



Not I,
But
Christ



By
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COVENANT MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

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Quotations from Scripture are taken from the NASB, NKJV and KJV versions.

This book is a transcription and revision of a teachings series originally given in spoken form.

Part 1: Introduction and Overview

Preface

The purpose of this book is to lay a foundational understanding of Jesus Christ as the life of the believer and all that means for us as Christians. It would be impossible to overstate the importance of knowing Christ as our life – the life of His body. It is the very heart of God’s eternal purpose.

This first chapter is an introduction by way of personal testimony, followed by an overview of all that we are going to be covering. So we will begin by painting with broad strokes, but the following chapters will be more of an in-depth look at the things we will only glance at in this chapter, although I realize that it is still only scratching the surface. We’re going to look at a lot of Scriptures and use many illustrations and analogies in an attempt to make this clear. The final section is my attempt to answer some of the most frequently asked questions.

Let me begin with a bit of personal testimony to set the stage. My hope is that many of you will be able to relate to what I am about to share.

Personal Testimony

I was saved, or born-again, as a teenager and began my own personal journey as a young man trying to live a Christian life. I was absolutely convinced of the truth of the Scriptures and the reality of Christ and His Cross, and I began to try to live my life according to His ways, serving Him with a heart of gratitude for saving me from my innumerable sins.

There was a specific time when I was in college that the Lord really began to awaken me to the reality of eternity, the worthlessness of living for the world or the flesh, and the certainty, magnitude, and permanence of eternal judgment. Seeing these things with a kind of spiritual certainty and inward conviction, I determined to live a life of radical devotion and complete abandon to Christ.

Not knowing exactly what it meant to live for God, I committed myself to a disciplined life to make myself fit for service in His kingdom. And so I began to pour over the Scriptures – often for hours a day. I began fasting regularly, and attempted to pray for a significant amount of time each day. By sheer determination and desperation for God, I managed to maintain this lifestyle for quite a few years.

As far as I could tell at the time, it seemed to be working: I was definitely growing in my knowledge of the Scriptures; fasting became easier; prayer seemed, for the most part, to become more enjoyable. Though there were some really “dead” times in prayer, there were many times when I seemed to really feel and enjoy the presence of the Lord.

On top of that, I had seen the Lord do a number of miraculous things, and had experienced a handful of somewhat unusual and stirring encounters with Him myself over the years. For quite a while all of this really made me feel like I was right on track.

And perhaps some of you are already thinking that I was indeed on the right track. But, if I had been really honest with myself, there was definitely something significantly wrong. Though in some ways I seemed to be “growing” in my relationship with the Lord, whenever I would take an objective look at my life, I would see some glaring problems.

For one, I was plagued with fears. Some of my fears were incredibly intense and irrational and actually came in the form of panic attacks. Some fears were more subtle, and just manifested themselves in insecurities or gnawing anxiety. Praying for countless hours and often fasting for long periods of time, I begged the Lord to free me from this torment, but to no avail.

I also found that I couldn’t seem to make myself love people. I loved the *idea* of loving people. I had heard it called “the second greatest commandment,” and had been told that if I really loved God, I would eventually automatically love people. But I found out that wasn’t really the case. Quite to the contrary, I found myself really loving or liking the people that I liked, and not caring much for the people that I didn’t.

Furthermore, when I was honest, I knew that I was full of pride – especially spiritual pride. It is so easy to couch pride in all kinds of spiritual language, but if I was really honest with myself and the Lord, I knew I was a cesspool of pride and ambition. It manifested its ugly head most in my desire to be exalted in the eyes of man, particularly in the eyes of spiritual leaders. I *hated* that about myself, but no amount of prayer or fasting seemed to be able to rid me of these things.

Sometimes, for various reasons, these struggles seemed to fade a bit into the background...but sooner or later I would be faced with them again. And this was just the tip of the iceberg of what I was seeing in myself. Looking back, I now know it was a God-ordained reality check. Your reality check may be totally different than mine; it may have to do with addiction, condemnation and self-hatred, perversion, inner deadness, burn-out, depression, lack of change, or whatever, but there comes a time when God brings us face to face with ourselves.

I could go on and on and give you the entire shopping list of all of my sins, failures, and struggles, and though that might be interesting, I have probably said enough to get my point across. And that point is simply this - I knew there was something wrong, terribly wrong, and I could not seem to change it even with the most arduous effort. Despite my years of heart-felt seeking, diligent pursuing, and what I felt to be genuine self-surrender, there remained an undeniable lack of genuine, inward transformation.

When I was honest, I knew that what I was living couldn't be the "fullness of life" that Jesus was talking about. Yes, I was sold out. Yes, I was disciplined and zealous compared to some. Yes, I loved Jesus. But there were so many Scriptures that described realities in Christ that simply did not correspond to my experience. The Bible I had become so familiar with spoke of the abundance of life and being filled up to the fullness of God. It said that for me to live is Christ, and that I was dead to sin. I would no longer walk in the lusts of the flesh, but rivers of living water would come out of my innermost being. The yoke I wore would be easy and rest for my soul, etc.

I began to see that I could go on *pretending* that this was really my experience, or I could face the reality that, generally speaking, it was not. I could continue to imagine that my "radical Christianity" produced what these verses described, or I could "fall on the Rock and be broken". It didn't seem to matter how many conferences I went to: I couldn't catch the cure. And no matter how many great leaders I followed or great books I read, something was still wrong. This couldn't be all there was. There had to be more to knowing Christ. There had to be more to new life.

Sometimes it seemed like there was a glimpse of breakthrough in one area, but how disappointing when my breakthroughs were always so short-lived. Through sheer discipline alone, I could often maintain the outward appearance of spiritual life, but I began to see that a truly spiritual life—the life I read about and knew I should have — was something altogether different than mine.

And so...I came to one of the most important crises of my life. I realized that one of three things had to be true:

1. Perhaps the Scriptures weren't true. But I simply couldn't ever believe that. They have proven in innumerable ways to be the infallible, inerrant Word of God.
2. Perhaps I wasn't trying hard enough or pressing in with all of my might. But this is what I had believed for so many years, and no matter how much I increased my diligence, my pursuit, my seeking, my fasting, etc., I never seemed to gain lasting freedom or transformation. Many times already I had assumed that a lack of diligence or "radical devotion" was the key. But it became impossible for me to

believe that adding one more hour of prayer per day, or one more day or week of fasting would do the trick.

3. My only remaining option was that somewhere along the line, I had a foundational misunderstanding—a fundamental flaw—in my comprehension of what the gospel is and how it works.

If it weren't for the Lord bringing me to a state of despair, I would never have even considered number 3. But, because I had tried everything else, and no other option could explain the situation I found myself in, I was forced to evaluate my life in a whole new way. I was beginning to agree with Paul that “in my flesh dwells no good thing,” and with Jesus saying, “The flesh profits nothing”. Because of this despair and some conversations with a Christian brother, I began to come to the Lord like a little child—not presuming I knew anything, but asking Him to reveal to me what was wrong.

The Gospel – The Reality of New Life

My goal for sharing all of this is not to set you up so that I can now say, “Here's the magic formula I discovered that will make you perfect,” or “Here are seven steps I found to take away all of your problems”. My goal in sharing this part of my story is only to help you question whether there might be something missing for you as well, or maybe a wrong comprehension of something extremely important—as important as life itself.

And that is exactly what I discovered within myself. What I came to see is that I had some foundational misunderstandings of the gospel. Now, it took me some months to swallow my pride enough to admit it, but that was exactly the problem. My main problem was that I was doing all that I could to live for Christ, but did not genuinely understand what it meant for Christ to live in and through me.

And that is what I would like to suggest to you: simply that there is an *enormous difference* between living radically for Christ, and Christ Himself living in and through you. Jesus was quite serious when He said, “I am the life,” and that is the only way Paul could say, “It is no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me”.

We are all quite familiar with verses like these, but before we conclude that we all know this already, let me just share quite honestly that thinking I knew it already was my main stumbling block in beginning to know Christ as my life. I cannot emphasize that enough. My familiarity with these Scriptures became a blindfold to me. Claiming that I saw, my blindness remained. Because I knew the theology, the doctrines – I assumed I knew the actual substance, the living experience, the spiritual reality.

In fact, the day my eyes began to be opened to the things that I am about to share, I literally got down on the floor in my bedroom and asked the Lord how all of this could have been hidden from me when I had prayed the prayer of Ephesians 1:17 for years: that He would give me a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the true knowledge of God, that He would open the eyes of my understanding, etc.

The Lord spoke to my heart and said, “Son, in all of your asking, you never once submitted your foundation to Me. You always wanted Me to add on to what you already thought you knew. What I want to show you can never be set on the foundation you have”.

And then two Scriptures popped into my mind:

- John 9:39 – “*And Jesus said, ‘For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see; and that those who see may become blind.’*”
- 1 Corinthians 8:2 – “*If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know*”.

It wasn’t until I was willing to let go of everything, that the Spirit was able to help me begin to comprehend the reality of new life in Christ.

Of course, we are familiar with the gospel as the forgiveness of our sins and the saving of our souls by grace through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross. But after coming to Christ for salvation, I was told to live *my life* for God in the best way I could, with the help of the Holy Spirit.

This is quite familiar language to many of us, but the concept of "living *our* life for God" is actually quite foreign to the gospel that Jesus and the Apostles preached. That might sound as strange to you as it once did to me, but try to suspend judgment until we have looked at a handful of Scriptures.

The apostolic gospel was not simply a gift of forgiveness followed by a self-improvement plan with the help of the Holy Spirit. Rather, it was a *self-replacement* plan—the destruction of one life or nature and its substitution with Another—the life of Christ. As we will be looking at in some depth, the Scriptures unanimously testify that we were crucified with Christ, and He is the risen life of the believer.

Much of the body of Christ has a comprehension of the blood of Jesus releasing them from their sins. But what I didn’t have was an understanding that the cross of Christ released me from *myself*. The cross is more than just the place where Jesus died for the forgiveness of our sins. That is true and wonderful, but the cross is also where we died with Christ so that we could walk in the newness of His resurrected life. Without a

comprehension of the cross severing us from our first birth—our flesh-life, and bringing us into union with the resurrected life of Jesus, we can spend years living *our lives* for God, rather than becoming a vessel of *His Life*.

And this was exactly my problem. The gospel of the New Testament was never simply about an imitation of His life; it is the *impartation* of His life. Christ's work on the Cross has indeed forgiven our sins, but has also caused us to "*become partakers of the divine nature*" (2 Peter 1:4), so that His life could be formed in us (Galatians 4:19) and expressed through us (2 Corinthians 4:10).

Therefore, Paul says:

"I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me". Galatians 2:20

It is not a striving to transform the old man. It is a crucifixion of that old man:

"Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with". Romans 6:6

And it is a forming in our earthen vessel of Someone entirely new:

"...that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God". Ephesians 3:19

"My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you". Galatians 4:19

This is why we are called "a new creation", and are told to put on the "new man".

"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come". 2 Corinthians 5:17

"...lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit...and put on the new self..". Ephesians 4:22

As I have already mentioned, the gospel is not about an imitation of Christ's works, it is the impartation of Christ's life so that His life could have full expression through His body, the church:

"You have "become partakers of the divine nature". 2 Peter 1:4

"For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so

that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh". 2 Corinthians 4:11

It is not about the flesh becoming spiritual - that's impossible:

"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing". John 6:63

"For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh". Romans 7:18

Truly comprehending the finished work of the cross, we can know (Rom 6:6) and reckon (Rom 6:11) the old man dead, and then abide in and live by the Life of Jesus.

"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing". John 15:5

Abiding in Christ is essentially synonymous with "walking in the spirit," i.e. living out of the place of union with Jesus Christ—living in and manifesting the life of Another.

"But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him". 1 Corinthians 6:17

"If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit". Galatians 5:25

And so the New Testament gospel is not really concerned with flesh bearing fruit for God. Even Old Testament prophets testified to this:

"And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment". Isaiah 64:6

Rather, we are brought into participation, or union, with the life of Christ so that God bears fruit through us—just as a branch is merely a living conduit for the sap of the vine. It is the sap that both gives life to the branch, and produces fruit on it.

"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me". John 15:4

"Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God". Romans 7:4

Of course, we are not becoming Jesus! The branch does not become the vine. But it is grafted into a joyful participation with the life of the vine, so that that *one Life* can have expression in and through the many branches.

Christianity is not about many people imitating one Life. Quite the contrary! It is about the expression or manifestation of that one Life through many.

We can know this by looking at our own body. The members of my body exist only to express the one life that lives within it—my life. They are not trying to independently imitate or mimic my life to the best of their knowledge. They are, in fact, the many members expressing the one.

And so, Paul's main concern was not the disciplining of our flesh so that we would act more like Christ:

"Self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, are of no value against fleshly indulgence" Colossians 2:23

Rather, he was laboring in prayer until Christ's actual life was formed in the body:

"My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you".
Galatians 4:19

God calls us "the body of Christ," and thus our eternal purpose is to become a many-membered expression of the Life of Jesus Christ.

The gospel then is the good news that the cross has brought about an exchange of life, wherein we can partake of His life for salvation from sin and death, but also abide in that life, walk in that life, live by that life, and thereby manifest the glorious life of Jesus Christ—and not simply our own.

Please don't misunderstand me. I love the fact that, at the cross, Christ purchased the forgiveness of our sins. Let us never minimize that wonderful gift. But if that is all we know of the cross, and we fail to see our death with Him and His resurrected life in us, then all we can do is live in the powerlessness of the flesh, doing our best to imitate the unique and un-imitatable life of Jesus Christ.

We all know that Christ lives in our heart. That's not a news-flash to any of us. It's generally one of the first things that we learn as Christians. But there is a huge difference between knowing He is there or even experiencing His presence there, and *walking by that life...abiding in that life...becoming an expression of that life.*

Yes, of course Christ lives in you if you're born again. And it's wonderful to feel Him there and experience His presence through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. But as the Lord began to open my eyes, I began to see that walking by that Life and expressing

that Life was something altogether different. As Paul says in Galatians 5:25 “if you live by the Spirit, so too let us walk by the Spirit”.

The Farmer

Lets imagine that you're a farmer and you have a really special apple seed you want to plant. It's from a prize-winning apple tree, and it was very costly to buy. So, you walk out to your field, and you carefully bury this apple seed into the dirt. Now, wouldn't you be absolutely astounded and confused if, after planting this seed into the ground, a tomato plant started growing? Or, even stranger, what if the ground itself started to grow rather than the seed?

That may sound preposterous, but in some ways, that is what we've done to the gospel. Christ's life is that seed. We are the soil. And the Father wants an increase of that life—a harvest of Christ, so to speak. So He plants the very life of His Son, the incorruptible seed, into us. We are called “God's field” in 1 Corinthians 3:9. And what God is expecting is an increase of that seed, unto a full expression of its life. The Father wants a harvest of Christ in and through us.

Now God doesn't just want us to walk around and talk about how we have a seed in us, and how one day we're going to meet the seed face to face. He wants that seed to grow in us, to be formed in us, so that we can literally become the branches through which the life of the seed flows and on which the fruit of the seed grows.

And He certainly doesn't want the dirt rising up and imitating His Seed. The dirt is supposed to be the habitation of the seed. “We have this treasure in earthen vessels.” 2 Corinthians 4:7 Can you imagine how disappointed the farmer would be if the dirt sprouted up and tried to make itself imitate his prize apple tree? That's simply not what the farmer intended. Even if the dirt spent all of its life, energy, and resources trying to imitate the apple tree, it would be a waste of time as far as the farmer is concerned, because apart from the Seed, the soil can do no good thing.

Do you see how this relates to our lives? We are the dirt into which the Father has planted His incorruptible Seed, but so much of the time we spend our energy trying to make our dirt grow, when the dirt is simply the housing for the seed. We receive the spiritual seed by faith, but then we think we have to make growth happen through works of the flesh. And so we try to pull weeds from our dirt and kick rocks out of our dirt. And when that doesn't change anything, we try to make a dirt sculpture that might look something like the apple tree the farmer is looking for.

But God is not after good looking dirt. Isaiah told us this—all of our good looking dirt

is still filthy rags before God (Isaiah 64:6). The harvest that the Father wants is the harvest of His seed.

It reminds me of what Paul says in Galatians 3:3:

“Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?...or did you suffer so many things in vain--if indeed it was in vain”.

The Car

Sometimes different analogies strike people in different ways. Here’s another word picture that demonstrates the same thing.

Let’s pretend you are a car, and you have a gas tank full of water. You’ve tried and tried to get yourself going somewhere with a gas tank full of water, but you can’t seem to move. And while you’re trying and growing frustrated, somebody hands you a car-Bible, and you read about how Jesus came and died so that you could have a new gas tank that actually contains gasoline. You get all excited, and you repent and believe. And now, inside your car, you have a new gas tank totally full of gas.

Now you’re really excited. You have a whole new tank filled to the brim with quality gasoline. But, even though you’ve been given this new tank full of gas, you continue to draw on the tank full of water. You try and try again to drive using that old tank, and you begin to grow frustrated. So you take out your car-Bible and you begin to read about men and women cars who, in the past, really got their cars moving, and they traveled all over the world doing great things for God.

Now you’re even more frustrated. You know something has got to change, so you get out some paint and give yourself a new paint job. That was a little exciting! And then you tune up your engine and change your spark plugs. And then you add a spoiler, and some fuzzy dice, some leopard-skin seat covers—maybe some neon—and pretty soon you’re looking really sharp. There is a temporary excitement and feeling of accomplishment until you realize that you still haven’t moved one inch.

Both of these analogies illustrate a lack of understanding of the gospel. We have been given an entirely new life. The purpose of that life is not a ticket to go some place after we die. It was not given that we would simply feel it occasionally when we pray, or occasionally have a spiritual experience wherein we taste something about that life. These can all be good things and have their place, but we’re missing the point if Christ’s life is not being formed in us so that we become expressions of it in the world. We’re missing the point if we’re not abiding in His life—living in and by the life of Another.

The Father is after an increase of Christ. He has planted His Seed for a harvest of *that kind*. As long as we misunderstand this eternal purpose and seek rather to imitate or live for the Seed with the power of the dirt, we will miss the heart and reality of the gospel.

Part 2: The Eternal Purpose

Now that we have a broad overview of our topic, let's dive a little deeper by looking at God's eternal purpose. If we are confused about God's ultimate purpose for creation, then we will inevitably be confused about our role in that purpose. In other words, if we begin with the wrong presuppositions, we will certainly come to the wrong conclusions.

The best place to begin seeing the eternal purpose of God is right back in the garden of Eden. But before we begin to look at that story, let's make sure that we're familiar with Romans 5:14, which tells us that "Adam is a *type* of Him to come," a type of Christ.

For those who are not familiar with this word, a "type" is a divinely intended figure, or foreshadow—a preview of something that is true of Christ, or true in Christ, or true of us in relation to Christ. There are innumerable "types and shadows" in Scripture—things, people, institutions, or places that purposely point us to the true substance in Christ. (e.g. the Old Covenant sacrifices are a "type" of the cross, Solomon is a "type" of Jesus reigning as King, etc.) In fact, the entire Old Testament exists for this purpose.

Paul the Apostle teaches us that Adam, in some ways, "typifies" or pre-figures Jesus Christ. And we know this, not just from this verse, but from a handful of explicit and implicit references to this fact. For instance, in Ephesians 5, Paul is talking about the joining between Adam and Eve and then goes on to say "this is a great mystery, but I'm actually talking about Christ and the church".

So when we look at Adam, we can see a shadow of Christ. It may not be a clear view of Him, but we can see some things that are true of Jesus. If you were to look at my shadow on the wall, you could learn some things about me. You might be able to see my general shape, my movements, maybe a rough idea of my size. And though you hadn't seen my body, my substance, you could understand certain things that were true of me by this shadow. It is the same way with Adam as the "shadow" of Christ. You can see something of Christ by looking at innumerable shadows in the Old Testament.

Joh 5:39 You search the Scriptures, for you think in them you have everlasting life. And they are the ones witnessing concerning Me. 40 And you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

Luk 24:27 And beginning from Moses, and from all the prophets, He explained to them the things about Himself in all the Scriptures.

So what can we see of Christ when we look to Adam in the garden? Well, back in Genesis 1, God began creating things—each according to **their own kind**. He created plants and animals and fish, and made them in such a way that they would all be able to reproduce their own image and likeness. Everything was made and placed on the earth with one intention: that it would bring an increase of its own kind—in other words, that the kind would bring forth a harvest of itself.

Then God created Adam, the first man, and set him in the garden. But man did not have a kind like himself. And so in Genesis 2:18 and 20, we read that it was “not good for man to be alone,” that is, for man not to have a kind like himself, “and a suitable partner for Adam could not be found in all of creation”. What we see here is that Adam had no way of bringing about an increase of his kind on the earth. There was no way to fill the earth with the “kind” that Adam was. There was no provision for the increase of this man. (Now keep in mind that Adam was a “type” of Christ.)

So in Genesis 2:21 we read how God did something to solve this problem. God put Adam to sleep, pierced his side to pull out a rib (something of the life of this man, something near to his heart) and made for Adam, from the very life and substance of Adam, one of the same *kind*. Out of Adam, came one of the same kind as Adam. And Adam said to her “you are bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, for you were taken out of me”.

And we read a little bit later in Genesis 5:2, that in the day that God created the two of them he called them *both* Adam. It was Adam that called the woman Eve. God called them both Adam. He called them by one name, because they were flesh of flesh and bone of bone. And now through this bride Adam could bring forth an increase of His kind in the earth.

I think that from this we can see the “type” and shadow of God’s ultimate intention quite clearly. We’ve already established that Adam is a type of Christ. And, as Paul teaches, this narrative (though literal and historical) is also a foreshadowing of Christ and His bride. And so we can really begin to understand that it was Christ who wanted to bring forth an increase of His kind and did not have a suitable partner. All of this points to God desiring to bring forth an increase of Christ—a greater manifestation and expression of His only begotten Son.

And what we can see from all of this is simply that the Father desires an increase of Christ—a harvest of Christ, if you will. And though He knew that in the natural creation there would be none suitable to bring forth this increase, He purposed an eternal plan, before the foundation of the world, to impart His life to a creation, in order for that kind to bring forth an increased expression or manifestation of the one glorious Son of God. Not, of course, that we become Christ, or become little gods. That is

heresy. But rather that we become vessels or conduits of expression for that one glorious Son.

