give something too much for something too little. If someone is receiving more than he is considered to be worth, then that is waste.

Here is something that Jesus said would go out with the Gospel. Wherever that Gospel would be carried this concept would go with it. Why? Because He intends that the preaching of the Gospel would issue in something along the lines of the action of Mary --- namely, that people would come to Him and **waste themselves on Him!** This is what Jesus was saying.

Look at this question of wasting on the Lord from two angles: **(1)** that of Judas (John 12:4-6) and **(2)** that of the other disciples (Matthew 26:8,9); and for our purpose we will run together the parallel accounts.

All the twelve thought is a waste. To Judas, who had never called Jesus, "Lord," everything that was poured out upon Him was waste. Judas stands for the world's concept of service for the Lord, and giving our self to Him for service – in their minds, is sheer waste. Jesus is not loved, does not have a place in their hearts, so any giving to Him is a waste. Many would say, "So -and-so would make good in the world if only he did not use his time and energy being a Christian!" Because a man has some natural talent or other asset in the world's eyes, they count such a person as too good for the Lord. "What waste of a useful life," they say.

The thought of being a life poured out for the Lord will flood our soul with the "Spirit of glory" (1 Peter 4:14). We can say without a reservation say, "Lord, I praise You! This is the best thing possible --- it is the right course that we have chosen!" To others, however, it seems like a total waste to serve the Lord --- but that is what the Gospel is all about -- to bring us to a true estimate of Christ's worth.

Judas felt it a waste. He said, "We could manage better with the money by using it in some other way. There are plenty of poor people. Why not give it for charity, do some social service. Help the poor in some practical way? Why pour it out at the feet of Jesus?" (See John 12:4-6.) This is the way the world reasons --- "Can't you do something better with yourself than this? It seems to be going a bit too far to give yourself altogether to the Lord!"

If the Lord is worthy, then how can it be a waste? He is worthy to be served wholeheartedly. He is worthy for us to be His servant. He is worthy for us to live for Him. **He is worthy!** What the world says about this doesn't matter. Jesus said, "Do not trouble her" -- So let us not be troubled! Men may say what they like, but we can stand on this foundation, that the Lord said, "It is a good work. All true work is not done on the poor, but, every true work is done to Me." When once our eyes have been opened to the real worth of our Lord Jesus -- *nothing* is too good for Him!

Let's not dwell to long on Judas, but rather, go on to see what was the attitude of the other disciples. Their reaction affects us even more than Judas.' Isn't it true that we aren't so concerned with what the world says? We can stand that. However, we care a great deal what other Christians are saying. They ought to understand, and, yet we find that they often say the same thing as Judas. The disciples not only said it --- but they were very upset, very indignant about the whole thing. "When the disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, 'To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor'" (Matthew 26:8,9).

Unfortunately, this is the attitude all too common among Christians who say, "Get all you can for as little as possible." But, that is not the view Jesus gives here. He deals with something much deeper.

Let me illustrate. Has someone been telling you that you are wasting your life by sitting still and not doing much? They say, "Here are people who ought to get out into this or that kind of work. They could be used to help this or that group of people. Why are they not

*more active?" -- and in saying so, their whole idea is **use!** Everything ought to be used to the full in ways they understand.*

There are those who have been very concerned with some dear servants of the Lord on this very ground, that they are apparently not *doing* enough. They could do so much more, they think, if they would secure a doorway somewhere and enjoy a greater acceptance and prominence in certain circles. They could then be used in a far greater way. Often others say, *"Why do they not get out and become involved in more service for the Lord? Why don't they do something? It seems a waste for them to be working where nothing is happening!"* They may reason, *"You know the Lord so well. You know the Bible in a most living way. Can't you see the need around? Why don't you **do** something? Isn't it a waste of time and energy just doing nothing?"*

No, that is not what is first with the Lord. He wants you and me to be used, certainly. I am not propagating inactivity or seeking to justify a complacent attitude to the needs around us. As Jesus Himself said, *"the gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world."* But the question is one of emphasis. Looking back over past years, I realize how greatly the Lord uses those who appear to be doing nothing – except seeking, and doing, His will -- regardless of what others may think or say

What is the secret? In approving Mary's action at Bethany, Jesus was laying down one thing as a basis of all service --- that we pour out all we have, our very self, *unto Him*; and if that should be all He allows us to do, ***that is enough!*** It is not a question of whether *"the poor"* have been helped or not. The first and primary question is, ***"Is the Lord satisfied?"***

There are many things we might do, many services we might attend or minister in, many tasks that we might share in. It is not that we are unable to do it. We could labor and be used to the full, but the Lord is not so concerned about our ceaseless occupation in work for Him. That is not His ***first*** object. The service of the Lord is not to be measured by tangible results. The Lord's first concern is with our position at His feet and our anointing of His head. Whatever we have as an *"alabaster box"* -- the most precious thing, the thing dearest in the world to us, *the outflow from us of a life that is produced by the very Cross itself* -- we give that all up *to the Lord!* To some, even of those who should understand, it seems a waste; but that is what God seeks above all. The giving to Him may be a tireless service, but He reserves to Himself the right to suspend the service for a time in order to discover to us whether it is *that* -- or Himself -- that holds us.