And that is God's plan for our life. That is His eternal purpose—that we would have Christ formed in us (Galatians 4:19)—that we “would attain to the full stature of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13). As we said in the first session, the Father is looking for a harvest of His Incorruptible Seed through us, the soil. (1 Corinthians 3:9)

And so, in fulfillment of this type in the garden of Eden, God takes His Son, pierces His side, puts Him to death, and takes His very life and imparts it into us. And He says “bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh”. And He calls *us* the body of Christ, just as He called both Eve and Adam by one name. He calls us one body with Christ. He calls us sons of God. He sees us together with Christ. He sees us joined to him in union. He calls us partakers of the divine nature.* He calls us the wife of the Lamb.

There are many today who talk about the Bride of Christ and how she is loved by the Bridegroom. That is great, but what is often missed is how that bride comes forth, and what is her *kind*. And if you fail to comprehend her kind—how she came forth, of what seed she is—you will miss the nature of the relationship, and you will miss the cross. Out of Adam, from his very life, came the partner. *His* life was used to make her. *His* life dwelled within her. She was his kind because she shared his life. The two were bone of bone and flesh of flesh. That is what this story shows us. The bride would partake of his life, and thereby bring forth the increase of his kind.

Once you begin to see this eternal purpose, you will begin to see it on every page of the Old and New Testaments. It is demonstrated in types and shadows, testified to by the Law and prophets, and boldly proclaimed by the Apostles.

Just as Paul does in Ephesians 1:

*“Just as He chose us **in Him** before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love, He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will”.*
Ephesians 1:4

It is my opinion that men have misunderstood this verse to be talking about a predestined choice. Whatever you want to believe about predestination is up to you, but this verse is not referring to a predestined choice. It is referring to a predestined plan to have a people *in Christ*. It is a predestined place to have an inheritance. God chose, before the foundation of the world, to have a people sharing the life of His Son, filled with the life of His Son, expressing the life of His Son.

He predestined an adoption whereby we could receive Jesus' life (John 6) and become Sons by sharing that life. We were not adopted through our own life; we were adopted by receiving the eternal life of the Son. And *this* was predestined and appointed before the earth was ever created. All that God would have, He has in His Son. All that God desires is to bring you and I into the life of Jesus Christ, so that we can bring forth an increase of that one glorious life in the earth. The only life that is acceptable to God is the life of Jesus Christ. And God's eternal plan is to make you a partaker and an expression of that life.

Of course, you have to say yes to accept that predestined plan. You have to choose to receive this fore-ordained place to live—in His Son. But it was decided before the foundation of the world that God would have a people dwelling in Christ—sharing His life, displaying that life in the earth.

This is what Paul is talking about in Ephesians 4:

“He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things”. Ephesians 4:10

There is the goal of God—to give His life to a people, in order for that life to be formed in them and expressed through them—that Christ might fill all things, not that we might try to imitate Christ in all things. God desires a lot more than your imitation. Heaven forbid! The Father wants His Son's life to fill all things so that there can be a harvest in the earth of His Kind. And so, like with Eve, He formed a bride out of the Son of Man in order to make provision for the increase of that kind. This is what we see in the Genesis pattern.

God desires far more than just a bride that is forgiven of her failures. Praise God He does forgive us, but it is for an eternal purpose to have an increase of Christ, a harvest of the Seed.

And now if you look at John 12:24, you can understand what Jesus means when He begins to talk about the planting of a seed. In the Garden of Eden, God looked at the seed of Adam and said “it is not good that this seed remains alone”. Now, in John 12, Jesus tells His disciples “it is not good for this Seed to remain alone”.

He tells his disciples that this one Seed is going into the earth (death, burial) and it will die. But when it comes forth from the earth (resurrection), it will bring forth a harvest of the same kind—the one seed bringing forth many of the same kind—the one Seed coming forth into an even greater expression.

Incidentally, that is what a harvest is. The harvest is not the increase of soil. Soil is required for a harvest, but the goal is a greater return of the seed.

Anyone that has done a little gardening knows that when you plant a single seed, you get a harvest of that one seed. You don't get a harvest from a bunch of different seeds; you get many branches, leaves, fruits, etc. that came from and carry the very life of the one seed. If you plant a corn seed, you can bet that you're not going to get squash. You are going to get a full expression of the life in that one seed through many ears of corn.

God planted His glorious Seed, the Lord Jesus Christ, into the earth. And you can bet that He wants a harvest of that Seed, and not a bunch of squash trying to look like corn.

The Fall of Man

In the previous section, we looked at God's eternal purpose for creation. Now I want to take a fresh look at the fall of man.

We are all aware that Adam and Eve sinned and that their transgression had great effects. But, before we go any further, it is essential to understand that in no way did the fall of man change God's eternal purpose.

The impartation and increased manifestation of Christ's life was not a back-up plan to the original. In fact, as we saw, the eternal purpose of God was demonstrated through Adam and Eve *before* sin entered the world. The cross became the means to that end, but the goal never changed. God never made a plan B. He had one eternal purpose from before the foundation of the world. I suppose that is why Jesus is spoken of as the "lamb slain before the foundation of the world".

Though the fall of man did not change God's plan, it did make quite a mess. Everybody knows that Adam and Eve fell and sinned in the garden, but it is so crucial to understand the nature of the choice they were given.

Many people speak of the choice Adam was given as merely a test of obedience—as if God were saying "Adam, I've given you a lot of neat games to play with here, but just don't play Monopoly or I'll punish you! We'll see if you're willing to obey me". Well, though obedience is certainly an issue here, there is much more to this choice than just abstaining from Monopoly.

God gave Adam and Eve a choice between *two ways of living*. Man could live by the tree of life. In other words, man could live by the life of another, become a vessel of expression for the life of God (and of course, Jesus is the tree of life). Or, man could

live by the knowledge of good and evil. In other words, man could live by what he knew (or thought he knew) was good and bad, and worthy and unworthy, etc. Do you see that distinction? One is living by the life of another, so that you experience and express the spiritual life of God. The other is living out of your soul, so that you do what you think is good or evil in every circumstance. That's the choice that Adam had—the tree of life versus the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

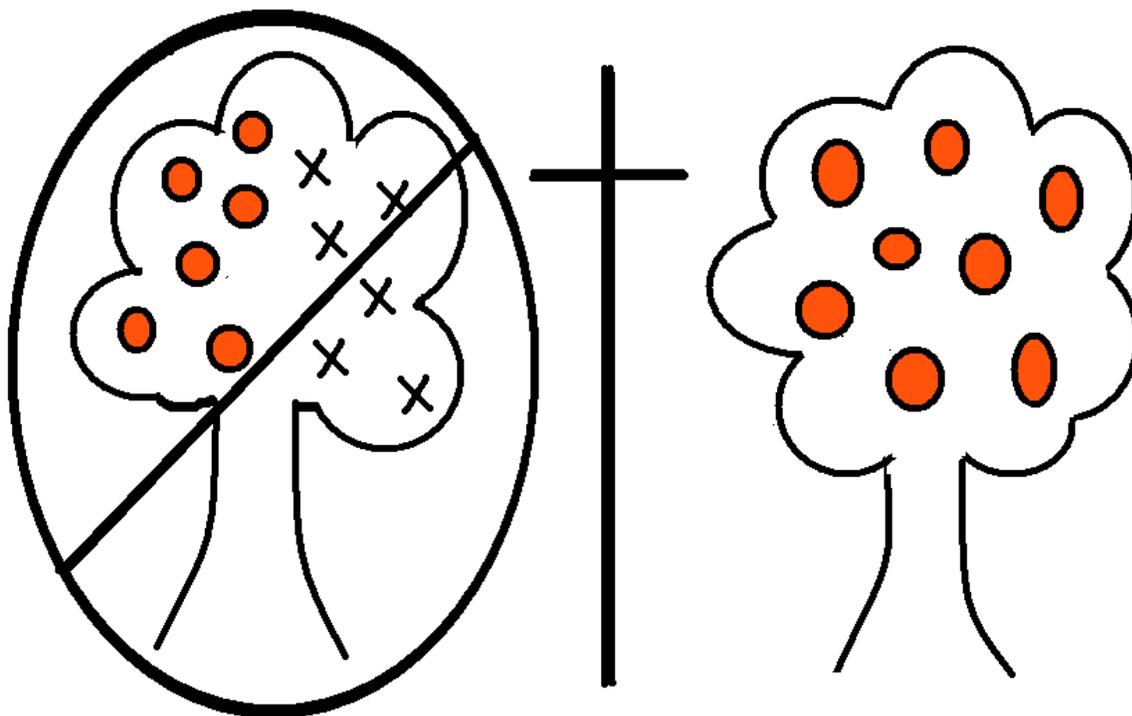
And so Adam's choice was not just a transgression. It was that, of course. But it was also a choice to "be like God" in the sense that Adam became his own boss. Adam lived by his own judgments. Adam lived according to his knowledge. Adam turned down the offer of life. And so he came to understand something he was never supposed to know. He came to understand that He could live independently of God based on what he "knew" to be good and evil.

And frankly, all religion is simply eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. All religion, every religion of the world, is just men and women living according to what they think is good or evil, with themselves as their own source. And, of course, every religion is simply an attempt to "be like God" without the impartation of the life of God just by doing this or not doing that. To whatever extent Christianity is like that to us, it is no different than any other religion. Christianity is dead religion without the impartation and expression of Christ's life.

Adam found out too late that the problem with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is not the bad fruit: it is the entire tree. The problem is that both the good *and* bad fruit are *not* the tree of life. If you knock all the evil fruit off that tree and throw it away, and have nothing left but the good fruit, you still have the wrong tree. It is man's tree, man's way, and man's knowledge of good and evil. That is why John the Baptist says that Christ came to lay the axe to the root of that tree, because He was about to graft us into the tree of life. But that is for another time.

Tree of Good and Evil ~ THE WRONG TREE

The Tree of Life



So Adam never ate from the tree of Life. And after the fall, Adam reproduced after His own kind and after his own image (Genesis 5:3). All that Adam could reproduce was Adam. He reproduced his own kind—the kind and nature of Adam. And so, rather than becoming living vessels of the life of God, Adam (the kind) filled the earth with a sinful race who lived as their own source. This is called the doctrine of original sin, but it seems to be often misunderstood by the body of Christ.

Some people have a hard time with this doctrine because it doesn't seem fair to the carnal mind. They say, "Why should I be punished for Adam's sin?" Well, it's not really that you are being punished for Adam's fruit-picking transgression. It is simply that you are of the same likeness and image of Adam. You are Adam, by nature. Adam reproduced after his kind, and you are that reproduction. Let's think about it:

The only thing an apple tree can reproduce is apples, right? Everything reproduces after its own kind. Even if an apple tree produces 10,000 apple seeds, each seed is the same kind as the mother tree. Not one of them is a cherry seed. Not one of them is a cucumber. And even if those new trees produce seeds of their own, each of their seeds is the same kind as the mother tree. Even if an apple tree *never produces* a single apple, it is still an apple tree. Even if you never transgress like Adam did, you are still only Adam (Romans 5:14). So it's not so much that you are being punished for Adam's fruit-picking transgression. It's simply that you are of Adam. You are of His nature, a

fallen nature—a soulish sinner. It’s a nature issue here, not God getting vengeance for Adam’s big mistake.

So Adam reproduced Adam, and Adam filled the earth. (And, just in case you didn’t know, “Adam” is the Hebrew word for “man”.) And very quickly the earth gets a good look at what Adam (man), the kind, the nature, looks like when he is living by his own knowledge of good and evil, doing what is right in his own eyes. In Genesis 6:5, God says, “Every intent of the thoughts of man’s heart was only evil continually”. That’s quite an indictment! But that’s Adam for you. And frankly, though you can try to cover Adam up with a bunch of religion (which is really just an attempt to keep Adam in check) you cannot disguise his nature to God. That is why Isaiah tells us that all of Adam’s righteousness is as filthy rags before God.

Adam is Adam. And I don’t care what costume (fig leaf?) or perfume you put on Adam, you still have something after the image of its forefather who refused to live by the tree of life and chose to “be like God,” living from himself according to what he thought was good and evil.

And that nature cannot be covered or hidden. It must be replaced by another nature—the nature of Christ. We’ll get to that, but while we’re talking about Adam it is interesting to see that the first thing he did when he saw himself clearly was to cover himself with something from the earth. God, knowing that wouldn’t do, replaced his fig leaf garment with a garment of animal skin—which was the very first demonstration (in type and shadow) that blood would be shed, and another life would be used to clothe Adam’s kind.

So God knew that Adam, the nature, had to be destroyed if He was ever going to bring forth an increase of His Son’s kind. The seed of Adam could never be a habitation of God to bring forth a harvest of Christ. And Genesis 6 tells us that God desired to wipe man off the planet.

Part 3: Understanding Abraham and Moses

God's Dealing with Abraham

Now let's move on, but as we do, let's always keep in mind the purpose of God for creation. As we saw in Adam and Eve, God desires that the life of His One Son be given, formed, and expressed through a people that would come to be "the wife of the Lamb." (Revelation 19:7) The creation of Eve in Genesis chapter 2 points to a true eternal "companion" that would be for the exhibition of His glory and the increased expression of His Seed. God's eternal will has to do with a union whereby a people would be "built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit." (Ephesians 2:22)

Now the real problem with the fall of humanity is that His eternal purpose could not be achieved. In our fallen state, God could not accomplish His desire to have an increase of Christ through the giving of His life. There could be no mixing of these seeds—the Seed of God (Christ) and the seed of Adam. God could not be joined to something of a different kind—really of an *opposite* kind. There could be no blending of the clean and the unclean. Or as Paul would later say, "What fellowship does light have with darkness?" And if you'll remember from the garden story, after Adam's choice, that kind was driven out from the presence of God, and a flaming sword (a type of the cross) guarded the way to the tree of life (Genesis 3:24).

Humanity desperately needed somehow to get out of this horrible Adamic situation. They were dead *in* sin, but somehow needed to become dead *to* sin. And, more importantly, God desired the removal of this cursed situation so that He could establish His ultimate intention for mankind.

But, for all appearances, the achieving of this plan was impossible. We were simply the wrong kind. We were all Adam by nature, and we could only reproduce according to our kind.

So, very early on, hundreds of years before Moses, God began to show the solution to this problem to a man named Abraham. The story of Abraham might be quite familiar to you, but let me just invite you to take a fresh look at it.

God began to reveal to Abraham the "good news". God spoke to him about a Seed (Christ), a single descendent, that was coming—a Seed unlike the seed of Adam. And God demonstrated the gospel of this coming Seed to Abraham through type and shadow. And you might be thinking, "Wait, didn't Jesus come long after Abraham's day?". Well, that's true. But, as you'll see, God began to speak to Abraham, in types

and shadows, about some incredible promises and blessings that would be fulfilled in Christ—the coming Seed.

The Gospel of the Seed Preached to Abraham

- He told Abraham that through this one Seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed somehow through this Seed. (Genesis 22:18)
- And that somehow there would be a great increase of this Seed...like the stars in the sky, or the sand on the seashore. (Genesis 22:17)
- He told Abraham that the Seed would possess the gates of all of His enemies. (Genesis 22:17)
- God promised that He would establish an everlasting covenant between Himself and the Seed, throughout all generations, and that through that covenant there would be a great inheritance, and an everlasting possession. (Genesis 17:7-9)
- God taught Abraham that the people of the Seed would be a people that received the blessing based on promise – a work of the Spirit and not the works of flesh – because when Abraham tried to bring about the Seed through his works he got Ishmael. But when he trusted in the Lord, he got Isaac, the one “through whom the Seed would come”. (Genesis 17:19)
- He showed Abraham types and shadows of the fact that this Seed would bring life from death, because the line of the Seed came forth from the dead womb of his wife Sarah. (and then Rebecca and Rachel)
- He showed Abraham that this promise through the Seed would be by way of a sacrifice of the Seed—for he told Abraham to sacrifice his only son in whose loins was the Seed (and all the promises regarding the Seed). And for 3 days and nights the Seed was as good as dead in the heart of Abraham as he journeyed to that mountain to kill his son (Genesis 22:4). But God gave Isaac back to him after 3 days, and replaced him with a ram. And in this we see something of the resurrection.

These are only a few of the truths that God began to reveal to Abraham about His great promise. But it’s enough to see that Abraham came to see the gospel of the Seed in type and shadow. He didn’t understand the exact “manner or time period” (1 Peter 1:11) of these promises, but he understood something of their nature and substance. He understood something of the day of Christ’s coming, His death, and His resurrection.

Though incompletely, he saw these things from afar—and he believed. Jesus speaks with direct reference to this in John 8:56, saying, “*Abraham rejoiced to see my day, he saw it, and was glad*”.

So what did Abraham do? He saw by faith (a spiritual seeing in response to what was revealed) all that God had promised about the Seed. He saw by faith that all that God had promised was sure. And God reckoned it to him as righteousness:

“Then he (Abraham) believed in the Lord, and He reckoned it to him as righteousness”. Genesis 15:6

Now here is something so important, yet so often missed. It is because Abraham saw something by faith, came to know it with certainty, and trusted what was revealed as more real than what could be seen that God credited to him something that was not of his kind. God credited to Abraham a righteousness that belonged to Another. God qualified him through the credentials of Christ. God credited to him the righteousness of the coming Seed.

How was righteousness credited to the first Jew? By faith in the promises regarding the Seed. Faith saw One coming. Faith looked to One who was not of Adam’s fallen kind. And so, Abraham was credited with a righteousness not his own...not based on his own nature...not based on his own works or merits...not based on obeying any law (the Law had not even been given). Abraham began to relate to God by faith, and God, through this faith, credited him with the righteousness of Another. But this right standing, this relationship, this covenant, came by way of faith in the promised Seed. It is so essential that we see this, or we won’t understand the Law that comes 430 years later.

The Purpose For The law

If you know a little of the history of the Jews, you know that the descendents of Abraham end up living in Egypt for 400 years and multiplying greatly. In fact, they become so numerous that the Egyptians fear them and make them slaves. The Lord raises up Moses and delivers them from the bondage of slavery in Egypt and brings them out of the land with many mighty miracles.

Most of you know the story of the exodus, so we won’t spend time there, but what is important to see is that, for 400+ years, the descendents of Abraham (the Jews) were living without the Law. In fact, no Scripture had been written at this time. They knew only of God’s dealings with their father Abraham. Well, what happened?

As Moses leads the people out of the wilderness, we see very quickly that these people are not like their father Abraham. They are *unbelieving* and *faithless*. They are stiff-necked, strong-willed people that grumble and complain. And even though they see miracle after miracle, they do not put faith in their God and in His promises. On the contrary, they make for themselves gods that they can *see and touch*, and would rather go back into slavery in Egypt than trust in the promises of an unseen God.

So God says to them something like this: “Ok, you reject my covenant with Abraham, the covenant of faith in the Seed. You reject believing in the promises of a God that has proven Himself in many ways to be good and loving. You have rejected faith in the Seed that could have granted you a righteousness that your father Abraham knew. You’ve rejected the righteousness of the Seed that I would have reckoned to you by faith. You’ve forsaken that kind of relationship with Me because you have rejected faith. And so...since you will not relate to me in righteousness, by the faith of Abraham, *I will require righteousness from you*. I will put you under my Law. *Since you will not allow me to credit my Son’s righteousness to you, I will demand it from you*. And here’s what it looks like!”

“HERE! Here are my righteous commandments. Here is My Law. Here is the righteousness I demand of you if you refuse to walk in faith. Go ahead and try to live by the knowledge of this Law. In other words, go ahead and try to live again by the knowledge of good and evil, and see where it leads you. *It will lead you to condemnation!* It will show you that you need a righteousness that is not of your own, because *“cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law, to perform them.”* (Deuteronomy 27:2)

Prior to this, if you’ll remember, God had a conversation with Moses. Essentially, God said “Moses, they are not relating to me by the faith of Abraham. I’ll just wipe them all out and start over with you”. And Moses says, “Let it not be, for the sake of your fame in the earth, you can’t do it. You just brought them out of Egypt by a mighty outstretched arm”. And then God says to him, “Well then, I’m going to have to put them under the law, both to maintain a testimony of my Son (which we will cover later) and also to reveal to them that they need His righteousness by faith. They must see that in their flesh dwells no good thing. They must see that they have nothing to bring to the table except what my Seed, my Son, will be made unto them”.

And here we see why the Law was given. *The Law was never given as a means for humans to really become righteous*. Hypothetically, if a human were to perfectly obey it, he would be righteousness. Paul mentions that in Romans. But, over and over again we learn from Scripture (and experience), that the Adamic man cannot keep the Law. Paul says *“by the works of the Law NO flesh will be justified.”* (Romans 3:20)

And that is why he tells us that “*the Law is a ministry of condemnation, and a ministry of death*” (2 Corinthians 3:7,9). The Law was like God’s description of His own nature. On the one hand, it established a testimony of the glory and righteousness to come in Christ, and on the other hand, it exposed the indisputable fact that man fell infinitely short of that righteousness. Thus, the Law condemns man’s attempts to live as righteous before God. The Law exposes our need for a righteousness that is granted based on faith. It was divinely intended to condemn our efforts to live under it in the flesh, to live by the knowledge of good and evil. *Man could live according to what he thought was good and evil. But he could never live according to what God thought was good and evil – because what God thinks is good is Christ, and what is evil is Adam. The Law was given to prove that.*

That is why Paul tells us that “*the Law was added so that transgression would increase.*” (Romans 5:20) The Law was like shining a flashlight on Adam. It exposed the nature of sin in Adam and caused *sin* to manifest itself as many individual *sins*. The Law was given because man would not walk by faith. They were in Adam—bound by that nature—but would not acknowledge it, nor turn to God in faith, in order to relate to God as their father Abraham did. And so the Law was given, both to keep them as a testimony of the coming Seed, and to expose what they were by nature. In other words, it was given so that sin (the nature) could be clearly seen through individual transgressions. It was the righteous standard of God put up next to the hopeless condition of Adam. And it condemned Adam to death.