### **Ministering To His Pleasure**

Jesus said of Mary's act, *"Whosoever the gospel shall be preached ... that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of"* (Mark 14:9).

Why did Jesus say this? The answer is simply, because the Gospel is meant to produce this attitude. ***It is what the Gospel is for!*** It may surprise you, but *the Gospel is*

*not just to satisfy sinners.* Thank God, sinners will be satisfied! But their satisfaction is a blessed by-product of the Gospel, not its only aim. The Gospel is preached in the first place so that *the Lord* may be satisfied.

Could it be that we lay too much emphasis on the good of sinners and have not sufficiently appreciated what the Lord has in view as His goal? We stress how the sinner will fare if there is no Gospel, but that is not the main consideration. Praise God, the sinner has his part. God meets his need and showers him with blessings -- but that is not the only thing about the Gospel. The important thing is that everything should be to the satisfaction of the Son of God. It is only when He is satisfied that we will be satisfied and the sinner will be satisfied. I have never met a soul who has set out to satisfy the Lord and has not been satisfied himself. Our satisfaction comes unfailingly when we satisfy Him first.

God will never be satisfied without our "*wasting*" ourselves upon Him. Have you ever given too much to the Lord? Some of us need to learn that in Divine service the "*principle of waste*" is the principle of power. The principle that determines usefulness is the very principle of scattering. Real usefulness in the hand of God is measured in terms of "*waste*." The more we think we can *do*, and the more we employ our gifts up to the very limit, the more we find that we are applying the principle of the world and not of the Lord. God's ways with us are all designed to establish in us this principle, namely, that our work *for* Him springs out of our ministering *to* Him. I do not mean that we are going to do nothing -- but the first thing for us must be the Lord Himself, not His work.

Let's get practical. Someone says, "*I have foregone certain attractive possibilities of a bright future, in order to go on with the Lord. I try to serve Him. Sometimes it seems that the Lord hears me, and sometimes He keeps me waiting for an indefinite period of time. Sometimes He uses me, but sometimes it seems that He passes me by. When this happens, I find myself comparing myself with others who seem to be so successful in the Lord's work. Someone who He has a bright future, but he has never had to give it up. He continues on and he serves the Lord. He sees success doing the Lord's work and the Lord blesses him. He is successful -- not just materially, but spiritually! --- I sometimes think he looks more like a Christian than I do. He seems so happy and so satisfied. After all, what do I get out of this? He has a good time, while I have a very difficult time. He has never gone through the kind of crisis you speak of -- **the death of the Cross** -- and yet he has much of what Christians today regard as 'spiritual prosperity,' while I have all sorts of complications coming my way. What is the meaning of it all? Am I wasting my life? Have I really given too much?*"

That's our problem --- we feel that is we attempt to follow in someone else's steps! You ask, "*What is wrong with that?*" The problem is that we begin concentrating on "*the blessing*" --- and not enough on the Lord --- and what His use for us, personally, might be.



We must take our eyes off the other person and look at your Lord. Ask our self, *"What is it that God values most highly?"* The principle of waste is the principle that He would have us to live by. Jesus responded, *"She is doing this **for Me.**"*

Why is it so difficult for our natural minds to realize that --- real satisfaction is brought to the heart of the Son of God only when we *"waste"* ourselves on Him? It may seem to us that we are giving, or doing, too much and getting nothing back - but, *that* is the secret of pleasing God.

What are we after? Are we after *"being used"* as Jesus' disciples were? They wanted to make every penny of those three hundred pence go to its full length. The whole question was one of obvious *"usefulness"* to God in terms that could be measured and put on record. The Lord waits to hear us say, *"Lord, I do not mind what happens --- or what I do --- if I can only please You, it is enough."*

### **Anointing Him Beforehand**

*"Let her alone; why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on Me. For ye have the poor always with you, and whensoever ye will ye can do them good: but Me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she hath anointed My body **aforehand** for the burying"* (Mark 14:6-8).