God did not give the Israelites the Mosaic Law as a means of securing true righteousness. As we mentioned, Paul tells us that “*by works of the Law NO flesh will be justified.*” (Romans 3:20) The Jews of Jesus’ day had completely turned the Law into a cause for boasting, rather than a cause for needing Christ. They had misunderstood its intention. It was given because their hearts were hard and would not relate to God by faith. You can see this demonstrated in what Jesus said to the Jews with respect to marriage: “*Moses told you to give a certificate of divorce because your hearts were hard, but it was not that way from the beginning*”. The whole Law was like that. The Law dealt with them according to the hardness of their hearts. But God would rather have dealt with them according to faith in the Seed.

The Jews of Jesus’ day attempted to turn the Law into a righteousness of their own. Paul refers to this in Romans 10:2 – how his zealous Jewish countrymen had refused to submit to God’s righteousness and tried to establish their own. Jesus actually tried to convince them that they weren’t really keeping it. He tried to show them that they could never keep it. He said to them “you have heard, do not murder, but I tell you that hating your brother is murder. You have heard don’t commit adultery, but lusting after your neighbor is adultery”.

Let's look at what the New Testament teaches us about the Law. And let's start with Galatians 3. (This is also taught in Romans.)

Galatians 3:19 *"Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator (Moses) UNTIL THE SEED WOULD COME TO WHOM THE PROMISE HAD BEEN MADE"*.

Galatians 3:21 *"...For if a law had been given which was able to **impart life** then righteousness would indeed have been based on Law. But the Scriptures (the written Law) has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe"*.

Galatians 3:24 *"...Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ"*.

Do you see it? The Law was added only because of the people's transgression. They did not receive the righteousness based on faith, and were themselves wicked by nature. So God used the Law to maintain His testimony in Israel and also demonstrate to them *their need for the righteousness of His seed*. He used the Law to "shut up everyone under sin" (Romans 3:22) so that they would see their need for the promise to be received by faith.

That is how the Law has become a tutor to lead us to Christ. The Law given to Moses pointed a rebellious people to their need of a righteousness that was not of themselves. It pointed them to another kind—another Seed.

What was God's purpose in all of this? What was God always longing to do? Go back to Galatians 3:21 to see God's eternal purpose here: *"If a law had been given which was able to **impart life**.."*! There it is. *It has always been God's desire to have a body in the earth that would be the exhibition of His Son, an increase of His kind, a harvest of His Seed. And so He desired to impart His life in us for the purpose of union.* That is all God has ever wanted from humanity—to dwell in their midst, to have a habitation, a new creation in which He could dwell. And we are that new creation.

So the Law was never something that the Jews were supposed to carry around and use to boast in their own righteousness or their own obedience. Those who did this totally missed the intent of the Law. This is one of the reasons Jesus spoke such condemnation over the Pharisees and Sadducees in His day. They were boasting in the Law—the very thing that was condemning them.

That is why Jesus says in John 5:45, *"Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope"*. And in

John 7:19, *"Did not Moses give you the Law, and {yet} none of you carries out the Law? Why do you seek to kill Me?"*

In other words, "You're setting your hope in the Law, and the very thing you hope in is condemning you, because you are failing to live according to it. I have come as the promised Seed—the Seed promised to Abraham, the Seed promised to Adam in the garden that would crush the head of the serpent".

Jesus had harsh words for these Jews because they were rejecting faith in the Seed yet another time. The descendants of Abraham rejected it when they came out from Egypt, and God put them under the Law. Then the Seed walked right into their streets and offered them a righteousness based on faith, and they continued their rejection, claiming a righteousness of their own through the Law. No wonder Jesus wept over Jerusalem saying, "How long I have wanted to gather you up, but you would not have it" (Luke 13:34).

The Law Demonstrates the Need for Our Death

The Law could never bring life. It was meant to bring condemnation. What God was really showing forth through the Law was the need for Adam, that fallen kind, to be *brought into the grave*. He was demonstrating the need for our death. The Mosaic Law lifted up a righteous standard next to the law of sin and death in Adam, and exposed the hopelessness of our condition. The Law described God's righteousness, and then compared us to it. The result was that the Law showed us for what we were and condemned us to death.

And that is why the New Testament is always making statements like these:

- *"The Law came in so that the transgression would increase"*. Romans 5:20
- *"I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET". 8 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead"*. Romans 7:7
- *"For while we were in the flesh, **the sinful passions, which were {aroused} by the Law**, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death"*. Romans 7:5
- *"Because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; **for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin"***. Romans 3:20

- *The Law is “a ministry of death” and “a ministry of condemnation”*. 2 Corinthians 3:7,9

Again, the Law was meant to demonstrate to us that we needed God to bring Adam into the grave and start a whole new creation in Christ—not just a new start with Adam, but a new nature, a new life altogether.

Adam is not repairable. Adam can not be patched. There is nothing of the old that can pass over into the new. We are going to be looking at the cross so we can understand how the Lord accomplished this, but for now we are simply trying to establish the need for our death—the need for Adam to be put away.

We’ll talk at length about how the death was accomplished, but what we need to do right now is establish that the Law judged and condemned every human’s attempt to live righteously before God. If we don’t establish this, then we will continue to try to bring to God something from ourselves that is acceptable to Him besides Christ: we will continue to try to offer to God the offering of Cain.

Way back in the beginning of Genesis, God demonstrated this in type and shadow. Both Cain and Able gave an offering to God. Cain’s sacrifice was the best of the earth, the fruit of his labors. God rejected it. Abel’s offering was the life of the sacrifice. And God accepted it.

Brothers and sisters, if we don’t learn this valuable lesson—that the Law condemned Adam—then we will forever be bringing to God the best of the earth, the fruit of our labors, when all that He wants is the manifest life of His Sacrifice.

You see, the gospel is not simply a forgiveness granted by God and then a patch job. It is not forgiving Adam and then trying to fix him up. No, Adam was condemned by the Law. There is this silly thing we teach in the church that we are supposed to try to live good lives for God out of gratitude for being forgiven. Pardon my frankness, but that is complete nonsense. It is not nonsense that we should have gratitude, but it is nonsense that gratitude will somehow empower you to live acceptably before God, as if somehow gratitude is going to stop Adam from acting like Adam.

No, Adam is not “patched up and put back in the game”. Adam must be crucified, and we must walk in the newness of Christ’s life. We must bring forth the actual nature of the Lamb if there is going to be a harvest of the Seed, if there is going to be anything acceptable before the Father. You cannot serve God in the flesh. The Law proved that. And if you are living in the flesh as a Christian, I can promise you that you are experiencing one of two things: condemnation, frustration, and failure, or pride, self-righteousness, and ambition. That is all the tree of the knowledge of good and evil can

produce: your own good—and pride with it, or your own evil—accompanied by condemnation. Neither of these is Christ’s life.

The only thing acceptable to God is Christ. There is nothing in Christ or from Christ that is not acceptable to God, and there is nothing out of Christ that is acceptable to God. The only thing that God accepts in you is the increased expression of His life in your soul: Christ formed in you.

Jesus tells us that “a good tree cannot produce bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot produce good fruit”. (Matthew 7:18) Friends, Adam is a bad tree. Adam can only bring forth the fruit of His kind. Granted, some of the fruit of that tree looks like it is good (to the carnal mind), and some like it is evil, just like the tree in the garden. But God would say that all of Adam’s good fruit is filthy rags. It’s simply the wrong tree.

Christ is a good tree. He is the only acceptable tree to the Father. And as Romans 11 tells us, God has grafted you into that tree so that you could bear the fruit of *that tree*—the life of *that* tree.

You cannot patch Adam. The Law proved to us that Adam needed to go into the grave. It was not supposed to give Christians (just like the Pharisees of old) a sense of self-righteousness by thinking that we’re doing pretty well living for Jesus.

Brothers and sisters, the gospel isn’t about Adam living for Jesus. It is about Adam coming to an end, so that Christ can be formed and expressed in you. I know there is a lot of talk out there about “what would Jesus do” in this situation or that. But, this thing just is not about trying to make Adam **behave** like Jesus. It is an entirely different nature altogether. It is an entirely different life. When that life is formed in you, you don’t have to try to figure out “what Jesus would do”. You will simply manifest the One who has become your life in every situation. You become the fragrance of Christ in every place. (2 Corinthians 2:14)

A long time ago, the Holy Spirit told us about this. In Ezekiel 36 he says:

"Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. Ezekiel 36:26

It does not say that He is going to fix up your old heart. It does not say that He is going to empower your old heart with gratitude. No, He is going to remove that old thing, because it is condemned, and He’s going to give you a new heart, a new spirit. And

when you walk by that new spirit, you certainly will be careful to walk in His statutes. But we'll get to that in the next section.

For now, let us just see that God established the Law to expose and judge Adam, so that we might agree with Jesus saying, *"the flesh profits nothing"*. (John 6:63) Or with what Paul says *"in my flesh dwells no good thing"*. (Romans 7:18)

In fact, if you read through Romans 3, you will see Paul bringing together quite a variety of quotations from the Old Testament (from Psalms and Prophets) trying to establish this very thing. He puts together quite a stinging indictment of Adam:

"As it is written, 'There is none righteous, not even one; There is none who understands, there is none that seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one. Their throat is an open grave, with their tongues they keep deceiving, the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their paths, and the path of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.' Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law {comes} the knowledge of sin". Romans 3:10-18

Friends, the whole world of Adam needed to be destroyed, like the earth was destroyed in the days of Noah. There needed to be a wiping out and a starting over with one new man—one new family, beginning with the Firstborn from among the dead.

The Otherness of Christ

In summary, the Law functioned to expose the nature of Adam for what it really was. The Law took the nature of sin and raised up a righteous standard against it, causing it to manifest as many individual transgressions. And that brought us to a place where we saw the need for our death. The Law judged Adam and condemned him to death.

And if the Law has really done its work in us, then what it really reveals is the "otherness of Christ". In a sentence, the Law functions to convince us of the "otherness" of Jesus Christ. What do I mean by that? I mean that the Holy Spirit is always trying to cause us to see that Christ is, by nature, something entirely different, contrary, and "other" than what we are by nature.

This may seem very obvious to someone at first glance, but the way I lived my life for many years proves that I didn't really believe it. You see, until we truly come face to face with the reality that the Father is looking for something from us that we could never produce, we will always try to produce it, or imitate it in the flesh.

But Christ is something entirely different than man. His nature, His life, His character, is not "imitable". It cannot be *copied by man*. It can only be *formed in man*. Man can only be a vessel and never a source for this Life. It simply cannot be reproduced. It is the one and only of its kind.

The will of man is, at its best, still another will and not Christ's. And left to its own devices, it is always contrary to Christ. In the same way, the mind of man is, at its best, still another mind, and not Christ's. It is naturally contrary to the ways of God. In fact, Romans 8:7 says "the carnal mind is enmity with God". Again, the righteousness of man is, at its best, a counterfeit righteousness that, as we have already seen many times, Isaiah calls "filthy rags".

We could go right on down the list comparing "man" to the "otherness" of Christ. But if we are ever to grow spiritually, we must first come to an agreement and an understanding of God's perspective of all of humanity apart from His life. Spiritual growth is only ever the increased manifestation of Christ in a man or woman.

Remember the verse we looked at in Genesis 6? God looks down on man, living as his own source—living by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—and says "all of the thoughts and intentions of their heart is only evil continually." I'm sure if you lived in that day, you could try to argue and say, "Well what about this or that, isn't that good? I took out the trash for Noah last night, isn't that nice?" But, compared to His "otherness"—His Life, His righteousness, His goodness—He could truly say without exaggerating, "Every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually". The issue at stake is not whether a certain action seems naughty or nice, grumpy or friendly. The issue is always a question of source. What is the source of that action, emotion, or thought? Is it Christ? Or is it a kind that has, in every way, "fallen short of the glory of God" — the kind that always has self as both its source and goal?

T. Austin-Sparks says it like this:

"We cannot produce from this nature anything acceptable to God. All that can ever come to God is in Christ alone, not in us. It never will, in this life, be in us as ours. It will always be the difference between Christ and ourselves. Though He be resident within us, He and He only is the object of the Divine good pleasure and satisfaction; and the one basic lesson you and I have to learn in this life, under the Holy Spirit's tuition and revelation and discipline is that He is

other than we are....**When you have come to your best, there is still a gulf between you and the beginnings of Christ that cannot be bridged”.**

Brothers and sisters, it is not safe to assume we have fully learned that lesson until we have ceased trying to offer God the fruit of our own labors. The danger in not comprehending this is that we will confuse God’s ultimate goal—to have an increase of Christ within us—with simply an imitation of Christ in the flesh. This is a tragic mistake, and it is the very one that Adam made in the garden of Eden when he believed the lie of Satan that he could “be like God”. I am afraid that many of us believe the same lie today.

That is why in one of the very first passages in the New Testament, Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5), we see Him actually making the Law even harder to obey. He raises the bar several notches, so to speak, just in case there were some who had deceived themselves into thinking they were living up to it (as we know the Pharisees and Sadducees, as well as many contemporary Jews certainly did).

Jesus says, “You’ve heard that a man who lies with his neighbor’s wife has committed adultery, but I tell you that if you even look at her with desire it is the same.” (Matthew 5:27-28)

He says, “You’ve heard it said that killing a man is murder, but I tell you that hating a man in your heart is murder.” (Matthew 5:21-22)

Those who were listening must have dropped their jaws and said, “Lord, if this be true, who then can be saved?” Of course, we know they did say that. And Jesus’ response was “With man (that *kind*) you’re right, it is impossible. But with God, something can be done about this”. And He wasn’t just speaking of forgiving their failures. He was speaking of newness of life.

So, I think we can picture Jesus saying to His disciples, “Get this into your hearts, disciples. What the Father is desiring and requiring is something completely “other-than” what you are or are able to reproduce or imitate. Let this sink into your ears: The way you are required to live is absolutely impossible in the flesh. You cannot imitate my life, you must be born of my Spirit, and I must be formed in you”.

This analogy might be helpful to you. Imagine you’re at church, and the pastor comes up front, opens up a dog book and begins to read to you about all of the amazing things that a dog is able to do. He begins to preach to you about how to live the “dog life”. He says that dogs are able to hear sounds 15 octaves higher than middle C. And then he tells you that most dogs can pick up a scent in the air that is more than a mile away and can identify and track that scent with pinpoint accuracy. And then he says that dogs

have such good survival skills, they can live out in the cold, without any covering, at temperatures down to 10 degrees below zero. And not only that, they can run 35 miles an hour, they can jump three times their height, and they can find their way home if they are lost—sometimes even hundreds of miles from home.

And then he says to you, “So, now that you know the nature and character of a dog, get out there and start living the dog life. Come on, I’ve told you all about it, now go do it! Go imitate it. Go try until you’re better and better at it. Come on, all of it is right here in this book. It’s all in black and white. Billy, I saw you putting on more clothes the other day, and it wasn’t even five degrees below freezing. And Suzy, you’re not even close to jumping three times your own height!”

Now, you and I immediately see something wrong with this picture. It is all very nice that a dog can do those things, but there is a nature barrier that prevents me from doing these things. It doesn’t matter how hard I try to imitate these things, I simply am not a dog by nature. I am human by nature. Now maybe, if by some miracle, I was actually made to partake of a dog’s nature, and then had that dog’s nature formed in me, then perhaps I could do some genuine dog things. But as a human, it is absolutely impossible that I could ever live the dog life.

There are only two kinds of humans out there trying to live the “dog life”. There are those that have fooled themselves into thinking they can smell a mile away, and so are self-righteous and proud. Then there are those that have condemned themselves for not being able to do any of it very well. Sure, they can jump, but only 20 inches. Sure they can smell, but only what’s on the plate in front of them.

The teachings of Christ and the expectations of the Father are exactly the same. They speak of another nature all together, another kind. And so the only hope for us to bring forth a nature that is not our own is if ours were crucified, and we were given another. Only as we are abiding in, drawing from, and living in union with another nature could we perhaps bring forth that nature into expression. But we will discuss that in length in a later chapter.

For now, we need to see that the Law, the Sermon on the Mount, the righteousness described in the Bible, etc. is divinely intended to leave us in *despair*. Maybe you have not realized this, but the Spirit of God is trying to bring us to despair. The Spirit is bringing us to the place where we will despair of every attempt to be like Christ apart from Christ Himself being formed in our soul. We must despair of producing anything from our lives acceptable to God apart from Christ. We must despair of every last attempt to imitate Christ and instead look to bring an increase of Christ within us. That is one of the first things that the Spirit of God tries to teach a believer. But sadly, if we do not allow the Spirit to show us the cross, we can get stuck there for our entire lives.

Again, let me quote T. Austin-Sparks: “Have you not learned the lesson of despair yet? Is it necessary for the Holy Spirit to make you despair again? *Why not have one good despair and get it all over?* Why despair every few days? *Only because you are still hunting around for something, somewhere, some rag of goodness in yourself that you can present to God that will please Him, satisfy Him, and answer to His requirements. You will never find it. Settle it today.*”

Friends, I wonder how much of our pain and how many of our inward trials are the result of failing to learn this fundamental lesson. I wonder how much of our self condemnation, self-hatred, insecurity, fear of failure, etc. stems from still “hunting around” for something, *anything*, that we can show for ourselves, for our lives, for our ministries, for what we can produce, for what we can do with our gifting, for what we can build for God. Are we still trying to bring to the Lord the offering of Cain (the fruit of his own labors, the fruit of the earth) when all He seeks is Abel’s slain lamb?

You see, until we despair of living in the flesh for God, He will keep sending us back to learn the all-important lesson of despair. The Law must have its ministry in us. “A ministry of condemnation. A ministry of death”. But do you see that it is the kindest thing that a loving Father could do? Can you see that until we learn the lesson of the Law, it is impossible for us to experience the rest, the life, the purpose for which He has created us.

The lesson of the Law drives us to Christ. It is, as Paul says “a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ”. (Galatians 3:24)

Part 4: The Cross

Now we can deal more specifically with the cross of Jesus Christ. And with the ground that we've covered, hopefully we can see that the cross is far greater and more central than how it is often portrayed.

When I deal with the cross, I want to make sure to distinguish between the cross and the crucifixion. The crucifixion was an event that happened two thousand years ago. It was the single most important event of all of history, but it was an *event* that took place in time and space.

However, when the apostles spoke of the cross they were not simply talking about the event of Christ's crucifixion. They were talking about the present, ongoing, and eternal realities brought about through the historical event. They were not just talking about two sticks of wood nailed together. And they were not simply talking about the factual account of how Jesus died there. They were talking about the present reality of the cross working in us today and every day. In fact, a better way to say it is this: ***when they preached the cross, they were talking about your death with Christ, your burial with Christ, and Him becoming your resurrection and your life.*** In this way, the cross was proclaimed as a timeless, spiritual reality that is forever being revealed in the heart, not simply a historical narrative that has future implications.

Almost anyone who claims to be a Christian will tell you how Christ died on the cross for the forgiveness of sins. That is certainly true. But if that is the limit of our understanding, then we see only a small portion of the cross. That is only a small piece.

As the Law has demonstrated, we need far more than just the forgiveness of our sins, we need the destruction, or the putting away, of the source of that sin—the sin nature, the Adamic nature. And that is exactly what the cross provided. If you are fighting a disease, it is not enough just to deal with the symptoms of the disease. You must actually destroy the root or source of the disease or the symptoms will always come back.

If you have an unwanted tree in your yard, trimming the leaves will not get rid of it. Neither will picking the bad fruit and throwing it into your neighbor's yard. You must chop the tree down at the roots.

Adam, the nature, is the rotten root. And to deal with Adam fruit, God must go right for the root. You simply cannot get Adam to stop reproducing the fruit of his kind without destroying the tree. And, as we mentioned previously, I believe that is part of what John the Baptist was referring to when he said that the one who followed him would lay the

axe at the root of the tree. This is also why Jesus cursed the fig tree and it withered from the roots upward. (More accurately, the wrong tree is more than just the Adamic man. It is the old man, the Old Covenant, and the old creation. But that is a bit beyond our scope.) The fact remains that Adam was the wrong tree. And the cross was far more than the removal of Adam's bad leaves or even the forgiveness of his bad fruit. The cross is the removal of the entire tree and then a gracious grafting of your soul into the rich olive tree of Jesus Christ (Romans 11:23-24).

We must understand that we are not sinners because we sin. We sin because we are sinners. Do you see the distinction in that? God does not consider you a sinner just because you sinned yesterday. You are a sinner by nature, and so you brought forth the fruit of that nature. You are Adam by nature, and so you brought forth the nature of Adam. *The sins are not the cause of you being a sinner. The sins are the result and proof of you being a sinner.* You sin because you are a sinner.

If you have a dog, it will bark. A dog will do what dogs do by nature. But barking does not make a dog. I can bark, but I am not a dog. Barking all day at a cat will not make me a dog. But if there is a dog, it will bark. Adam is a sinner and therefore he will sin. The sins do not make Adam a sinner, but because he is a sinner he will sin.

And so in order to be delivered from this deplorable Adamic situation, we need a solution powerful enough to do more than forgive what we do. We need a solution that will also free us from what we are. Yes, we need forgiveness from our sins, but we also need deliverance from the nature of sin that we were born with. Both of these are accomplished through our death. Our death with Christ becomes the destruction and putting away of the offense together with the offender. It is the judgment of the transgression together with the transgressor.

You see, before I understood that Jesus was my life and that I could abide in Him, I did not understand this at all. I thought that through the cross God had forgiven me of my sin, and now it was up to me to go out and do good things for God.

But, if I were honest with myself, I realized I could only change some outward actions. I could not change what I was on the inside. I was grateful for being forgiven, but living a Christ-like life was only somewhat outwardly possible. I could clean the outside of the cup, but inwardly I was polluted. Inwardly, I knew what I was. And I found that trying to be like Christ was like holding a soccer ball under water. It seemed I could do it for a while, but because of the very nature of the water and the laws that govern it, sooner or later the ball would always shoot back up to the surface. I found that I was striving against my very nature. I was trying to live contrary to what I was.

What I'm trying to say is this: at first, I was very concerned with what I did or did not do, because I thought the problem was with my actions. But over time, I became aware that the problem was not just what I did. The problem was what I was. And I had to cry out to the Lord and say, "Lord, there is something far worse than what I'm doing. It's what I am! There must be deliverance from the body of this death!" (Romans 7:24)

But then I had to ask myself how in the world could I ever get out of Adam? I was born into Adam. I have only ever been Adam by nature. And the answer to this question is, of course, there is no way out unless Adam dies. I needed to be released from Adam by death, and be born again of a new kind, a new Seed.

And friends, that is exactly what happened on the cross. "You were crucified with Christ, and it is no longer you that lives but Christ that lives in you" (Galatians 2:20). It is far more than just forgiveness and a patch job. It is the putting away of one kind, so that you can partake of His kind (2 Peter 1:3).

Have you ever thought about the fact that the Bible tells us over and over that we died on the cross with Christ? I know that we always hear about how Christ died for us, but have you ever stopped and pondered what the Bible means when it frequently says that *you* have died?

- **Galatians 2:20** - I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me
- **Colossians 2:12** - having been buried with Him in baptism
- **Colossians 2:20** - If then you died with Christ from the elements of the world...
- **Colossians 3:3** - For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.
- **Romans 6:3** - Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?
- **Romans 6:4** - Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death
- **Romans 6:8** - Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him
- **Rom 7:6** But now we having been set free from the Law, having died *to that* in which we were held,

The list goes on and on.

You were not just forgiven by Christ's sacrifice. You were crucified with Christ. In fact, that's how you were forgiven. You were already dead *in sin*, but, through the cross of Christ, you became dead to sin so you could be alive in Him. We are often familiar with Bible verses that say such things, but far from knowing the reality of it.

Unfortunately, such statements are often presented as theology to be studied rather than reality to be revealed.

You see, in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, all that was in Adam, of Adam, and for Adam was gathered up and done away with. The cross was the ending of one kind, and the beginning of a new kind – those sharing Christ’s resurrected life. The cross was a sword that cut between two creations. It divided between the first creation—summed up in the man Adam, and the new creation—summed up in the Man Christ. The cross cuts off one and begins another. It chops down one and plants another. And when Christ died, all of Adam died in Him. When Christ died, we died in Him. He laid the ax to the root of the tree, and all the branches died along with it.

We see a beautiful type and shadow of the cross in how God deals with Noah. Remember, God looked down on the Adamic race and grieved at what it had become apart from the Tree of Life. God mourned at what man had chosen and as the result of that choice, and it had to be utterly destroyed.

So God took one man into an ark and brought the entire race of Adam and his world into complete destruction. And when it was all said and done, only those who were in the ark had life. Everything outside of the ark perished. That ark was raised up on top of the water, and seated on the top of a mountain. And God started over again with one new man, one new family.

This is exactly what He did at the cross. He gathered up all of the first man and the first creation and brought it into death. He was then raised up and seated at the right hand of God. And to those who would live in and by Him, He “makes them alive together, raises them together, and seats them together with Him in the heavens”. “Old things have passed away, behold the new has come”. God began again with a new creation in Christ. A people joined to His Son in covenant. This is the eternal purpose of God: One new man, Jew and Gentile yet neither Jew or Gentile, coming out from death, joined to the Firstborn from among the dead (Jesus), the Firstborn among many brethren.

And this is precisely what Jesus is referring to in John 12:

“Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself”. John 12:31,32

Every word here is so important. Let’s look at it carefully.

“Now” ~ not 2000 years later. NOW the judgment has come upon Adam and his creation. When? At the cross. Jesus is going to the cross and He is saying that the

entire world is coming under judgment. There is a judgment of a kind in view here, the condemnation of a race of humanity. This is the judgment of the world of Adam.

“Judgment” ~ Jesus is bringing all of that Adamic kind into His death so there can be a new creation out from a new Man. He’s bringing the dead nature of Adam into the death of Christ. He is literally putting death to death, putting death away, so that He can offer Himself as the resurrection and the life to any of “the dead who will hear His voice”.

“come upon *this world*” ~ The judgment is upon this world, meaning the first creation as distinct from the new. This is the world over which the enemy rules and reigns. The New Testament clearly teaches that the old creation – the earth – is NOT the reflection of God’s rule, authority, and kingdom. It is always called the domain of the enemy.

- 1 John 5:19 “all the world lies in the power of the evil one”
- 2 Cor. 4:6 “the god of the world has blinded their eyes”
- Luke 4 – Satan says “all of the kingdoms of the world belong to me”, and Jesus doesn’t argue with him.

The judgment has come upon the kingdom of Adam, which is the territory or kingdom of the devil.

“ruler of this world” ~ again, a reference to Satan - the ruler over the entire dead realm of Adam; the entire first creation.

“cast out” ~ What is the devil cast out of? Not the old creation. He certainly is still quite active there. But he is entirely cut off from the new creation, the second creation, the second ‘Genesis 1’ that is in Christ Jesus.

“lifted up” ~ a clear reference to the cross (which John confirms in vs. 33)

“draw all men to Myself” ~ In this context of judgment, death, Jesus is certainly not referring to drawing unbelievers to get saved. He is clearly referring to the time and place and judgment of the cross. This text refers to the drawing of all of Adam into Himself and unto death. He says “All men” - All of humanity drawn into a judgment; dealt with in the person of Jesus Christ.

And this is exactly what we see in a number of other New Testament Scriptures, like 2 Corinthians 5:14 “For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, **therefore all died;**”

The cross of Jesus Christ gathered up Adam and his creation and brought it into death. And this death was a permanent state of judgment and separation that both satisfied righteousness, but more than that, put death to death, so that those of faith could come forth in Christ's resurrection. Those who would be born of His life could step out of a dead man and a dead world, and live in and by Christ's resurrected life.

Here is why Jesus tells Martha "I am the resurrection and the life". In other words, "Martha, I am life out from death. Your experience of resurrection will be your experience of Me living in you". And now, living in Him, "the resurrection", living by Him, "the life," we are no longer dead in sin, but have become dead to sin and alive to God. (Romans 6:11)

1 Corinthians 15:45-47 speaks of Jesus with two unique terms. He is called the last Adam. And He is called the Second Man. As the last Adam He takes upon Himself the sum total of all that Adam was and brings it into His death. When He was crucified, He was crucified as the last Adam. And He kills the entire race. He annuls the entire kind. He brought it into His death.

And then He comes forth from the grave as the Second Man. He is the beginning of a new kind – those that partake of His life, i.e. brethren. "Partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:3) Ones that can relate to the Father in the same way that He can because they are sharing His life. That's what adoption is, it's being placed into Christ. Or Christ in you. It is, quite literally "Son placement". You partake of His Sonship. You don't have a separate Sonship of your own. You are being brought into His relationship with the Father. "I am in the Father, you are in Me, and I am in you."

And, in the resurrection, He stands as the Second Man. He is the fulfillment of all that Adam pointed to. And we are joined to Him in resurrection life. He is, in fact, our resurrection from among the dead.

That is why Christ is called "the firstborn of many brethren". Or the "firstborn from among the dead". He took one kind into the grave and brought forth from the grave, from the dead, a new race, a new Kind sharing His resurrected life. And these are called brethren because they partake of the one Son's life, and therefore the one Son's relationship with the Father. John tells us that "we have been given the right to be called sons of God."

And so the cross is the cataclysmic division between these two kinds. It brings us out of one and into the other. As Watchman Nee says "we died in Him as the last Adam, we live in Him as the second Man. The Cross is thus the mighty act of God which translates us from Adam to Christ".

So, through the cross you were forgiven, yes, but only in that you were crucified. You were crucified with Christ so that you could now walk in the newness of His life. Your old life came to an end, and now you are born again of His Seed. Or, as Paul so perfectly says “I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me”. This is the cross! Yes, forgiveness...but through the death of the old, and new life in Christ; sharing the life of the Son. And this has been the testimony of Scripture from the beginning.

The prophets testified of this long ago.

Eze 36:25 Then I will sprinkle clean waters on you, and you shall be clean. I will cleanse you from all your defilement and from all your idols. 26 And I will also give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give to you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My judgments and do *them*.

Jer 31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: **33** But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

And now we have all that was promised in the Old Covenant made real through Christ.

- Rom 6:4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.
- Rom 6:8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,
- Col 2:12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him

And so, in a word, the cross was the end of Adam for those who are in Christ. Adam was fully punished and put away through Christ’s death and burial, and He offers Himself as the resurrection of all who will now live by Him.

Everything of that first kind, that first humanity, was judged and punished in the Last Adam. And Jesus became the head of an entire new Kind. The cross became the monumental dividing point between two different kinds and two different creations. Again, the cross was the exposing and judgment of one, and the raising up of another. It is a dividing point between two realms – one having the life of Adam (more accurately, the existence of Adam), and the other sharing the resurrected life of the Son.

- The reason I say “existence” is because there is a difference between existence and life. I could have said “active death”. Biblically speaking death does not mean “lack of existence”. Death is not a state of inanimation. Death is the state of being separated from that which is life. In actuality, spiritual death is a very active thing.

In summary, the cross is the sword that cuts between the old kind and the new kind. It cut between death and life: the old racial order headed up by Adam, and the new racial order headed up by Christ. It is a division between the old creation and the new creation in Jesus Christ. The cross ended one thing, and started something entirely new. We’ve come from an old man (Adam) living in an old creation, to a new man (Christ) living in a new creation.

And now we are to put off the old man, and put on the new man. We are to live in the power of His resurrection, to abide in His life, to manifest a new creation, come to our rest in Him, manifest the life of Jesus Christ. We are no longer of the flesh (Romans 8:9), and so we are to walk in the spirit. “Since we have been raised up with Christ, we are to mind the things above.” (Colossians 3:1) We have been taken out of Adam so that we can live in Christ. We have been “translated out of the kingdom of darkness and made to dwell in the Son of His love.” (Colossians 1:13) And now we can bring forth the fruit of that kind, a true harvest of the Seed.

All of these are New Testament quotations or paraphrases. These sort of statements are all over the New Testament, and once the Spirit of God begins to deal with your soul about the reality of the cross, you will find the New Testament declaring these realities every place you look.

- Col 3:9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its {evil} practices, 10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—
- Eph 4:22 That, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on the new self, which in God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

- 2 Cor 5:17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

What does all of this mean? Simply this: the cross was your way out of one kind of humanity, and into something (actually Someone) entirely new. Your soul has been translated out of Adam and into Christ. You have been transferred out of one kingdom and placed into the Son of God's love. And now, rather than living under the Law in the power of the flesh, you can abide in Christ and bring forth the nature of the Lamb – the only life acceptable to the Father.

Christ In Us – the Fulfillment of the Law

Prior to new birth, we were under the Law attempting to live according to the righteous standard of God in the power of the flesh, the weakness of the Adamic man. As we saw, that was futile.

But now the cross has ended that hopeless situation. It has not ended the Law – the Law remains the righteous standard of God. Paul says it is always “holy, righteous and good”. (Romans 7:12) No, Christ did not come to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it. What has ended is the hopeless situation of being under the Law in the flesh. How? By bringing the nature of flesh to an end in the body of Christ and giving us the very life of the one who demands the Law. And now, if we walk by that life, if that life is formed in us, then we grow to effortlessly do the things that are required by the Law. It is no longer a gritting of our teeth and attempting to obey what is contrary to our nature. Rather, we find that “the requirements of the Law are fulfilled in us who no longer walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit” (Romans 8:4). “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh”. (Galatians 5:16)

And so the fruit of the Spirit is the fruit **of the Spirit**, and not the fruit of us trying to act like the Spirit!

Adam is dead, and we are made alive together, raised up together, and seated together with Christ in the heavens. We are going to spend some time discussing why Adam doesn't seem dead in our experience. But for now it is enough to realize that the Scriptures declare that the old man is dead, and that you can walk in, abide in, and make manifest Him who is the New. The Adamic man was completely powerless to carry out the Law. But now in Christ you can walk by the Spirit within you.

Christ didn't come just to die for you. He came to live for you too. Paul illustrates this beautifully in Romans 7.

Rom 7:1 Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives? 2 For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. 3 So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man.

What Paul is saying here is that the relationship between the Law and the sinner is comparable to the relationship between a husband and a wife. The wife is bound to the Law. She has to remain with him as long as he is alive, though she longs to be joined to another.

Watchman Nee explains this wonderfully in the following anecdote. Imagine a wife that is married to a husband named Law. He is a very good man. He is very particular and very precise, but also very good to her and always acts righteously. He is a perfectionist, and is incredibly consistent. But he is very demanding and wants everything to be done perfectly. And yet you can hardly blame him because everything he wants and expects from his wife is very good and perfectly legitimate. There is nothing wrong with the man and nothing wrong with his demands.

The problem lies with her. She is inconsistent and careless and weak. She wants to do what her husband desires but has found their marriage to be incredibly frustrating because she is never able to do it. She knows she makes so many mistakes, and knows that he has a right to demand these things of her, but that doesn't make it any easier to live with him.

The two are a horrible match, and the woman is in terrible despair and frustration. What she really wants is to be married to another man she knows. She knows a man who is equally good and consistent and has the same requirements but everything he expects of her he also gives her the ability to do. Every weakness of hers he makes up for with his strength. Every failure of hers becomes a place for him to help her succeed. She knows that she is unable to change because she's been trying for so many years. If only she could marry this man who would help her become everything she knows she should be.

But alas...she is bound to another. The only way that she might be free from her covenant with him is if he dies, and he looks very healthy. Mr. Law is not going anywhere because the righteousness described by the Law is not going anywhere. It is the eternal standard.

What can she do? How can she be freed? Well, there is one thing that she forgot. It's true that death is the only way to sever this covenant. But she forgot that she could get out if **she** died.

And this is exactly what Paul tells us in the next verse.

*Rom 7:4 Therefore, my brethren, **you also were made to die** to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be **joined to another**, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.*

Do you see it? You are the woman. The first husband is the Law. And Christ is the second husband. And the fruit is the increase of Christ: the harvest of the Seed!

The Law doesn't die, because the righteous standard of God doesn't change. But when we die with Christ we are no longer bound to it because we now come to share the life and nature of the very Lawgiver Himself! We have received the life of the One who is love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, etc. And "against such things there is no law". (Galatians 5:23) And so now, as Paul goes on to say in the following verses – "Since you have crucified the entire body of flesh, and live in the Spirit, **let us also walk in the Spirit**". (Vs. 24-25)

You see, the Law requires from us the very righteous standard of God, but it gives us no help in obeying it. It leaves us to the Adamic nature. Christ, the second husband, requires of us just as much as the Law, but every single demand He makes of us He fulfills in us as He becomes our life. Every single thing that we (the wife in the illustration) could not do because of our weakness, He accomplishes through us as we walk in the newness of His life - as we live by the life of Another. Or as Paul says "yet not I, but the one who mightily works in me".

*But freedom from Law doesn't mean that we no longer do the will of God. Far from it! The freedom that we've come to in Christ is not a freedom to be ourselves. It is, in fact, a freedom from ourselves to live by Him. Freedom from the Law means that we no longer are left to the flesh. Rom 7:6 "But now we having been set free from the Law, having died *to that* in which we were held". It means that it is now "not I, but Christ". It is not me, living in the flesh, struggling against my nature. It is now Christ, living in me, manifesting increasingly what He is by nature.*

Now, as we have been joined to Christ, and as we are transformed by the renewing of the mind (which we will talk about in detail) there is an actual nature change. There is inward transformation into His likeness as Christ is formed in us. There is a new resident Life within us carrying out the very things that are His nature and character – the righteousness that the Law described. In other words, "It is God who works in us both to will and to work for His good pleasure". (Phil. 2:13)

There is a new "I" in the New Covenant. It is not the "I" of the old. Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, **yet not I**, but Christ lives in me"

This foundational understanding of an exchanged life, a new life – BECAUSE OF THE CROSS – is absolutely the key, the foundation, the basis, the starting point, the heart, the core of Christian living. In fact, if we think that “Christian living” has to do with believers doing what they can to live **for** God, then we have missed the cross. We have failed to see that it is “not I, but Christ”. We have missed the reality of the New Covenant.

Jesus did not come to earth 2000 years ago and drop off an instruction manual on how to “live for God”. Jesus came to earth 2000 years ago, brought all of Adam into the grave, and then came forth in resurrection to live and reign forever in His body – “Which is the church, the fullness of Him who fills all in all”. (Eph 1:22) We were never meant to receive His life and continue to live by ours.

And the reason we all live most of our lives in the hopeless frustration of Romans 7:14-24 (where Paul describes what living for God is like in the flesh...saying “the good I want to do, I simply can’t do it!) is because we have too often only heard the gospel preached as a path to heaven with a self-improvement plan along the way.

And what Paul describes in Romans 7:14-24 is what living as a Christian is like when we still understand ourselves to be married to the Law: when we don’t see our death; when we don’t know what it means to live by the life of another. In other words, Paul is telling us what it is like to try it when the old “I,” the old man, is still trying to live for God. That’s why he starts out that passage of Scripture defining the “I” as that “which is flesh, sold into bondage to sin”. And then uses the word “I” according to that definition 23 times in those 10 verses. He’s making a point here. His experience, and EVERYONE’S experience, when living for God in the flesh is an exasperating “wretched man that I am, who will save me from this body of death?”

His point in this is NOT that you would identify with it and say “I guess that’s just how Christianity works”. *NO! It’s that you would see the futility of trying to walk in the flesh after you’ve been born of the Spirit.* It’s so that you would cry out “Who will set me free from this body of death?”...and turn to know the Lord as your very life.

And this is exactly what the next chapter of Romans deals with. “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” Thanks be to God that the body of this death was dealt with by the cross. Thanks be to God that I no longer have to walk in the flesh.

*Rom 8:2 “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was **through the flesh**, God did...so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit”.*

This is the glorious work of the cross. It brings us out of living in the flesh, into a participation in the life of Christ. It is not the imitation of Christ in the flesh; it is the impartation of Christ in the Spirit. The cross is the bridge, the ladder out of Adam, and into Christ. It’s an escape out of one humanity into Another. It’s an exodus out of

Egypt and into the land that is Christ. It's the very ladder that Christ told Nathaniel that he would see. It is the flaming sword that guards the tree of life. (Genesis 3:24) And when you walk towards that tree, the sword cuts down the Adamic man, and the fire burns up the sacrifice.

The cross is literally an exodus out of one man, one life, one dwelling place, and into another. By the cross we have come to a new spiritual place to dwell in Christ. And this is exactly what the entire Bible speaks of with words like "Zion," "the mountain of the Lord," "the city of God," "heavenly Jerusalem," "the kingdom of God," "the land of promise".

Christ Himself has become the reality and fulfillment of the Land of Israel that Joshua brought the Israelites into. Christ is a land flowing with milk and honey. He's a land where you don't have to build your own cities, plant your own vineyards, or dig your own wells. He's a land where you can feed off of the produce of the land. He's a land where, just like Joshua showed us the moment he brought the Israelites over, the flesh profits nothing. Remember how Joshua had them all circumcised before they took one step in the Promised Land. The flesh profits nothing here! And this is fulfilled in us! Colossians tells us that "In Him (IN THE LAND!) you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in **the removal of the body of the flesh** by the circumcision of Christ".

So, to us, Christ is like a completely new spiritual place to dwell. And we are to abide in Him and bring forth the fruit of His land.

But if you look at it from God's point of view, **WE** have become a habitation of God. We have become the dwelling place of the Lord. We are the place where the Resurrection, the Second Man, lives and dwells and expresses His life. As Ephesians 2:22 says "You are growing into a holy sanctuary in the Lord, in whom you are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit".

Or as Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5, we have become a new creation. Think about this for a moment. The first creation was a habitation for the first man. The goal of the habitation was for a kind, Adam, to increase and multiply and fill it. The goal of that habitation was to have one kind exercise dominion over it...so that there could be an increase of that kind, and an expression of his rule. It was a living habitation (teaming with birds and plants and fish and animals) that was all given to one man.

So too with the new creation in Christ. The purpose of this creation is to be a habitation. It is to have a new Kind fill it and exercise dominion over it. The goal of the new creation is that there would be an incorruptible Seed, a Seed promised to Abraham long ago, planted and grown unto a harvest. A harvest of that one Seed in a

new creation. We are a living habitation of the Lord. We are a new creation in which the sun of righteousness dwells. And now God is saying “Let there be light in this new creation” (2 Cor. 4:6) so that we can walk in that light and have fellowship in the light with the Father and with His Son (1 John 1:7).

We were made by His cross into His spiritual habitation: His residence. A body for His expression. It is therefore absurd for us to seek to live our own life for Jesus. We are His body for the express purpose of living by the life that you have been given. We are to grow up into Him in all things: be filled up with the fullness of God; have the full measure of the stature of Christ working in each member. That is the purpose of any body. Can you see how ridiculous it is to receive the very imparted life of God and then go on to live by your own dead and blind soul? Having finally been grafted into the Tree of Life, yet continuing to live by your knowledge of good and evil.

The cross has crucified and cut off one kind of life, and placed you into another. It may be that you haven’t realized that yet, and so still walk in the flesh. But that doesn’t change what’s been accomplished. Our level of comprehension doesn’t change God’s finished work.

Paul says, in Galatians 5:25 “If you live by the Spirit, so too walk by the Spirit”. Jesus says “If you’ve been grafted into the vine, so too abide in the vine”. We will get into exactly what that means and how that works in us. But for now, it is so essential that we see that the cross separates us from our first birth, and brings us more and more into an experience of our new birth. Paul makes reference to this in Galatians 1:15.

“Now when it delighted God, who severs me from my mother’s womb and calls me through his grace to unveil His Son in me...”

Here again is the work of the cross. A severing from our mother’s womb (the first birth, our natural birth) and a bringing into existence and then a revealing of our new birth – the Son who is in us. I think Paul summarizes this so perfectly in Galatians 6:14 *“But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world”*.

To Paul the cross was a crucifixion to the entire first creation: a death to Adam and his world. Crucified to the entire world over which the enemy has dominion. The cross was the exodus out of the world of Adam and the way into a new world, a new Man, a New Covenant.