Jesus introduces a time-factor with the word *"aforehand,"* or, *"beforehand!"* Here is something that we can have an application for today --- because it is as important to us now as it was to her then. We all know that in the age to come we will be called to a greater work -- not to inactivity. *"Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"* (Matthew 25:21 - also compare Matthew 24:47 and Luke 19:17). Yes, there will be a greater work in eternity! Jesus told His disciples that the poor would always be with them, but they could not always have Him. There was something, represented by this pouring out of the ointment, which Mary had to do *"beforehand"* because later she would not have this opportunity. In that day we shall all love Him as we have never done in this life - however, it will be most blessed for those who have poured out their all upon the Lord in this day and age. When we see Him face-to-face we will all pour out everything for Him. But *today* - what are we doing *today*?

Just days after Mary broke the alabaster box and poured the ointment on Jesus' head, there were some women who went early in the morning to anoint the body of the Lord. Did they do it? Did they succeed in their purpose on that first day of the week? **No!** There was only one soul who was successful in anointing the Lord -- it was Mary, who anointed Him *before* hand. No one else ever did, because He had risen. In just the same way the matter of time is important to us also. The question is, *"What am I doing to the Lord today?"*

Are our eyes open to see the preciousness of the One whom we are serving? Have we come to see that nothing less than the dearest, most costly, most precious

things in our life are fit for Him? Have we come to see that working for the needs and benefits of this world --- working for the souls of men and for the eternal good of the sinner -- all these so necessary and valuable things -- are right *only* if they are in their place? In themselves, as things apart, they are as nothing compared with work that is done *to the Lord*.

**The Lord has to open our eyes to His worth!** If there is in the world some precious art treasure, and I pay the high price that is asked for it – if it is one thousand, ten thousand, or even a million dollars – would anyone say it is a waste?

The idea of waste only comes in our Christianity  
when we underestimate the worth of our Lord.

The question is, “*How precious is Jesus to us now?*” If we do not think much of Him, then of course to give Him anything at all, however small, would seem a waste. However, when He is so precious to our soul, nothing would be too good, nothing too costly for Him. Everything we have, our dearest, our most priceless treasure, we will pour out for Him, and not count it a shame to have done so.

Jesus said of Mary, “*She hath done what she could.*” What does that mean? It means that she had given up her all. She had kept nothing in reserve for a future day. She had lavished on Him all she had. On the resurrection morning she had no reason to regret her extravagance. The Lord will not be satisfied with anything less from us than that we too should have done, “*what we could.*”

This does not mean the expenditure of our effort and energy in trying to do something for Him. That is not the point! What Jesus looks for in us is a life laid at His feet -- and here it was in view of His death and burial and of a future day. His burial was already in view that day in the home in Bethany. **Today it is His crowning that is in view** -- when He will be acclaimed in glory as the Anointed One! Then we will pour out our all upon Him! -- But it is a precious thing -- far more precious thing to Him -- that we would anoint Him ***now***, not with any material oil but with something costly, something from our heart.

The things that are merely external and superficial have no place here. The Cross has already dealt with these – we have given our consent to God's judgment upon them – and learn to know, by experience, their being cut off. What God demands of us now is represented by that “*flask of alabaster*” ---

**Just what was this alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, very precious?**

“*Alabaster*” was a mineral stone of lime used to ornament buildings and to make vases and small bottles.

The word “*spikenard*” comes from a combination of two Greek words, “*nardos*,” referring to a variety of bearded grass from India, and specifically to the fragrant oil extracted from it which was used in the East in both pure and mixed forms (Song of Solomon 1:12; Mark 14:3 & John 12:2). It is here modified here by the Greek adjective, “*pistikos*,” that comes from “*pistis*,” meaning faith. The Greek word, “*pistikos*” can have some sense of faithful, however, it is used only twice in the New Testament, both times in conjunction with “*nardos*.” In this context, it probably means genuine, pure, or liquid nard. That it was liquid here cannot be disputed for it was “*poured*” and was used to “*anoint*.” Anointing was always done with liquid.

“*Braking the box*” – or actually, “*flask*” – means that the seal or cement that kept the odor preserved was broken. Then the “*nard*” was poured. The flask itself was not broken or the liquid would have been spilled at the breaking of the bottle.

“*Alabaster*” was sought after -- mined from the depths -- ground until it was transparent “*ointment of spikenard*,” -- then worked and wrought upon until it was aromatic. Jesus uses this incident as an opportunity to teach a valuable lesson to the believer as something cherished – (as Mary cherished that flask) to be surrender to the Lord. Something that comes from the heart, from the very depth of our being; and we come to the Lord with it, and break it and pour it out and say, “*Lord, here it is. It is all Yours – because You are worthy!*” -- and the Lord then, receives what He desires. May He receive such an anointing from us!