And so the words of Jesus in John 17 became true of Paul, as they are true of us – *“Father, they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world”* (John 17:16)

Part 5: The New Covenant

In this section we are going to look at the New Covenant, which will help us understand the reality of terms like “abiding in Christ,” and “walking in the Spirit”. For many Christians these are familiar biblical concepts, but not living or experienced realities.

What does it really mean to “abide in Christ”? Let’s begin by simply defining our terms. Abiding in Christ is living out our union with Jesus Christ. It is living by the life of another. It’s being found in Him, and that reality defining your soul. It is the experience of Galatians 2:20 “I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me”. It is where we live as a vessel that expresses the manifest life of the Son of God. Not, of course, becoming the Son of God. But quite literally becoming His fullness, or full expression - even as it says in Ephesians 1:23 “The church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all”. Can you see what this verse is saying? This verse is declaring that we, the body, are the fullness of the head: the full expression of the head, the full manifestation of the head. It is analogous to saying that an apple tree, with all of its branches and fruit, is the fullness (full expression) of the planted seed. It is the full manifestation. It’s the increase, the harvest.

Pardon this somewhat strange example, but if you were to walk into my house and see my head sitting on the kitchen counter, kept alive by machines, there would be something of me expressed in that head. But you certainly couldn’t say that that was the fullness of Jason Henderson. No, **my body** allows for the full expression. My members are the fullness of the life that is in the head. And it is my life that fills all members. My body exists to bring manifestation to the life that dwells within it.

We are the body of Christ. And our purpose is to be the “fullness of Him who fills all in all”. Our purpose is to express the life that lives within us. We do this by having that life formed in us. We do that by living by the life of another.

Well, how do we do that? That’s the big question, isn’t it? How do we do this? That’s everybody’s first question. That was my first question when I started to understand the cross. But what you’ll see is that that very question reveals our carnal mind. No one likes to hear this at first - but it’s the wrong question. Now, I don’t mean that it doesn’t happen. I don’t mean that this transformation is not real. I simply mean that “how do I do it” is the wrong question. Because in the very asking of this question there is a contradiction of all the verses we’ve been quoting. It is not something **you do**. That is the whole point! It’s actually an escaping of all that **you** do, and all that you could never do, and living by the “one that mightily works within you”. “It is no longer I that lives, but Christ that lives in me”.

If we are going to understand any of this at all, we're going to have to deal with the fact that manifesting Christ's life isn't something we do in the power of the flesh. We'll talk more about this as we go on, but what we're going to see is that abiding in Christ isn't a work of the flesh, but a living relationship that flows out of seeing our union with Him. **It's not your work, it's the byproduct of His finished work, and you experience it when that work is revealed in you.**

Please don't misunderstand me. I'm not saying that you don't experience it. Praise God you will experience it in every arena of your life. There is nothing His life won't affect in you. But it's not the fruit of your Christianity. It's the fruit of Christ revealed as your life.

So we need to establish this right now. And we need to remind ourselves of the otherness of Christ. Adam cannot "do" Christ...any more than I can "do" dog. Adam cannot manifest the divine nature. That nature manifests itself as it grows with the "growth that comes from God".

Righteousness is not something you do. It is something He is. And it works in you as He is known as your life. Real love is not something you do. It is something He is. "God is love". And it works in and through you as He is known as your life.

I'm not trying to confuse you; this is actually very logical. Just look at the types and shadows in the natural realm. If you take a seed and throw it into the dirt, where does the plant come from? Does the dirt grow into a plant? Does the rain grow into the plant? Obviously the seed is what becomes the plant. The dirt is a nice home for the seed. The dirt can be an environment that is conducive to seed growth. But growth is the increase of the Seed. So it really doesn't make sense for the dirt to ask "how do I become a plant?"

Brothers and sisters, you are God's field (1 OCR.) 3:9) and the incorruptible Seed is in you. It was planted for a harvest. And we'll never get anywhere until we establish the fact that dirt will never turn into a seed. But the seed can increase and fill the dirt. Praise God! And that's what we want.

So, let's ask a better question. And this is a question that Jesus asks in some parables: What ground is conducive to the growth of the seed? I'm not trying to be nit-picky about words. I just know that thinking we can "do" this in the flesh is a frustrating dead-end. It cuts the whole thing off. It is a contradiction to truth.

And so to answer the "how" question, we must come to understand that the "how" is really a "who". It really doesn't have anything to do with how **you** do anything...it has

to do with **who** lives in you: The One who is your life, The One who is your vine. Remember, you have been crucified with Christ, and you weren't resurrected. He was, and He has become your life. He is your resurrection. As we have mentioned, that is what Jesus told Martha "I am the resurrection and the life". (John 11:25)

You may think that I'm dealing with semantics or trying to be confusing, but nothing could be further from the truth. I'm not trying to be confusing, I'm actually trying to take us out of a state of carnal mind confusion into a place where we see what is true of us because of the cross. And the lack of seeing (spiritual comprehension) is exactly the problem. That lack of seeing reality translates into a lack of experiencing reality. A lack of comprehension of what is true, and who lives, and who does not. That lack of understanding is the downfall of the church. The failure to comprehend the New Covenant is our ever-present problem.

The Hand Analogy

Some people have found this analogy helpful. Think about your hand for a minute. I'm sure you are well aware that you are experiencing a union of life with your hand. It doesn't even make sense for your hand to operate independently of your life and your will.

But let's just say, for the sake of this analogy, that my hand grew lips. And then it turned and said to me..."oh Jason, what I wouldn't give to be close to you. I just wish you would come visit with me and tell me what I could do to be like you".

Now, after I got over the shock of my hand talking, I would turn to my hand and say "Hand, there's obviously been some misunderstanding. I really appreciate your heart in saying that, but if you saw clearly, you would understand that you are joined to me and I am joined to you. In fact, my very life is flowing through you. You don't have to try to be **like me**, you simply have to manifest my life".

And then the hand turns back to me and says "Jason, that's profound...but what do I have to do to get closer to you. I'd do anything. I'll fast, I'll pray, I'll do good deeds." And I would again say, "Hand, you obviously don't comprehend something here. There's a lack of understanding about who you are, where you are, what you are. And that lack of comprehension is drastically affecting your sense of reality. You cannot do anything to get closer to me. You are joined to me by life. You just don't see our union".

And then the hand says "Yes, that's all very nice. I've read about that in a book, but **let's get practical**. I want a prophetic word about how to be like you. I want

something I can work with, something that makes sense! Maybe a seven step program.” And I would say “There’s nothing more practical then you simply manifesting my life in all that you do. That’s all that I want from you, Hand.”

And then my hand says “ok, Jason...this is getting frustrating. You stay there, and I’m going to go and do a bunch of good works for you. Then maybe you’ll listen to me”. And then I say to my hand “You know, you can try to go and do a bunch of good things for me. But all that I want from you is that you simply become the manifestation of my life working in you. In fact, there is no such thing as a good work unless I’m the author of it. Apart from me, you can do nothing good because “goodness” is bound up with my life and will”. (Doesn’t that sound like something Jesus said?)

And then my sad hand drops its head in sorrow and says “Can’t anybody give me some practical instructions on how to fulfill my spiritual potential? Can’t somebody tell me what would Jason do? This guy won’t give me anything practical. He’s speaking in riddles”.

You see, the simple purpose of my hand is to manifest my life in the world. It doesn’t have an individual purpose apart from that. If there was ever a time in the past when it wasn’t joined to my body, there might have been a separate purpose for it then. But because it is joined to me in living union, it doesn’t even make sense for it to have a purpose other than the manifestation of my life in the way that expresses me.

Brothers and sisters, we are “His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all”. We are not the fullness of ourselves. We are not to manifest our own “hand” life. No, we have been crucified with Christ and now He is the life. “We are dead, and our life is hidden with Christ in God”.

Now let’s get back to the crux of our question because answering this question is going to help us understand the process of Christ being formed in us. What was wrong with my hand (besides the lips)? It simply had a misunderstanding of the nature of our relationship. It didn’t understand what or where it was. It didn’t understand what life was because it was trying to live its own. It didn’t understand abiding in my life because it still thought it lived apart from me. It’s not that the hand wasn’t joined. It was! It’s that it did not understand the nature of the relationship. It didn’t understand the covenant. It didn’t understand the cross, which brought an end of all life apart from me, and a beginning of sharing my life and living by that life.

Its failure to operate according to covenant relationship was the result of a huge misunderstanding of that relationship. There wasn’t an agreement between me and hand about how we moved as one. There was one body, but two minds. There wasn’t a common foundational understanding that it was “no longer hand but Jason”. The hand

had been grafted into Jason, but still thought it was separate. The hand had died and its new life was hidden in Jason. But it still thought of itself alive separate from Jason. And so it acted out of its comprehension. It lived according to that comprehension. It related to me according to that comprehension.

My hand was wanting to serve as one separate and not live as one joined. May I suggest to you that much of the church is in the same boat. And the primary reason is a major misunderstanding of the cross and our union with Christ. In other words, we misunderstand the nature and reality of the New Covenant.

Old Covenant vs. New Covenant

Before we go any further, let's look a little closer at the nature and character of the New Covenant. For years I would have told you that I relate to God according to the New Covenant, but I had no understanding of what that really meant. The fact of the matter was that, though I had come out of the Old Covenant, it had not come out of me.

What is a covenant? In a word, a covenant is **an agreement or understanding by which two parties enter into some kind of relationship.** In other words, a covenant is the nature of a relationship. And sometimes in Scripture, the relationship was signified by some sort of natural sign or memorial.

For example: God and Noah entered into an understanding, an agreement, that God would never again flood the earth. That's a covenant. And the sign of that agreement was the rainbow. Jacob and Laban entered into an agreement that they would not pass into each other's land to do one another harm and that Jacob would not take any other wives besides Laban's two daughters. It was an understanding as to the nature of their relationship. And the sign of that understanding, that agreement, was a pile of rocks.

There are several such relationships established in the Bible through a covenantal understanding. But, with respect to God's relationship with a specific people, there is the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. Both of these covenants are an understanding or agreement by which God and a certain people enter into a relationship. The Old Covenant was the understanding of one kind of relationship that a people had with God. The New Covenant is the nature of a different kind of relationship that people have with God.

These relationships are entirely different. This is extremely important because a failure to understand this New Covenant relationship, translates into a failure to experience and walk in the nature and reality of that relationship. And that was exactly the problem with my hand in the above analogy.

So let's take a minute to compare the Old Covenant with the New. Most every Christian will tell you that they are in the New Covenant and not the old. But for many years, if you would have asked me to explain the difference (and there is all the difference in the world), I would have given you a very incomplete answer.

But in coming from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant, what we've come to is an entirely different relationship, a new kind of relating between God and man. God had one *kind* of relationship with Old Covenant Israel. God has an entirely different *kind* of relationship in the New Covenant. The New Covenant is an entirely new way that God relates with human beings. It's a new understanding and agreement by which we have relationship.

And it's not just new in relation to time. Like "there's my old tennis racket, but here's my new one". It's new in relation to quality. More like, "here's an old mode of transportation – my horse, and over here's a new one – my jet". Totally new in nature and character. One is a brown animal that eats grass. The other is a flying metal machine that burns fuel. Altogether different.

So the Old and New Covenants are radically different in substance and reality, but have one very important thing in common.

The important thing that they have in common is that they are both relating to Christ. But the way that they do that is what is entirely different.

The first covenant is only the type and shadow, the prophecy and promise of the second. We talked about the concept of type and shadow. *In every way, the Old Covenant was a natural shadow of the spiritual reality experienced in the New Covenant.* The New Covenant is the fulfillment and experience of all that was foreshadowed, prophesied, and promised in the old.

So they both, in their own way are related to Christ. In the one, the understanding of their relationship was only a picture of Christ. In the other, the understanding of their relationship was the very life of Christ. Let me give you some examples:

- In the first covenant God said "build a natural temple that will be filled with a cloud as a testimony to my Son". In the second we have become that temple, the dwelling place of the actual life of Christ.
- In the first covenant God gave natural bread from heaven that gave natural life to a natural body. In the New Covenant God gave His Son as spiritual bread to give spiritual life to a spiritual body.
- In the first God said "build the ark of the testimony that speaks of my Son". In the second, Christ was that ark – the very presence and glory of God.

- In the first God said “make a sacrifice that speaks of the blood of my Son”. In the second Christ was that sacrifice.
- In the first God said “make shewbread, instruments, altars, laws, regulations, ceremonies, feasts, curtains, robes, incense, etc. In the second, Christ and our relating in Him, was all of these things.

So in all things, the first was pointing to the second. The first was the testimony of what would come in the second. The first was the promise and prophecy, type and shadow, of all that was coming in Christ. They both concern themselves with Christ, but the first covenant was a relationship with God that **testified to** the reality of being in Christ. The second covenant **was the actual relationship with God IN the Son.**

In the Old Covenant, it is like God said “You don’t even understand fully what all of this is pointing to: it and how all of this is to be fulfilled in the person of My Son (it is veiled in this covenant – 2 Cor. 3, veiled behind types and shadows and buildings and garments and feasts), BUT...nevertheless...live according to this understanding of what is coming in Christ. Live according to my specific terms, conditions, and provisions – all of which speak of My Son. And this will be the nature of our relationship. This will be the agreement through which you become my people and I become your God.

So, here’s what I want you to do:

- build a temple that points to my Son
- put on white priestly garments that point to my Son
- perform these sacrifices that point to my Son
- live according to these laws that are the nature of my Son
- celebrate these feasts that point to my Son

“Live according to this covenant of type and shadow and prophecy and promise – and put your faith in me for the fulfillment of all of this – and I will be your God and you will be my people. Here’s the agreement, the understanding of how we will enter into a relationship. Here’s the covenant”. And the agreement of that relationship – the Old Covenant – was written on stone and parchment.

And in this covenant, man was separate from God. Man was living in the flesh. Man was serving this testimony of Christ through types and shadows. Man was under the Law. As the book of Hebrews says, in the Old Covenant, men served a natural “copy” of the things that were to come.

Well, what is the New Covenant? **It is the nature of a new relationship.** It is an understanding or agreement by which God and man come into a completely different relationship.

What is that relationship? It is a new relationship that came by way of the cross. Not merely the forgiveness of sins, but the reality that Adam is dead and Christ is the life of the believer. In other words, the New Covenant is God relating to you in His Son. It is union with Christ. You have been joined to the very one you were serving through types and shadows...even as my hand was joined to my life in the previous analogy. It was no longer serving as one separate: it was living as one joined. It was no longer trying to look like Jason through works and sacrifices and feasts. It was far better than that. Now it was the experience and manifestation of the very life of Jason. It was no longer trying to create a copy, a figure, a shadow of Jason...it was abiding in and expressing the very substance of his life.

This is the nature of the new relationship. And if the hand was going to be in agreement with me, the head, as to the nature of the relationship, it would have to know and confess that the relationship was “not hand, but Jason living in me”. In other words, “Not I, but Christ, living in me.”

Do you see? This is the nature of the New Covenant. This is the relationship with God that you have in this New Covenant. You are **in Christ**. You are abiding **in Him**. You are found **in Him**. You are walking **by His Spirit**. You are manifesting the fruit of **His Spirit**. You are striving according to **His power** working mightily in you. You are making manifest **His Life** through your mortal flesh. These are all extremely common New Covenant terms. In fact, the phrase “in Christ” occurs over 230 times in the New Testament. And the great proclamation of the New Testament apostles is this phrase ~ “But now in Christ”.

That doesn't just mean “but now that you are a Christian,” or “but now that you believe in the Messiah”. No. But now that you have died and Christ is your life. Now that you have been translated out of a dead kind, and made to partake of His resurrected life. Now that you are in Him, and live in Him, and live by Him, and walk in Him, abide in Him, partake of Him, and manifest Him. “**But now in Christ**”.

We are no longer serving shadows of Christ as one separate. But living in and by the very substance of His life. It is a relationship of union where Christ has been made all things unto us. We are no longer serving a copy of those things out from ourselves, but are manifesting the reality of those things as out from Him. The New Covenant is a relationship of being in Christ and Christ in us. In a word “I am in the Father, you are in Me, and I am in you”

My hand, in the aforementioned analogy, kept trying to think of things that it could do to get closer to me. That is an Old Covenant mindset, because in this new relationship we are joined as one spirit. 1 Cor. 6:17 – “The one that is joined to the Lord has become one spirit”. Can you imagine your knee or your foot trying to figure out a way

to get you to come down for a visit? That doesn't make sense because of the nature of your relationship with your knee. It doesn't make sense in this covenant.

My hand kept trying to please me through its own actions. That is an Old Covenant mindset because in this new relationship, the only way to please the head is to manifest His life. John 15 "A branch cannot bear fruit apart from the Vine. Apart from me you can do nothing".

My hand wanted a practical instruction manual on how to live. But that is an Old Covenant mindset, because in this new relationship, the question is not "how," but "WHO". He is the life. You live in and by Him. He lives in you. And it is no longer a matter of instructions on how to modify natural behavior. Now it is the manifestation of the nature of Christ.

Let me say this very clearly. In the New Covenant, God is looking for a whole lot more than mere alterations to Adamic behavior. God is looking for His Son's life manifested in His Son's body, and we are that body.

My hand was trying to gain acceptance based on what it could perform. Once again, that is an Old Covenant mentality. In this new relationship, the hand could not be any more accepted than being joined to my life. "You are accepted IN the Beloved". (Eph. 1:6)

This is the New Covenant. And the reality of this covenant is not something that is written in books. The New Testament is not the New Covenant. The New Testament describes the New Covenant. The New Testament declares, proclaims, teaches the New Covenant. But how could a relationship be written in a book? The covenant itself, the reality of this relationship is written on the human heart.

- Jer 31:31 "Behold, days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers **in the day I took them by the hand** to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them, declares the LORD. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD, **I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it**; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. **They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, Know the LORD, for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them**, declares the LORD, for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more".

- Ezek 36:25 "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.**"
- 2 Cor 3:3 "Being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on **tablets of human hearts.**"

So we can see where this covenant is written. It is written on human hearts. That understanding, that agreement, the knowing that it is no longer I but Christ, is given of God and it is written, not on stone or parchment, but on the only place where a relationship can be known - on the heart.

Wouldn't it be strange if I handed you a book and said "Hey, look at this. This book is my relationship with my wife". Well, that wouldn't make any sense. That book may describe my relationship with my wife. But my wife would be pretty irritated if our relationship existed on pages, but was not known, understood, and experienced in the heart.

As I said, the New Testament describes, explains, and testifies to this covenant, but to find the place where this covenant becomes substance and reality, you need to look on the human heart because that's where it was written. And to learn this covenant, you cannot simply read a book. You can memorize the New Testament and come to know nothing of the New Covenant. We will speak more to this later, but to walk in the New Covenant, it must be revealed by the Spirit where it is written.

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 3 – it's not a ministry of the letter, it's a ministry of the Spirit. It was written on your heart by the finger of God, and the Spirit of God is the one that teaches you this Covenant. No person can teach you the New Covenant. A person can read you the New Testament. A person can teach you theology. But a person cannot teach you the New Covenant in such a way that it becomes reality.

Once again, this is why Jeremiah so plainly says:

33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "**I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it;** and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 "**They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying,**

'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,"

This covenant can be described by man, but not taught by man. And that is because it is a relationship of union with Christ in God. It's not words, it's a spiritual reality. It's not doctrines; it's a Person who has become your life. If it were just doctrines, a man could teach it. But it is Christ living in your soul. And thus the Spirit of truth must unveil this reality, this relationship, this Person, in us.

To summarize: The New Covenant is the new understanding or agreement by which God and man came into relationship on the basis of the Cross of Christ. The nature of that relationship is union. The understanding of the covenant is "not I, but Christ". The place where that covenant is described is the New Testament. But the place where the reality and substance of that covenant is written is the human heart. And the way that the covenant is learned, experienced, walked in is when Christ, who is your life, is revealed in you by the Holy Spirit.

Part 6: Transformation

Now we come to the part of this series that has to do with transformation. I'm going to spend a good deal of time dealing with transformation because this is where the rubber really meets the road in terms of our personal experience. This is where what is finished in Christ begins to become reality in us. This is where we really get into the reality of things like "being conformed to his likeness" or "being transformed by the renewing of the mind," or "putting off the old man and putting on the new man". All of that is wonderful and real and good, and everyone always wants to jump ahead to these subjects.

However, until you have truly seen the eternal purpose of God to bring an increase of Christ; until you have seen that the fall of man and the Adamic kind make that purpose impossible; until you have seen how the Law of Moses exposes that impossibility and magnifies the otherness of Christ; and until you have seen how the cross rectifies that entire situation by devastating one seed and planting another, you will never experience true transformation.

Why? Simply because transformation is by the renewing of your mind unto the reality of what is **now true in Christ**. If you do not have a true comprehension of man's actual situation, and God's remedy to that situation by **new life in Christ**, then the renewing of the mind means nothing. That will make more sense to you as we go along.

You see, the entire problem for Christians is not that we need to get something we don't have. **The problem is that we don't know and experience what we do have.** I cannot emphasize that enough. When you were born again, you did not receive a piece of Jesus. You received the only Jesus there is. You received a full salvation. You received the incorruptible Seed Himself: not a portion of the Seed, not an arm or a leg. You were born again: an entirely new life. "Old things have passed away, behold the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Where then is the lack? What then is my problem? Only in failing to know the reality of Christ who is our salvation. The problem is that we have received a salvation that we do not understand – largely because we have sought to understand it with the carnal mind, rather than have it revealed from Spirit to spirit: from deep to deep.

We are in Christ. We have been since the day we were born again of His life. We were crucified with Christ. We have died and our life is hidden in Christ. We were planted together with Him in his death. We were raised with Him in the resurrection. These things are true. They're all over the Scripture. But these things being true, doesn't mean that they feel true. Why don't they seem real? Why don't they feel real?

Because being in Christ doesn't mean that you've seen what that means, or that you have come to truly relate to God in Christ.

We lack the experience of the truth because we do not truly know the truth. Again, herein lies our problem. We've learned true things, but have not truly known the Person of Truth as our very life. We've been set free, but it's only as we "know the truth, you will be **made** free." (John 8:32) The reality of freedom came with the cross. The experience of freedom comes with true knowing: the true knowledge of God. The Son set you free, but it's only in the true knowing of the Son that you experience that freedom. It is not an intellectual knowing, but a spiritual knowing, a spiritual seeing, a spiritual comprehending.