**Fragrance**

“*And the house was filled with the odor of the ointment*” (John 12:3). By the breaking of that flask, and the anointing of Jesus, the house was permeated with the sweetest fragrance. Everyone could smell it and be unaware of it. What is the significance of this?

Whenever we meet someone who has really suffered -- someone who has gone through experiences with the Lord that have brought limitation, and who, instead of trying to break free in order to be “*used*,” has been willing to be imprisoned by Him and has thus learned to find satisfaction in the Lord and nowhere else -- then immediately we become aware of something. Immediately our spiritual senses detect a sweet savor of a Christ-like life. Something has been crushed, something has been broken in that life, and so we sense the odor. The odor that filled the house that day in Bethany still fills the Church today. Mary's fragrance never fades. It didn't take much to break the flask for the Lord --- just a willingness to surrender a precious possession --- but the breaking and the fragrance abides.

We are speaking here of what we *are* --- not of what we *do!* Maybe you have been asking the Lord that He use you in such a way as to convey Himself to others

through you. That prayer is not exactly for some great public gift. It is rather that you might be able, in your contact with others, to impart God, the presence of God, the sense of God. Remember --- (and this is so important to ever keep before us) --- we cannot produce such impressions of God upon others without the breaking of everything, even your most precious possessions, at the feet of the Lord Jesus.

But, when that point is reached, we may – or may not – seem to be much used in an outward way, but God will begin to use us to create a hunger in others. People will “scent” Christ in you.

The least saint in the Body of Christ will detect that. He will sense that here is one who has gone with the Lord, one who has suffered, one who has not moved freely, independently, but who has known what it is to let go of everything for Him.

That kind of life creates impressions --- and impressions create hunger --- and hunger provokes men to go on seeking until they are brought by Divine revelation into fullness of life in Christ.

God does not set us here first of all to work in the “spot light” --- or, even, to do work for Him. The first thing for which He sets us here is to create in others a hunger for Himself. That is, after all, what prepares the soil for successful work in the Master’s vineyard?

If you set a delicious cake in front of two men who have just had a heavy meal and feel stuffed, what will be their reaction? They might talk about it, admire its appearance, discuss the recipe, argue about the cost -- do everything in fact except eat it! But, if they are truly hungry it will not be very long before that cake is gone. And so it is with the things of the Spirit. No true work will ever begin in a life without first of all a sense of need being created. But how can this be done? We cannot inject spiritual appetite by force into others. We cannot compel people to be hungry. Hunger has to be created --- and it can be created in others only by those who carry with them the impressions of God.

Think of the words of that “great woman” of Shunem. Speaking of the prophet, whom she had observed but whom she did not know well, she said, “Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passes by us continually” (2 Kings 4:9). It was not what Elisha said or did that conveyed that impression, but what he was. By his merely “passing by” she could detect something --- she could see something different. What are people sensing about us? We may leave many kinds of impressions. We may leave the impression that we are clever, that we are gifted, that *we* are this or that or the other. But, the impression left by Elisha was an impression of God Himself!

This matter of our imparting God to others rests upon one thing -- *the working of the Cross in us in regard to pleasing the heart of God!* It demands that we seek His pleasure, that we seek to satisfy Him only, and that we do not mind how much it costs us to do so.

There must be a willingness to yield --- a breaking and a pouring out of everything to God -- that gives release to that fragrance of Christ and produces in other lives an awareness of need, drawing them to know the Lord more. This is what is at the heart of the Gospel. The Gospel has as its one object the producing in us sinners of a condition that will satisfy the heart of our God.

In order for God to have that, we come to Him with *all* we have, *all* we are -- even the most cherished things in our spiritual experience -- and we make known to Him, "*Lord, I am willing to let go all of every precious thing in my life for You, not just for Your work, but for Yourself!*"

***Oh, to be wasted!***

It is a blessed thing to be wasted for the Lord. So many who have been prominent in the Christian world know nothing of this. Many have been used to the full -- maybe too much -- but do not know what it means to be wasted on God. Human nature likes to always be "*on the go.*" The Lord sometimes prefers to have us in prison. We think in terms of apostolic journeys, God dares to put his greatest ambassadors in chains.

*"But thanks be unto God, which always leadeth us in triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest through us the savour of his knowledge in every place"* (2 Corinthians 2:14). "*And the house was filled with the odor of the ointment"* (John 12:3). The Lord grant us grace that we may learn how to please Him. When, like Paul, we make this our supreme aim ---- (2 Corinthians 5:9) --- the Gospel will have achieved its end!