1 Corinthians 2:14 "The natural man cannot comprehend the things of the Spirit for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot discern them". That's not just talking about unbelievers. That is talking about the natural mind of man - period. That's talking about the carnal, unrenewed mind. It simply cannot discern the things that are true in Christ. These things must be revealed by the Spirit of God.

The natural man thinks that gaining information is learning, and there is a sense in which that is true when it comes to natural things. But spiritual realities are not learned by acquiring information, theology, doctrine, etc. In fact, the natural mind is not the faculty that we use to know God.

Nobody would think I was crazy to say that you cannot hear a sunset. And nobody would say that I was wrong in insisting that a person cannot see beautiful music. The ear is simply not the faculty for seeing. And the eye is simply not the faculty for hearing. In a very similar way, the things of God are learned as the Spirit of God reveals them to soul. The natural mind is a tool that is given to us by God, and a very important one, but it is not the faculty through which spiritual reality is known.

Christ is in you through new birth, but He is only seen, experienced, and formed in you as the Father reveals Him through the Spirit.

And by the way, when I use the word "revelation," I'm not talking about some sort of "spiritual experience", angelic visitation, and certainly not the Gnostic concept - spiritual "enlightenment" of secret knowledge. I'm simply talking about the objective truth, as it is in Jesus, being shown to your heart by the Holy Spirit so that you can see it and live in it. I'm not talking about a mind trick. I'm talking about reality. This is the substantial, concrete reality of being in Christ. This isn't mind over matter. But it is a mind that needs to see the truth of a matter as the Spirit reveals it. It's not true because you get yourself to believe it. No! It's true whether we believe it or not, and the problem is that we don't. The problem is that the natural mind, the natural eye, the natural ear cannot know it. It must be revealed.

And that's exactly what that entire second chapter of 1st Corinthians says. It says in verse 9 that "The eyes of man have not seen these things, the ears of men have not heard them, nor have they entered into the heart of man". **But....don't stop there, read on!** "But to us, the Spirit has revealed them." Here it is!

Do you see what Paul is saying? At one time, I used to stop reading after the first part there and say to myself, "Well, I guess I'll just find out those things in heaven one day". But that is not what Paul is saying at all. He's saying that the very things that man cannot access with his natural senses and natural mind are the very things that the Spirit of God is revealing. And as you read on in that same chapter of 1st Corinthians, Paul goes on to say that "the Spirit has been given in order to make us know the things that **HAVE BEEN FREELY GIVEN**". 1 Cor. 2:12

But, Paul insists, these things cannot be known except by a revealing that comes from the Spirit of God. They can be read. They can be talked about. But they cannot be known in such a way that they are experienced or lived until they are revealed to be the truth of you in Christ.

Colossians 3:4, "Whenever Christ, **who is our life**, is revealed, then you will be revealed together with him in glory". Yes, revealed. Manifestly seen. You have a new life, and that new life is Christ. But that new life needs to be revealed because you'll never see it with the carnal mind. You'll never see it or experience it or abide in it or manifest it until it is revealed by the Spirit of God as your life.

So, we're identifying our problem here. Why doesn't a new believer simply start walking immediately in the Spirit? Because the carnal mind has no comprehension of what that means. The carnal mind knows only Adam. We've received a new life, but that life is not known or understood by the old mind. So we need this mind renewed. Why renewed? So that we can "know the things that have been freely given by God".

Romans 8:7 "The carnal mind is enmity with God. It does not subject itself to God, nor is it even able to do so". What an indictment! It doesn't just say that the carnal mind is "at enmity". It says that the carnal mind "*is* enmity". It does not know or experience the truth as it is in Christ.

Here's the bottom line: you will never abide in, experience, express what you cannot see, what you do not know. You cannot abide in theology. You must abide in Light. And God is the one who "shines in your heart to give you the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ". "In Him was life, and that life was the light of all men". When Christ, who is our life, is revealed...then we see ourselves as we are. We "come to know, even as we are known" (1 Corinthians 13:12) And all things begin to change. All things of the old fall away. All things of the new begin to become my

experience. We begin our **experiential** exodus out of one life and into another. And we're going to talk more about that, but before we can deal much with that, we need to understand what hinders this process. We need to understand our carnal mind.

Truly, If we are going to understand the revelation of Jesus Christ and the renewing of our mind, we must first come to understand that stumbling block that we have in our own carnal mind.

The Carnal Mind

It's important to understand that the carnal mind is actually a great enemy. We're used to talking about the devil as our enemy, and of course he is that. But the carnal mind is his playground. It's his territory. It is there that he sets up his strongholds, fortresses, thoughts that rise up against the true knowledge of God. It is there that man exalts himself in such a way that he cannot see the Truth. So we do well to spend some time discussing the carnal mind.

When the Scriptures speak of the carnal mind, they are not referring to only the perverted, vulgar, or immoral thoughts of man. The carnal mind is simply the mind of the flesh. It's your earthly, natural, unrenewed mind. It looks at everything from an earth based, flesh based, natural, temporal, material perspective. It is totally self-oriented, and self-interested. And it always wants to know, think, learn, see, comprehend on its own terms, and according to its own light. And when it steps out of its intended purpose, it always argues with God.

Now the natural mind isn't inherently evil. It is just completely spiritually blind. It is fallen but not purposeless in God's design. **It's just simply that the carnal mind dominates or even creates our sense of reality, when it is supposed to be receiving an understanding of reality by the Spirit. It's not supposed to tell you what's real. It's supposed to learn what is real from your heart seeing Christ as your life.**

The problem is that the carnal mind steps way out of its intended functional boundaries and tries to run the show. It tries to know Christ. It tries to dictate what is real. It tries to interpret things of the Spirit. But these things are not its function.

Knowing Christ as your life doesn't happen because you're smart. It doesn't happen because you have a sharp mind. It's not a function of your natural mind. It's a function of your heart, where Christ is revealed. The carnal mind actually too often interferes with this process.

God does not speak to your intellect. God speaks to your heart by His Spirit. And until our mind is renewed, it will always function as an enemy of God. Your mind must be renewed so that it lines up with the reality that has been revealed in your heart by the Spirit of God.

But we always want our natural mind to be gratified, to understand. We want everything to make sense in our natural mind (on our terms) before we'll actually trust God that it is true. Our mind insists on having things on its terms.

But God's desire is not to gratify our minds with intellectual knowledge. If we don't understand this, we can grow angry or disappointed with God. But that won't change a thing because gratifying your mind has nothing to do with His ultimate goal. We don't understand why God won't explain it to us on our terms, and it's because that has nothing to do with the goal of forming Christ in us. It's actually a distraction.

Now, I am not saying that we don't come to understand the things of God. But it's not through our own reasoning and intellect. It is through an unveiling of Christ in our heart, after which our mind can be renewed to grasp spiritual reality. In other words, it is not as *our mind* learns about spiritual things, it is as the *mind of Christ* is wrought in our hearts.

And I'm also not saying that in order to be spiritual, we need to be un-intellectual Christians. Far from it. The mind is a great tool, and can be very good and helpful when doing what its supposed to be doing. I'm simply saying that we need to use the appropriate faculty for the right function.

God is not seeking to gratify our carnal minds. He's seeking to form His Son in us. But we often misunderstand, become upset, and say - "Come on, God...just make this make sense to me and I'll believe it". And what we're really saying is "**God, I won't trust you unless I wrap my carnal mind around it**". "**God I won't trust this to be real, unless you prove it to me on my terms**".

And to that Christ would say "I'm afraid you have no room in your heart for my Word. Your heart is closed off: guarded by your carnal mind. You've got a gatekeeper there that won't let my Word in."

What happens if the carnal mind is running the show? What happens if the carnal mind is dictating reality, establishing what is spiritually true? It causes major problems in our lives as Christians. What it actually does is it shuts off the life of Christ in my heart. In other words, the mind keeps us from knowing the reality of Christ as our life. And that's a huge deal. And that's why, generally speaking, Christians know far more of Christ intellectually than they are ever able to experience, abide in, or express.

It is far less dangerous to be ignorant of something than to have replaced it with something else. It is a much better position to approach the Truth confessing that you do not know the reality of Christ's life, than to think you do, but in reality have nothing more than a firmly lodged theological concept.

Let me give you an example of how the natural mind can keep us from knowing and experiencing His life. Let's say we read a verse like "Abide in me and I in you, for apart from me you can do nothing". Here's what we do with a verse like that. Our natural mind says something like one of these three wrong responses:

1. Yes, I already know what "abiding" means. That verse corresponds to this thing that I already know and experience. It's not possible (after being a Christian so long) that this verse refers to anything outside of my experience, so here's what it must mean. I've been doing that for years. I'm glad I know that. Now on to the next thing to learn.
2. Wow, that doesn't make any sense. How can I be a branch? How do I do this abiding thing? Let's make it practical. Give me something I can work with here. Make this thing understandable to me. What's my next step? Let me see the game plan. Maybe a flow chart. I don't know what I'm supposed to be doing!
3. Man, I could never do that. That must be something for the spiritually elite. One time I thought I might have seen something about that, but I was probably just fooling myself. Just look at me. I still have obvious sin in my life! How could I ever abide in Christ? My own actions and heart prove that I have no idea what this means and probably never will.

All three of these responses are the carnal mind in full force. It's the mind trying to bring the truth of Christ into the world of Adam. Trying to see all things according to what it knows, or experiences, or feels in the flesh. And all three of these responses could actually look good and appropriate to a carnal mind. The first one looks like spiritual confidence and boldness, when it is really blinded pride. The second one might look like seeking and inquisitiveness, but it is works, Law, and formula. The last one looks like humility, but it is self-condemnation, a disagreement with how God sees you, and a disregard for what God says is true.

A really good biblical example of this can be found in John chapter 8. Jesus is arguing with the Pharisees about several different things. Now it's easy for us to read this chapter and say to ourselves "Well, those religious Pharisees were so blind, etc". But what we can really see here is what it looks like when **any** carnal mind argues with the Word of God.

Jesus is very much desiring to communicate truth to these men, but the Pharisees are tripping over every single thing that Jesus says. Everything that Jesus is trying to share with them is being intercepted by their natural mind.

Jesus is talking about His Father, and they say “Where is your Father? I don’t see anybody!” Jesus is talking about setting them free, and they say, “We have never been slaves to anybody!” Jesus is talking about going away, and they think He’s intending to commit suicide. They are missing Him on every level. The carnal mind cannot grasp this Word.

Now to some it may look like the Pharisees want to know Jesus. It could appear that they are looking for the Messiah, diligently studying their Scriptures, and asking some really nice religious sounding questions.

But Jesus cannot even answer their questions. Their questions are so earth based, self-seeking, natural minded – He can do nothing to help them understand the answers that they are looking for. So finally He says “...**the reason you cannot understand me, is because my Word has no place in you**”.

These men are thinking and seeking according to a carnal mind. Their mind must have all things on their terms. It must make sense to them. And when the Word of God actually tries to make its way into their hearts conflict arises. There is an offense.

Now the offense doesn’t always manifest itself in anger. Generally it’s just unbelief, and a subtle rejection of the Word. The offense covers up the soil so it cannot receive the seed. And Jesus must say of them “My Word has no place in you.”

Yes, the Pharisees are asking questions. But they are not asking questions to receive the Word in their heart. They are asking questions to gratify their carnal minds. Oftentimes it is like that in us. **We have genuine questions, and feel like we are “seeking”. But what we’re really trying to do is make Jesus and His teaching fit into our theologies, our world-views, our desires and needs, our little categories of knowledge, or natural mind conceptions.** We can have the appearance of wanting to know God, but it is on our terms, and it’s for our end. There is a difference between asking questions and seeking Truth. The carnal mind asks plenty of questions, but must ultimately bow out of the way if Truth is to be known.

If not, Jesus’ words get stuck in our minds like a chicken bone in the throat. They just don’t go down to the place where there can be growth. We learn “words,” but the Living Word never makes it to the soil of our heart.

And so often, Jesus needs to say to us the same thing He said to them – “You do not understand my speech because you cannot hear my word. You can’t understand my speech, because there is no room in your heart for my word. If you had room in your heart for my word, then my speech would be music to your ears”.

Friends, as long as there are two contrary minds, there will never be an experience of union. There will never be an experience of the mind of Christ. As long as there are two minds, we can never walk in the New Covenant. As long as there are contrary minds, there will always be the experience of separation. We will feel and act as though we weren’t crucified with Christ. We feel and act as though we still live for God in the flesh. We feel and act as though there IS condemnation for those who are in Christ.

So if you’ll remember our hand analogy, we saw that the hand failed to experience union. It failed to live by the life that was in it. And the primary reason for this was because there was a faulty comprehension, a carnal mind comprehension of the nature of the relationship it had with my life. And, though I would have argued with you about this, for years my natural mind convictions of the nature of my relationship with Christ were so partial, so anemic, that I failed to experience life as a member of Christ’s body. The problem wasn’t that I wasn’t doing enough spiritual things, or lacked something of Christ. The problem was that I didn’t know the reality of new life, and so I was born of the Spirit, but walked in the flesh. I received Christ, but still saw myself in Adam.

Growth ~ The Discovery of a Finished Work

We finished the last session discussing how we fail to understand and therefore walk in the reality of the New Covenant. The New Covenant is our new relationship with God – union with Christ, the reality of being in Him. And so we need the Spirit of God to make us know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

So in order for us to really know, and therefore experience, walk in, abide in, the true nature of that relationship, there must be a renewing of our mind by the revealing of Jesus Christ. The problem is not that we lack Christ: the problem, in Paul’s words is “that we are acting like mere men”. (1 Corinthians 3:3) We are in Christ, but don’t know where we are, who we are, or what it all means.

And as the Spirit of God causes us “to know the things that HAVE BEEN (*not* will be) freely given,” that is where true transformation begins. The Spirit of God is trying to renew our minds so that we can know, walk in, live out, experience, the reality of being in Christ. So that we can “walk in the light as He is in the light and experience fellowship with the Father and Son”. This is where things begin to change practically in your experience. You might be thinking – “where does this get practical?” Friends,

there is nothing more practical than the transformation that begins to happen in you as Christ is revealed as your life – when His life becomes yours in experience. You come to the truth at new birth, but here is where the Truth begins to work in you.

All that is of the old is brought into an experiential end, and all that is of the new (of resurrection life) becomes what defines you on every level.

Paul says it this way:

- *2 Cor 4:14 Always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.*
- *Phil 3:10 That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.*

And all of this transpires in us as the Holy Spirit “guides you into all truth,” “teaches you all things,” “takes the things of Christ and unveils them to you” (John 14 – 16). This is what Jesus said the Spirit of Truth would do. **The Holy Spirit isn’t trying to show you something that you don’t have. The Holy Spirit is revealing a salvation that you do have. He is only revealing to you what is already there. If it wasn’t there, He couldn’t reveal it. If you knew it was there, He wouldn’t have to reveal it.**

When you were born again you received the entire life of Christ. You didn’t receive part of Him. You manifest Him in different ways, different giftings, according to different vessels. But each person receives full salvation at new birth. You receive the very life of God. You receive a finished work. You received Jesus - the entire Person. But now we must grow in the knowledge of the Person that we’ve received. Now we must grow in the view of what is now true because that Person is our life. Now, as the body of Christ, we are coming to share His mind. (1 Corinthians 2:14) We, who have become His body, must grow up into the sharing of His mind, His thought, His view, His heart, His perception.

So what increases is not the *amount* of Jesus that you have. What increases is the knowing, the experiencing, and the manifesting of the Jesus that you’ve had since new birth. In other words, what increases is the measure of His fullness that is working in you. Yes, there is an increased manifestation of Christ as you grow up in Him, but that is not because you’re getting more and more of Him. There is an increased manifestation because your soul is being transformed to bear the image, the likeness of the One who already lives in you.

It's not that you have a little baby Jesus growing up in you. And that is where the seed analogies might be a bit misleading. His growth in you is not the quantity of Jesus increasing: it is the manifestation of Christ increasing. It is His dominion over your soul, His kingdom taking ground in you. It's the increase of His government in you.

So it's not that a baby Jesus is growing up in you. It's that Jesus still has a little baby Christian that doesn't yet know what is real. Jesus has a baby Christian that is acting like a "mere man". Jesus has a Christian that still thinks he or she is supposed to live FOR Him, rather than be a branch of His life.

But you're not getting more of something you don't have. You are being transformed into the image of what you do have. And that is why transformation is through the renewing of your mind. You'll never have more of Jesus than you do right now. Not in a million years. But what you'll do is grow in your view of what you do have. You'll grow in faith. (And that's what faith is – it's a view of what you have. It is the spiritual seeing of a finished work: beholding all things fulfilled in Christ your life).

And so you will grow in your ability to abide in, walk in, live by, that which you do have. And that will bring forth a harvest. Therein will be the increase of that Seed. There will be an appearing in the earth of what was planted in that Seed.

And that is why when you look for the word "grow" in the New Testament, you're going to find it in the context of "growing in the knowledge of the Lord," "growing in faith," "growing up into Him in all things". **Spiritual growth is nothing other than the increased knowing and expressing of Christ who is your life.**

Someone might ask: "If I have all of Jesus right now, where then is the lack? I know myself, and I know there is something wrong somewhere."

Well, that's just what I've been saying. The lack is in your heart. The lack is in your inner man, your soul. The lack isn't in your discipline. A whole lot of discipline won't get you more of Jesus. The lack is in a heart that has not come to know its true Life. The lack is in a soul that does not see, therefore experience, therefore express, the reality of being in Christ. The reality of the matter is that your heart, your soul, and therefore your feelings, actions, understanding, will, etc., are not in line with reality. In fact, they are in many ways quite contrary to reality.

So we need to wake up! "Wake up, O sleeper, and Christ will shine on you". We're asleep in an "Adamic" slumber. We're hitting the snooze button and we're rubbing our eyes and peering out from under the covers to see a finished work. A work where you

have already been crucified with Christ. A work where it's no longer you that lives, but you've become a vessel of His life. A work where now, you walk by the reality of all things new in Christ, all things finished in Christ. Again, this isn't "mind over matter". I'm not talking about "if you believe it, it will be true". This isn't Peter Pan. I'm telling you that it is true and we don't believe it.

So, how do you live it? Well that's my point! You cease having to ask "how" because the more you see of Him, the more you see it's already done, and you just rest in it. You abide in it. The knowing of it doesn't change circumstances and situations. It changes YOU in all circumstances and situations. As we said earlier, it is simply not your "how". It's actually an escape from your "how". It's not what you do, it's freedom from all that you could never do. It's not your life – you've been crucified, and He is your life.

We're always asking "how". And the "how" has been finished for 2000 years and the entire New Testament is trying to teach us to enter into His rest. To rest in His finished "how". The how is over and we can't add to it. We can only live in it. It's a Person, and He's your life. We're always asking how, but the Lord looks at us and says "if you had anything to do with the how you'd be in trouble. I'm the how, now abide in me".

The House Analogy

Perhaps I can illustrate this more clearly with the following analogy. Suppose there was a man with a blindfold who sat on the floor of a dirty cave. And this man had always wanted to build a house. But strive as he may, he simply did not have the abilities or the resources. He was, in fact, so far from it, he couldn't even begin to build a house. Well, by some act of power and grace, the Lord actually picked him up from his cave, blindfold and all, and set him in the most beautiful house that this man could ever imagine.

The man was aware something had happened. The Lord had definitely done something. He could sense that there had been some change...but, as far as he knew, he hadn't left the cave. As far as he could tell according to his natural sight, things were the same. So he just sat there on the floor of this house continuing to dream of one day living in a house. There he sat, in the most perfect house ever finished, dreaming of what it might be like to dwell in a house.

And perhaps this would have continued indefinitely if it wasn't for the Holy Spirit who kept whispering to him that he was already in a perfect house. The man would often open up his Braille Bible and read passages like "But now you're in the house". But when he looked around he continued to see nothing of this house. It seemed as though

everything was the same as the cave. He saw the back of the blindfold – just like always. So he sat back down and continued to brainstorm ideas on how he could build a house.

But there it was again, on another page of his Braille Bible: “You have been translated out of the cave and made to sit in a finished house”. Well at last, out of desperation, this man got on his knees and cried out “Spirit of God, if I’m in a house, show me in a way that I can know, because as far as my natural eyes go, I see nothing of it”.

Well, the Spirit then began to show him first a wall, then a chair, then a door, then the bathtub, then the bed. Until he soon became so familiar with the substance, the reality of the house...he could never doubt it. In fact, he lived by it. He knew where everything was. He walked in it. He slept in it. He ate from it, drank from it, played in it, bathed in it. All that the Spirit revealed was real! It was substance. Though it could not be seen with his natural eyes, there was something better than seeing it with those eyes. There was living in it, experiencing it, enjoying it, sleeping in it. Far more real to him than the darkness of the blindfold was all that the Spirit of God had revealed to him about this new dwelling. *It was not his to build. It was only his to abide in it. It was not his to wait for: it was only his to know.*

And this is, more or less, what happens to us when we get saved. We’re actually carried out of one house and placed into another: out of one realm and into another, out of one man, Adam, and into another, Christ. Or as Paul says “transferred out of one kingdom of darkness and made to dwell in the Son of His love”. (Col. 1:13)

But, like the man in this analogy, we were placed into this new house but we carried with us the same old Adamic blindness that we had in the cave. We do not immediately know what has transpired. We do not immediately know the riches of glory in this inheritance. We do not know the things that have been freely given. And so now the Spirit of God is trying to give us a clear spiritual view (not a natural view) of this house. The Spirit of God is trying to reveal a finished house.

Christianity is not about forgiven people trying to build God a house. Christianity is abiding in a house that has been built. Christianity is not preparing a house for God in this earth. Christianity is manifesting the finished house of God in the earth. Christianity is not building a kingdom for God. Christianity is manifesting His kingdom in the earth as it is in the heavens.

But so many of us, so much of the time, sit in this finished house, and instead of asking the Spirit of God to “reveal the things that have been freely given to us by God”; instead of asking the Spirit to “take the things of Christ and reveal them to us as ours”...we still think we’re in the cave and we dream of a future house.

We've pushed everything off into the future because we haven't seen what is "now in Christ". We've believed it was for another time, or another place, or another person, because we don't see the house that we're in. We often decide that we won't really know this reality until our body dies. But the reality of being in Christ doesn't follow the death of your body: it follows the death of His cross. Paul was not writing his letters to dead Christians telling them the reality of being in Christ. He was writing to those who were still in a body – insisting that, though they were still in an earthen vessel, they had been translated out of a cave and into a finished house.

And the burden of the Apostles in their intercessory prayer life is exactly this. Have you ever noticed that most of the apostolic prayers are for the church (believers) asking God to give them the ability to see what they already are and already have? Have you ever noticed that? "God, grant them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the true knowledge of Jesus Christ". "Open the eyes of their understanding". "Give them a comprehension that surpasses the mind". "Let them increase in spiritual wisdom and understanding". "Let their love increase through true knowledge". "Show them that everything pertaining to life and godliness has been given to them through the true knowledge of Jesus Christ". "Cause their faith to become effective through the true knowledge of everything that is in them".

Why would the apostles pray this way? Because they knew that the Holy Spirit needs to show us the Truth as it is in Jesus. He must show us that we are a hand, attached to a body, and that we have been given the life of that body. We are not trying to get something that we don't have. There is much of the church's frustration. They are trying to get into a room that they're already in. But failing to see where they are, they strive to get there through works of the flesh.

It reminds me of what Paul says in Galatians 3:3. He says "You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now trying to come to maturity through works of the flesh? Or have you suffered all these things in vain..."

I'm sitting in my office right now. Imagine the frustration I would experience if, on a heart level, I didn't believe that's where I was and I was looking all over the walls and windows trying to figure out a way to get into my office. That's insanity! And yet, that is how I lived much of my life as a Christian.

Friends, Christ has been made unto you salvation. Christ is your salvation. Our salvation is a Person. We are in that Person, and He is in us. He is our life. And therefore our **experience** of that salvation comes with the revealing of that glorious Person. Unless we are learning the reality of our union with Christ, and all that that means, we can be "ever learning, but never coming to a knowledge of the Truth".

The Renewing of the Mind

You see, the very first thing that the Father desires to do after we are born of the Spirit is to “reveal His Son in us”. (Galatians 1:15) And until Christ is revealed in us as our life, everything we learn is just theology and doctrine. The journey of transformation really begins in the revealing of the Person who is your salvation: The Person who is your relationship with God.

This is incredibly important to understand. We can sit in church week after week and read our Bibles, but unless the Spirit of God begins to open the eyes of our understanding and reveal Christ in us, then we are just learning true information, not beholding the true spiritual reality that brings an experience of Christ’s life. Until Christ is revealed by the Spirit of God, all of the Bible remains theology to be studied rather than reality to be unveiled and experienced.

Peter followed Jesus around for a long time hearing His words and watching His deeds. But one day this thing went beyond words and miracles and Peter’s spiritual eyes were really opened, and he confessed out-loud “Jesus, You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God”. And Jesus was very quick to tell him, “Flesh and blood did not reveal that to you, Peter, but my Father in heaven. And upon this Rock (the Son revealed by the Father) my church will be built”.

What do I mean by Christ being revealed in us? Just exactly what Paul describes in Galatians chapter 1.

“But when God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles”. Galatians 1:15

Now some modern translations will translate this verse something like this – “When God, who set me apart even from my mothers womb, etc” – which makes it sound like Paul is referring to a sovereign calling. But any literal translation will show you that that is not what Paul is saying, nor is it what he means. (I’m not denying the reality of God calling people for specific purposes as He did with Jeremiah and others. I’m simply saying that this is not what Paul is referring to here.)

Here is what Paul is saying – “...when I came to the Lord, there was a severing from my first birth, my natural birth, life in the flesh – a severing that happens at the cross. But then the Father began the revealing of Christ IN ME. I was cut off, severed, from my adamic birth, my natural life, my mother’s womb. Then the substance of my new birth, my new life, began to be unveiled to me”.

This is exactly what Jesus is talking about when He says to Nicodemus “flesh gives birth to flesh, spirit gives birth to spirit. The flesh profits nothing, it is the Spirit that gives life”. (John 3:6)

Paul does not simply say that Christ was revealed TO HIM. No, Christ was revealed IN HIM as his own life (Col. 3:3). He was revealed in His temple – a temple that we are (1 Cor. 3:16). He was revealed in His City – a city that we are (Rev. 21:2). He was revealed in His body – a body that we are (Eph 1:23). And then Paul could, abiding in that life, present this Person, this salvation, this Christ to the Gentiles.

You see, once Christ began to be revealed in Paul, all of his life began to be the outworking of the indwelling Christ. Paul’s ministry wasn’t the passing along of true doctrines. It wasn’t spreading proper theology. It was the spreading of life. It was the manifesting of the one who was in him and revealed in him. That’s why he can say “For me to live is Christ.” (Philippians 1:21). And you find him making statements like:

“For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me”. Colossians 1:29

“Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us”. Ephesians 3:20

And perhaps one of the clearest statements of this is in Colossians 3:

“For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 Whenever (Gr.- “as often as”) Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed together with Him in glory”. Colossians 3:3,4

And it is with this comprehension, this inward reality, this living understanding that Paul could both write and live Galatians 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.”

So, we need a work to be done in our mind (not our brain, but our spiritual understanding) that is equal to and corresponding with the reality of new birth. In other words, we have been born of the Spirit, but if our minds are unrenewed, we will continue to walk in the flesh. We have been grafted into the Vine, but apart from the renewing of the mind, we will continue to live as a dead branch.

So let’s move on to look at what the Bible says about the renewing of the mind. We’ve already mentioned the fact that Paul and the New Testament authors were really trying to get Christians to realize that there was much they weren’t seeing. In fact, in the book of Ephesians, Paul praises the church for their growing faith and love, but then goes on

to ask God for an opening of their eyes to see the truth as it is in Christ. If you're like me, I might have been offended at Paul. But Paul obviously knew something about this process.

Paul was after genuine life transformation unto the exhibition of Jesus Christ. He was not seeking to dress up Adam so that he could better imitate Christ. Paul was after leaving Adam behind, and coming into an ever-increasing knowledge and experience of living in Christ. And that is what he means when he talks about being conformed to the image of Christ. It's not a super-charged imitation. It's a life impartation that can be lived out only as Christ is revealed. You received a new spirit the day your were born again, but you cannot comprehend that new spirit with an old Adamic mind. You need a renewed mind. You need to share the mind of the One who is your life. And this is the process that truly changes you into His image. Let's look at some verses.

- *“Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world, but be transformed (HOW?) by the renewing of your mind”*. Romans 12:12
- *“Lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on the new self, which in God has been created in righteousness and holiness and truth”*. Ephesians 4:22-24

Here he is saying that we are laying aside, not just the old actions, but the old self: the old nature, the old man who never changes. In fact, that old man is always being corrupted by the lusts of deceit. You can't change him. You must cease living by him. How? Vs. 23 – by the renewing of the spirit of your mind. That's how you can put on the new self. You'll see this over and over again in Paul's writing. But you have to see that Paul is telling us to **put on what we already are, by the renewing of our mind**.

There's a new life. A new man. A man that is in fact the righteousness, holiness, and truth of Christ Himself. And as the Spirit shows us the reality of being in Christ, one man is put off, and another is put on. Or, as with our previous analogy, as the Spirit reveals this finished house that you are in, you put off the cave-man. And now the reality of being in the house defines your heart.

- *“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory”*. 2 Corinthians 3:18

What's he saying here? Something quite similar. We are seeing the Lord without the veil of the Old Covenant (the veil of natural types and shadows – natural tabernacle, sacrifices, priesthood, etc). Now the Spirit is showing us the actual unveiled Son. We

are beholding Him. He is being revealed. But where are we seeing Him? We're looking into a mirror, and seeing the One who is in us. We're seeing Him in ourselves. We're seeing a true reflection of ourselves in God's mirror, and behold!... He's our life! Christ is being revealed as our life.

James chapter one talks about this same mirror. And what is happening? As we behold Him in us something is happening. We behold the truth of our union, the truth of our death, burial, and resurrection in Him. We behold, more and more, the truth of our being brought out of Adam into His glorious life. As we behold it with the eyes of the heart, we are being transformed into the same image. The reality of being in this house is breaking in upon our soul. It is like the dawning of a great light that is showing me what is real. A light showing me the very room in which I stand. And my heart, my emotions, my thoughts, my will are beginning to bear His image; bear His likeness. (And the "glory to glory" speaks of the Old and New Covenants – the glory of one in shadows, the glory of the other in substance...but we'll leave that alone for now.)

It's like the old scrolls that were sealed with wax and a signet ring. The ring pressed down into the wax, and the pattern on the ring conforms the wax to its own image. The pattern turns the wax into a replica, a likeness. The difference with us is that the signet ring of Jesus Christ is not pressing in on us from without, but it is bearing upon our soul from within. His Spirit bearing in upon our soul from the inside as Christ, our very life, is revealed.

- *“For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Whenever Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory”.*
Colossians 3:3-4

If you'll recall our previous hand analogy, this verse is saying that the hand has died to itself and has been grafted into and hidden in a new life altogether. But the hand doesn't understand where it is. That hand doesn't see the new life with its old mind. You can't understand a new life with an old mind. You need a new mind. You need a renewed mind. You need the mind of Christ to see it.

So, what happens? What does the next verse say? “Whenever (that's the literal word in the Greek – “as often as”) Christ”...here we have a process: a process of unveiling. “Whenever Christ, who is our life...” Who is Christ? He is *our life*. What is being unveiled, what is appearing to us? The reality that we have no life but Christ. Whenever Christ, who is our life, is seen, appears, is revealed, THEN YOU....then and only then will you be revealed together (Greek word indicating union) with him in glory. Glory here doesn't speak of some place far away, like “someday I'll be in glory”. Glory is the very Person who is Christ. Glory is the nature and character and reality of the One who is in you and the relationship you've come to in Him. Glory is what 2

Corinthians 3 said is what you were seeing in the mirror. “Whenever Christ, who is your life, is revealed, then you will be revealed with Him in glory”.

But Paul goes on a few verses later to say this:

*“Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its practices, and have put on the new self who is being **renewed to a true knowledge** to accord with the image of the One who created him”.* Colossians 3:9,10

There it is again! The same thing. The renewing of the mind. Renewing unto a true knowledge. We laid aside the old man, Adam, and we laid aside his practices also. We laid the axe to the root of the tree, and took care of the fruit also. And then what? Then we have put on the new self...the new man. And what is happening to this new man? He is being renewed to a true knowledge so that he looks like, conforms to, the image of the One who created Him. In seeing this he begins to bear Christ’s image and likeness, becoming the body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Each of these verses speaks of a transformation, a life change that comes through a renewing of the mind. Now, at first glance that might seem overly simple to you. It may not seem practical. But let’s examine this for a minute. Let’s get real practical for a minute and think about this question: what does it take for something to significantly change in you?

Now I’m not talking about a change where there is a substitution of one habit for another. You know, like giving up smoking, but chewing gum and drinking coffee instead. I’m not talking about giving up over-eating and become a fitness addict though you never really like the way you look either way.

What does it take to really have something totally change in you? Something totally transform? Is it discipline? Well, maybe something can change a little with discipline. But has discipline ever really changed your heart? What about your emotions? What about your will? What has changed these things?

Education? Well, education might change some things sometimes. But does learning facts about how anxiety works and how many people suffer from it really remove fear? What changes you?

I would suggest to you that the only thing that ever really transforms the heart is an inward change in perception of reality. When I see something, and come to know it as reality, then my mind, my emotions, my affections, and my will can begin to line up with that reality. But these changes are the byproduct of a change in my perception of reality.

Now this is somewhat true even of natural realities. But it is so much more true when the reality you are beholding is spiritual and eternal Truth as it is in Christ. And that is exactly why the unveiling of Christ as your life changes everything. It changes you from “glory to glory”, from “the old to the new”. When you see and know Truth in the inward parts, when God begins to open the eyes of your understanding, then and then only can you begin to know, experience, and express the reality of salvation.

Our problems are directly related to our view of reality. We are a product of the view of reality we currently see. We are experiencing and expressing whatever view of reality is working in us. When what we behold is not true, or worse, not life, we still experience and express that view. Paul calls that “strongholds of the mind”. Again, he’s not saying that this is simply a mind game. On the contrary, it is absolute and objective reality. But if you have not seen reality, you believe lies about reality, and you are defined by those lies.

Ask an 85 pound anorexic woman if she’s overweight, and you’ll see some of the power of lies. And if this is true in the natural arena, so much more in the spiritual. All that is real in Christ must be revealed by His Spirit to us. You can only live according to what you know to be real. Or in Paul’s words, you can only reckon on what you know.

That is why Paul addresses wrong behavior in the churches as he does. So often, rather than just saying “stop doing that,” he looks at the problem and says “hmmm...you obviously don’t know who you are”. “You obviously don’t know what is true of you”.

And you find him saying things like:

- *“Do you not know that you are a temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in you?”* 1 Corinthians 3:16
- *“Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?”* 1 Corinthians 6:15
- *“Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?”* Romans 6:3

And then he says “knowing that our old man was crucified with Him” (vs. 6) and “knowing that Christ was raised up” (vs. 9) and us in Him, “therefore **reckon** yourselves dead to sin and alive to God IN Jesus Christ”. (Vs. 11)

Reckoning is a natural and effortless response to a spiritual knowing. Reckoning is where what you know becomes what you experience. And, as Watchman Nee points out, the word reckoning is an accounting term. If I have seen that I have five dollars in my pocket, I can reckon on those five dollars when I’m standing in line for a meal. If I

don't know what I have in my pocket, I can only hope I have enough. If I have 5 cents in my pocket, it doesn't matter how much I reckon, it will not change the nickel into a five dollar bill. Reckoning will never change what we know. It only allows us to draw upon what we know. It allows us to live according to what we know. You can reckon yourself dead in Christ till you're blue in the face, but if you've never seen your death with Christ – if the Spirit has not unveiled that reality – reckoning is a lost cause.

If we have seen our death with Christ and new life in Him; if we have seen the light in our hearts of the glorious gospel in the face of Christ, then we can reckon. Then we can abide. Then we can experience the REALITY of our great salvation. Then we can walk in the light. Then we can be found in Christ, not having a life of our own. Then we can operate as a member of His body because we are no longer confused as to the nature of the relationship. Then we can abide in the vine and bring forth the fruit of His life. Then the seed grows up with the growth that is from God. Then Christ will be formed. 1 Peter 1:13 reads, “Fix your expectation entirely on the grace that is being brought to you at the unveiling of Jesus Christ”. (Concordant Literal Translation)

“Whenever Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you will be revealed together with Him”. If you have been made to know by the Spirit of God, then you can live in and by what you know. If you have been given a comprehension of the cross that comes from God, then you can walk in that comprehension. That is what faith is. Faith is a spiritual apprehension, a spiritual comprehension that brings an inward possessing of spiritual reality. As the Spirit of God grants true faith, then you can walk by faith. You can live by faith.

This is where total transformation happens – the transformation from one man to Another: from the first man to the Second Man; from glory to glory; from Adam to Christ. This is how you begin and continue your great exodus out from relating to God in Adam to relating to God in Christ. When Christ is revealed, then you are revealed and you leave the old behind. You can stand with Paul and say, “May it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of Jesus Christ, through which the world was crucified to me and I to the world”. (Galatians 6:14)

Water World Analogy

Transformation really boils down to one thing – the revealing of Christ who is our life. If we are born again, the problem is never that we lack Jesus. The problem is always that, in some way or another, we have not been conformed to His image through beholding Him. Our problem is that we have failed to put off the old man through the renewing of the mind. Familiarity with theology and doctrine is not the same as knowing the reality of being in Christ.

The reality of being in Christ is a bit like a world that we often read about, talk about, or sing about, but we fail to live there.

I'll use one more analogy. Let's say that mankind had lived all of his existence until Christ in water. I know it's impossible, but let's just say that we were born into a "water world". We tried to live in water, breath the water, run under water, sing and dance under water, play soccer underwater, etc, and it was getting totally frustrating. Running was extremely slow. The singing was bubbly and hard to hear. Every time we pushed the soccer ball down by our feet where we could kick it, the water immediately pushed it back up to the surface. It was a terribly frustrating existence.

Finally, Christ comes and says, "I have paid the price for you to live up on the land in the realm of the air. When you live in the air, you will realize all of the things you have wanted to do and be. You can breathe freely. You can run and jump, sing and dance, and even play soccer. Every blessing has been given to you **in the realm of the air but not in the realm of water.**"

So of course the people are elated to hear the good news. They say "Hooray! I can finally run and jump and breathe, and play soccer. Now that Christ has come, everything is totally different!" And then they get out their soccer ball, put it back down in the water and try to kick it; nothing has changed. They concentrate and try to believe as hard as they can what Jesus told them and begin running in the water, and they're just as slow as ever. They love Jesus, they believe Jesus, but sadly, they still try to do all of these things in the water. They try and try again in the realm of water and find it just as hopeless as before. So they become frustrated either at themselves and their failures or at Jesus and His promises. One way or the other, it just does not seem to be working out.

Then, one of them pulls out a water-Bible and reads "Walk in the air, and not in the water...and you will no longer be under the law of the water, but will know the freedom of living in the air". They sit around and teach each other that verse. They memorize it and have their water babies memorize it in children's church. They even build water Bible-schools to learn how to teach it, and get degrees in ministering the truth of it. But none of them comes out of the water to live in the air.

Well, what's their problem? It's obvious for us to see it in this silly little story. But so often we do the exact same thing. We're so glad He came. We love His book. We teach His stories. We memorize His words. But have we come to walk in the realm of air? Have we come through an experiential exodus out of one realm and into another? Have we made the great transition out of Adam and into Christ? I know we have transitioned according to doctrine and theology. I know the book says it time and again. But has it become the actual reality of where we live, move, and have our being? Has what is true of the Head become the experience of the body?

Now this analogy breaks down (as all do) in that it makes it sound like we're still in the water needing to get to the land. The reality is that we have been brought onto the sand, but are still trying to tread water because of our unrenewed water mind. All we know is water reality. The point of this analogy is simply to illustrate the reality of the two realms, the two lives. Abiding in Christ, walking in the Spirit, is not something you try to do in the flesh or just talk about in small groups. Abiding in Christ is not something we "try to believe in".

We are in Christ. We have been "made alive together," "raised together," and "seated together" in Him. This is the present reality for all who are in Christ. We all know that the Bible says these words. We memorize and teach the words. Yet, the reality is not words. The reality is an altogether new life.

So often we confuse concept with reality. We have water concepts, rather than air realities. The concepts are so familiar in our minds and established in our doctrines that we think we must know the substance, the reality. Of course we know about the concept of new life, the concept of abiding in Christ, the concept of the cross, and the concept of salvation. We've been Christians for years. But for the water people in the analogy, the true concepts turned into the reality of salvation only as they experienced the reality of living in the air.

Too often, because we do not find life and fulfillment in the water, we push the reality of the air off somewhere into the future. Seeing only water realities, we suppose that the air must be for another time. But it's not for another time. It's just another realm: another life - a new life, a new man, a new creation, a New Covenant. Your entrance into it is through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and not the death, burial, and resurrection of your body.

What we need is to experience the reality of His cross as our transition out of death and into life, out of Adam and into Christ, out of the old and into the new. The work of God in Christ is entirely finished. Ephesians 3:11 reads, "The eternal purpose of God was accomplished in Christ Jesus". And yet, unless we see that finished work, unless we know Him in His death, burial, and resurrection, that finished work has no expression in us.

As we come to see the reality of the cross – my death with Him, my burial with Him, and His resurrected life in me - then we begin to experience the reality of our salvation: the reality of being in Christ. Knowing Christ and Him crucified is like coming out of the water and into the air.

Paul said, "When I came to you, I determined to know nothing besides Christ and Him crucified". (1 Corinthians 2:2) For Paul the apostle, this was everything. And he would

never boast “except in the cross of Jesus Christ, through which the world was crucified to him, and he to the world”. (Galatians 6:14)

The reality of the cross must be worked into our hearts through the unveiling of Jesus Christ. As Christ is revealed in you, all that God has put away is taken away from your heart. And He who God has raised up from among the dead becomes your resurrection and your life. There is always the objective finished work of the cross, and then there is the subjective participation, experience, and expression of that finished work as it is unveiled in you in the Person of Jesus Christ. In other words, what God has finished must become finished in us as we “come to know even as we are known” (1 Corinthians 13:12)

The cross brings all of Adam to its end. The cross brings you into the reality and substance of resurrection life. The cross has finished the work objectively, and now works in us subjectively – revealing what is Christ and cutting off what is not. The cross uproots the old, and plants the new. It brings you out of the old and into the new, so you can eat true Food and drink true Drink. As the reality of Christ and Him crucified is revealed in you, God’s eternal purpose is accomplished. Your soul is conformed to the image and bears the fruit of Christ who is your life.

Part 7: Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I learn more?

For those of you who are not aware, my church, *Market Street Fellowship* in Akron, Ohio, has a website at www.marketstreetfellowship.com which has a large number of free teaching resources. There is a multitude of downloadable audio sermons and Bible studies as well as written transcriptions of sermons and teachings. Everything on the website builds upon the foundation of Christ as it is taught in this book.

All of the topics discussed in this book are an overview, and can be explored in greater depth through the resources provided on the website. If you have never downloaded audio off of the internet, there are instructions on the site to help you with that.

Please feel free to email me with questions of any kind. My email address is marketstreet981@sbcglobal.net

What are good works?

Inevitably, when people begin to really comprehend the cross, it brings up questions about good works. Understanding now that “I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me” changes everything. But what about the Scriptures that talk about good works? What about the passages that seem to tell us to do good things? What are good works?

These were some of my first questions. I couldn’t deny what I knew the Lord was showing me about the cross and about Jesus as the life of the believer. But, I didn’t know how it fit with what I understood to be biblical requirements to do good deeds.

It’s a good question. We’ve perhaps answered this in bits and pieces as we’ve gone along, but let me try to say it plainly. First, we need to remind ourselves what the goal of God is. Wrong presuppositions will always bring wrong conclusions. What does God want? Most Christians know that God desires for us to get saved by faith in Christ. But as we’ve talked about, beyond salvation, many people think that God is primarily after a certain **kind of human behavior**. We are supposed to act like Jesus, talk like Jesus, love like Jesus, do the works that Jesus did, etc. This, they think, is the kind of behavior that God desires from humans.

That may sound “spiritual”, but it really isn’t the right answer. God isn’t after a kind of behavior. If that was all that He wanted, He could have simply left us under the Law. If modifying our behavior was in any way suitable to Him, or like His nature, we could have stayed in the Old Covenant. The Law already was the righteous requirements of God as pertains to behavior, lifestyle, social interaction, etc. If God wanted us to try to simply act **like** Jesus, He might have sent Jesus to be an example for us, but He never would have had to send Him to the cross.

No, God wanted far more from us than modified Adamic behavior. He didn’t want a different kind of behavior; He wanted a different kind of life. (John 6) He wanted us to become partakers and then conduits of His Son’s life, not mere imitators of His Son’s behavior.

Now of course Christ’s life working in us manifests itself in outward ways that we call behavior, so the result of the New Covenant does involve a radical change of behavior. But behavior change is the by-product or consequence of new life. It is the outworking of the indwelling Christ. So the question in view here is not the appearance of actions or words, (i.e. did they seem friendly or mean, naughty or nice) but rather the **source** and **life** of those actions and words.

Here’s His question: are our words, our affections, our actions the outward manifestation of His indwelling life? Are they the effect that knowing Him is having on our soul? As Paul says, are we “manifesting the knowledge of Him in every place”. (2 Cor. 2:14) Or, are they the outward manifestation of our attempts to please Him in the flesh? In other words, are we bringing him the offering of Abel or Cain? That’s a key distinction involved in answering this question.

We have to remember what we are by nature. “In our flesh dwells no good thing,” “The flesh profits nothing,” “Apart from me you can do nothing”. “There is no one righteous, not even one”. Again, the question then becomes not whether a human judges an action to be good, nice, mean, friendly, or grumpy. The question of “goodness” has to do with source. Was it Christ in us, or just us? Was it a manifestation of life or death? Was it the tree of life, or you living according to your knowledge of good and evil?

Jason, are you telling me that I’m not supposed to try to be nice? Not really, I’m just saying that, as you grow up in Him, you won’t have to strive to behave contrary to your nature. You won’t have to try to be something you are not. You’ll become an effortless expression of who He is, and not just your best attempt to figure out what He’s like.

I think we mentioned this, but that is why the fruit of the Spirit are called the fruit “OF THE SPIRIT” and not the fruit of you acting like the Spirit. They are the natural

outworking of His Life. And they are contrasted there in Galatians 5 with the “deeds” of the flesh: the fruit vs. the deeds.

This is why the “deeds of darkness” in Ephesians 5 are contrasted with the “fruit of light”. Deeds are something you do, but the fruit Paul speaks of here grows out from Christ’s Seed. Our deeds are always darkness because they are always from a dark source. You can try to justify your flesh before God, but He knows the difference. His fruit is always good because it grows forth from His life. Again, that is why He says “a good tree always bears good fruit, and a bad tree always bears bad fruit”.

So, is God after good works from me? Well, of course! Of course He wants good works from you. But, what is “good”? Jesus says “there is no one good but God”. And if you are going to produce any “good works”, it is going to be His life working in you, and not your life working for Him. Every work that is good and lasting in God’s eyes is ALWAYS the outworking of our union with Him. It is never something we do apart from Him.

Well, what about this verse and that verse? Well, let’s look at some of those verses. Sometimes we are so accustomed to verses being used in the wrong way that we have never seen them correctly.

1. Doesn’t Paul say he labored and strived for God? Well, yes. But let’s look at how he says it. “For this purpose I labor, striving according to His power which mightily works in me”. Colossians 1:29
2. Are we supposed to work out our salvation with fear and trembling? Yes, but don’t forget the second part of that very verse. “*Work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure*”. Philippians 2:13 We are to, with reverence and awe, allow God to make manifest the glorious salvation that we have received.
3. Aren’t we supposed to present the members of our bodies as instruments of righteousness? Romans 6:13 Yes, but don’t forget that an instrument is something that is played by another. An instrument is used by another. No instrument plays itself. And just like us, an instrument has no real life unless it is played.
4. Doesn’t Scripture say that God is glorified when we bear much fruit? Yes, but do not forget John 15:4, “*Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch **cannot** bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me*”.

5. Am I supposed to pray without ceasing? Yes, but don't forget Romans 8:26, "*In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; ... He intercedes for the saints according to [the will of] God*".
6. What about in James, where it says that faith without works is dead? Well, that is certainly true. But again, let's define the terms. What is faith, and what are works? James is NOT saying that "If you say you believe it, you better prove it by doing something!" He's simply saying that true faith, the faith that has joined us to the Lord so that we became one spirit with Him, will always manifest itself. It always bears the fruit of His works. A true seeing of Him will bring a manifestation of Him. If there is no outward expression of the One to whom we have been joined, there is no inward seeing. There is no living faith.
7. What about where Jesus says, "*Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good [deeds] to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil [deeds] to a resurrection of judgment*". John 5:28 Again, let's not take this verse out of the context of the New Testament gospel. What does Jesus say about works? John 15:4-5 reads, "*Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me... Apart from me you can do nothing*". There are no good works in His eyes unless they are His works. The good works mentioned in these verses are not the means to His life, but the evidence of our partaking of His life. They are not something we do of ourselves in order to qualify for the life. The carnal mind always seeks to make works a means by which we are awarded life. But the New Testament is always presenting works as the outflow of the life He has given.

When we truly believe and know the One who is our life, we will become the expression of Him. In John 6:28 the Jews say to Jesus, "*What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered and said to them, This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.*"

Until we have a foundational understanding of the cross, we will misunderstand these passages every time. If we miss the reality that Christ is the life of the believer, we will always assume that these are **our** works. In other words, we will have the wrong head on His body.

The Jews of Jesus' day misunderstood this as well. What did He say again and again after performing miracles, or teaching the multitudes? He so often said things like - "The Father abiding in me does His works". "These words are not my own, but I speak the words of the Father". "I do nothing of my own initiative". He says this sort of thing

over and over again, especially in the book of John. This is because He was a branch of His Father's vine. Jesus did not come to manifest His own life or His own name. He came to manifest the life, works, and words of the Father. He says this plainly ~ "Father, I have manifested your name in the earth, not my own. I have not come to glorify myself, but you!" (John 17:4-6)

Now we are the branch, and Christ is the Vine. Now we are to say, "The Son abiding in me does His works. I only speak the words that He is saying. It is not I, but Christ that lives in me".

We miss so much if we don't see this foundational truth. We read the Bible with a carnal filter that perverts everything we see. With a wrong foundation we necessarily come to wrong conclusions. For example, we look at verses like Colossians 3:12 which reads, "*So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience,*" And we say, "Wow, I really have to work on mustering up some more love and humility". But there is no real humility in Adam. There may be things that have the appearance of humility – like suppressed pride or low self-esteem. But genuine humility is not an attribute of Adam: it is the fruit of His life being formed in you. It's the same with love, wisdom, righteousness, etc.

When we read that verse in Colossians 3:12, we often completely forget (or have never comprehended) what Paul just said a few verses earlier. Colossians 3:3,9 and 11 "*You have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God... you have laid aside the old self and put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge so that it can accord with the image of its creator... renewed so that Christ is all and in all*". **Then** Paul can say – put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience because, in its context, putting on such things is really putting on the new man. Understanding the right foundation makes you realize that putting on these attributes is simply putting on Christ your life.

There are so many verses where we make this mistake. Someone once asked me about a verse in Romans that seems to be talking about good works. Well, I'm sure it is talking about good works, but let's not forget what Paul goes to great lengths to show us in Romans chapters 5 through 8: we were crucified with Christ, planted together with Him in His death, and raised with Him so that we could walk in the newness of His life. Now, we walk by the Spirit, and not by the flesh. And THEN Paul brings up good deeds. THEN we can talk about the manifestation of Christ's life, what it is and what it is not in a specific church. Then Paul can say "Hey, stop doing this and that; those things are not Christ. Put on Christ. The Father wants fruit." He might even deal specifically with questions about how to manage our vessel in the earth, how to relate to

earthly governments, or how to wisely handle church discipline situations. But Paul does not forget the reality of the cross when he deals with such issues.

There are times when Paul does not go out of his way to re-establish the foundation of the gospel. He does not go back and say “not I, but Christ” at the end of every sentence. I am sure, having explicitly taught the cross both in person and in letter, that he could safely assume his readers understood. And so when he spoke of putting on compassion, for example, they would know they were really putting on Christ. (Romans 13:14) They would be quite familiar that Paul was speaking of “putting off the old man, and by the renewing of the spirit of the mind, putting on the new”. Paul had already labored to lay that foundational understanding.

What About Disciplining Myself?

To understand the purpose for discipline we must go back to the cross. We’ve talked about how the cross was a sword that divided two creations, two kinds of humanity, two natures. The cross was the death of one kind and the planting of another.

The cross brought us out of the old and into the new. It severed us from our first birth, and planted in us the very incorruptible Seed of Christ.

Though we are no longer “of this world,” we are still living in it because of our body. Though the cross has brought us into sharing the resurrected life of Christ, we walk around in an earthly tent. We are born of the spirit, but we live for a time in a physical vessel attached to the natural world.

So we find ourselves in a somewhat difficult predicament. “We have died and our life is hidden with Christ in God” but our bodies continue for a time bumping into the remaining vestiges of an old creation. We have received a new life, but our tent and our temporary campsite, so to speak, is in the earth. We are new creatures, encountering through our bodies the residue of the old creation.

As long as we are in this body living with an unrenewed mind, the world, and all that it offers, still makes an appeal for our attention, affection, and identity.

Paul and the writers of the New Testament admonish us to have nothing to do with the world that we have left behind and have everything to do with the world that we have entered. “Since you have been raised up with Christ, mind the things above,” “Fix your eyes upon Jesus,” “Set your affections on the things above,” and “Look not to the things of the earth,” etc. (Colossians 3:1,2)

So, because we are still in this body “The flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit lusts against the flesh, for these two are in opposition to one another so that you may not do the things that you please”. (Galatians 5:17)

Here is where discipline comes in. Discipline is not earning something from God. It is not getting God’s attention or adding something to your worth in His eyes. Nor is it “getting more of Jesus” through your effort or “taking the kingdom by force”. Man does not take anything from God. Man has been given all things from God in Christ. Even if you could, there is nothing left to take. Now, there is only knowing the things that have been freely given.

Discipline can be helpful in protecting you from being drawn into the blindness and deadness of a world that you have been raised up out of. It’s not meriting you something; it is guarding you against living in the flesh after you have been born of the spirit. I’m not talking about discipline protecting you from losing your salvation. That’s not what’s at stake here. I’m talking about protecting you from living in such a way where your earthen tent feels like life itself, rather than just a temporary shell.

Paul tells us in Romans 13:14 that we are to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ [His Life] and make no provision for the flesh with regard to its lusts”.

What does that mean? It means to not feed the flesh, now that you have become partakers of the divine nature. It means to not stimulate and resuscitate that which you are seeking to put away. Do not nourish that which is supposed to be dead and outside the realm of your experience. Do not supply yourself with reasons to be deceived that you are something you are not. Discipline is living in such a way that you protect yourself from things that hinder the increase of Christ within you.

Discipline does not earn life or produce life, it just protects life. Discipline can help create an environment that is conducive to the growth of the Seed within you.

Let’s go back to the Seed and dirt analogy for a minute. God’s desire is to grow the life of His Son in us (Gal. 4:19). In this analogy, discipline would not be something that makes the seed grow. It would simply be an umbrella to protect the Seed from acid rain, or from birds, or from weeds. It does not make growth happen, but it can help create an atmosphere where growth can happen.

I’m not just talking about staying away from overt sin and immorality. I’m talking about everything that can hinder the Spirit’s work to reveal Christ as your life. I’ll let the Lord deal with you as to what that means in your life.

Often our problem is that we water the Seed with one hand, and pour poison on it with the other. What do a few minutes of asking God to renew our mind do if, for the remainder of our day, we are immersing ourselves in that which causes the flesh to wrestle against spiritual reality, causing the natural world and the natural man to seem far more real than the reality of being in Christ?

Paul says to the church in Colossians. 2:5, “I am rejoicing to see your good discipline”. He was rejoicing to see that they were protecting the Seed of Christ’s life. He was rejoicing that they were being careful to foster an atmosphere that was conducive to Seed growth. He wasn’t rejoicing that they were gritting their teeth and disciplining themselves to act like Jesus. He was rejoicing that they were keeping themselves from things that “make provision for the flesh with regard to its lusts.”

So, if I cut back on my TV watching, it is not because God doesn’t like people that watch TV. And it’s not because cutting back on TV is making me more spiritual. It is because I want to be diligent to keep my mind on the road to knowing, abiding in, experiencing, and expressing the Life of Christ that is within me.

We can understand why Paul says, “resist temptation,” “flee from immorality,” “make no provision for the flesh,” or, in 1 Corinthians 9:27, “I discipline my body and make it my slave”. He is not telling you to do something to earn more anointing, more favor, or more spirituality. He is basically telling you to “work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure.” He is telling you to be wise in guarding this work of the Spirit in you.

So what about Spiritual disciplines?

Fasting, prayer, and the like have a purpose when understood correctly. But we are so quick to make these things a means to getting something we think we don’t have. We think that they are going to motivate God to relate to you differently, or give you more of Christ. And that is nonsense.

Let me try to say something that may be unfamiliar, but is absolutely true. **You are not trying to improve your relationship with God.** I know that this is how so many people talk. “My relationship with God is bad this week, but it was good last month”.

Friends, your relationship with God is Christ. You relate to God in Christ. You have been placed into Christ’s relationship with the Father. You are joined to Him and co-heirs with Him. You don’t have your own means or method of relating to God. You relate to God in His Son. Christ is your relationship with God. How could you possibly

change or improve upon the nature of that relationship? It really doesn't even make sense.

Let me say it even more plainly. If you are born again, you don't have your own individual relationship with God, you have Christ's relationship with God – and that's a whole lot better. And it never changes. It is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Now, what does change is your comprehension of that relationship and, consequently, your ability to rest in and experience that relationship. You might say you have had a good or bad week spiritually, but that is not because the nature of your relationship with God has changed. It is still Christ. Your bad week is because you have perhaps not seen, or experienced, or rested in the unchanging relationship with God that you have in Christ.

God does not relate to you as an individual person outside of Christ. He relates to you as a partaker of Christ's life and a member of Christ's body. Now that does not mean that He doesn't see you as an individual with an individual personality, but His relationship with you is based on you being brought into Christ. It is according to the covenant. You have entered into the Son's relationship with the Father, not your own separate relationship.

You experience that relationship as an individual, but it is entirely because you have been brought into the one relationship that the Son has with the Father. In the New Covenant, the Father says, "I'll relate to you in my Son. I'll see you with His life. I'll see you with His righteousness. I'll love you like I love Him, because you have been crucified and your life is hidden in Him".

Here is another analogy for you. My wife's name is Jessie. Jessie and I got married and began a covenant relationship. She is bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh. We are joined. There are certain things that are true of us in our relationship. I feel certain loving emotions for her. I provide food for her. I provide a place for her to live. I am loyal to her. I speak kindly to her. These are all part of our covenant relationship.

Well, after a while, Jessie conceived and had our son Ezra in her womb. So, inside of her is another person. Inside of her is the life of another individual that is joined to her. By virtue of the covenant relationship that Jessie and I have, this baby, which is hidden in Jessie, receives the benefits of a covenant relationship that existed before he was even born. By virtue of me fulfilling my covenant with Jessie, I am thereby protecting, loving, providing for, cherishing, and speaking kindly to this indwelling little one. He relates to me in her. He experiences the relationship that I already have with her. If I go shopping and bring home some food for Jessie, guess who else is nourished? I give

Jessie a hug, guess who else gets a hug? When Jessie goes to bed in a warm house, guess who else stays warm?

It is the same way with you and Christ. You have been brought into Christ, and thereby His relationship with the Father, a relationship that existed before you were ever conceived. You do not have a separate way of relating to God on the side. You relate to God either in Adam, or in Christ. If you are in Christ, then you are like that baby in Jessie's womb. You have entered into the benefits of an eternal relationship, and that relationship doesn't change.

Again, the variable here is our comprehension and our experience of that relationship. But our striving with spiritual disciplines, or by any other means, is not going to change the nature of our relationship. Prayer and fasting have their purpose, but they will never alter the nature of your relating to God in Christ.

Should I do nothing until Christ is formed in me?

I have heard this question a number of times. Should I do nothing until Christ is formed in me, until I am walking entirely in the newness of His life? Of course not! When Paul said "you have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer you who live but Christ that lives in you," the next verse isn't "FREEZE! Hold perfectly still and don't think! You might accidentally think something or do something that isn't Jesus!"

Over and over again Paul tells us that we are in a process of putting off the old man, and through the renewing of the spirit of our mind, putting on the new man. We are being transformed by beholding the Lord. We are being changed into His likeness from glory to glory. This is a process for everyone. God isn't losing sleep over your dead works. To Him, Adam is in the grave, the old is done away and the new has come. It is finished. So it is no newsflash to Him that we have borne the fruit of Adam. It may be news to us, but He is quite aware of our dead branches and our plastic fruit.

Don't condemn yourself for what He has already condemned. Just turn your heart to know Him, and know that He will work the cross in you by His Spirit. He will take every city by the brightness of His appearing. Don't try to give yourself a report card every three days. Just seek that the Father would reveal His Son in you, and know that it will be a process of putting off what He has already put away, and putting on the One who is your resurrection and life.

Are there things I can do to help along the process?

Well, Christ isn't going to be formed in you if you sit back all day and watch MTV. But, with that said, this is nothing other than a work of the Spirit of God.

No sooner do I try to answer this question than so many people go right back into trying to make a formula. For the purpose of this study, let me just say this - Come to Him like a little child who knows absolutely nothing and needs to be shown all things by His Spirit. Humble your heart before God and ask Him to reveal His Son in you.

How Do I Know If It Is Christ Or Me?

When I was first seeing Christ and Him crucified in this way, I found chapter 12 of *The Normal Christian Life* by Watchman Nee to be helpful with this question. In this chapter, Nee talks about how this is a very normal question for people who are somewhat new to understanding the cross. He says, "Trying to look within, to differentiate, to discriminate, to analyze, themselves only brings them into deeper bondage. True inward knowledge will never be reached along the barren path of self-analysis". His conclusion is simply that "In His light, we see light". (Psalm 36:9) We will begin to know because it becomes plain to us. The flurry of questions in our natural mind start to disintegrate as we see more and more in His light.

Honestly, that is just another way that our natural mind can hinder our growth. We're so concerned with whether we're doing it right, or whether we're getting better, that we get our minds off of Christ and back on ourselves. We analyze everything as though we can see spiritual reality with the carnal mind. It becomes condemning, distracting, or a source of pride. I have found it so much more helpful simply to fix my eyes on Jesus, the author AND PERFECTER of my faith. My view of spiritual reality is in Him. He started it. He will perfect it. When my gaze falls down from Him, I only see myself.

John the Baptist says, "He will increase, I will decrease". That's exactly right. It doesn't say "I will decrease, and He will increase". No, the increase of Christ will be the decrease of you. So fix your heart on Him, to know Him as your life. Seek that Christ be revealed by the Spirit of God. When He is on the increase in you, I guarantee you will be on the decrease. As you grow up in Him, you won't have to ask this question any more. It just becomes more and more apparent.

Why does Paul say "imitate me"?

What about the handful of places in the New Testament where Paul tells his readers to imitate him, or to imitate Christ. Well, again, we don't throw away everything else that

Paul teaches us in trying to interpret these verses. These verses have a wonderfully valid interpretation that is in keeping with the New Covenant.

This may be obvious to you by now, but it's not the works themselves that we are supposed to imitate, but the way of Life. How did Jesus always live? Abiding in the Father, doing nothing of His own initiative; never a word or action that wasn't the Father in Him. How did Paul live? Well, he tells us himself. "I have been crucified and no longer live, but Christ lives in me". "For me, to live is Christ". Jesus lived abiding in a vine, bringing forth the fruit of Another's vine. Jesus lived as a vessel. Paul lived abiding in a vine, bringing forth the fruit of another's life.

Friends, we're not supposed to simply copy the words or works of Jesus or Paul. Jesus said this, now I'll say it. Paul did this, now I'll do it. That's pretty silly if you think about it. It's pretty external and superficial. We're supposed to imitate **the way** that they lived, abiding in the vine, living by the life of Another, so that we can bring forth the same reality of life. Now that's worth imitating. Imitate somebody that never steps out of union with Christ. Imitate someone that never acts on their own initiative, but has become "the fragrance of the knowing of Christ in every place". Yes, imitate that. Imitate how they live, not just the specific things they do or say.

What is the process like?

Let me start by saying that being conformed to Christ's image isn't a 40 yard dash. It is a journey that involves breaking with one "life" and being found in another. It's a journey of being renewed in the spirit of your mind so that you can put off the old man and put on the new. It's a journey that you will be on every day of your life. But, the good news is that, contrary to what I used to experience, it's a journey that bears fruit. It's a journey that conforms a soul to Christ's image. It's not like trying to pray harder, fast harder, do the spiritual disciplines and still get nowhere because we're trying to get out of Adam through the strength of Adam, and not the cross of Jesus Christ.

So, it is a process. But it's not the hopeless process of trying harder and harder to live the "dog life".

Also, let me say that it is just like our carnal minds to be more concerned about whether our transformation is "working" according to whatever our definition of "working" is, than with whether it is true. To be totally honest, sometimes our view of "working" is so earth-bound, me-centered, and natural minded, that it bears little or no resemblance to the Father's ultimate intention. The Lord spoke to my heart one day as I was praying about this and said, "Son, don't focus on whether you think it's 'working'; focus on whether it is truth. If it is truth, it will set you free". And that's exactly what Jesus said.

“If you abide in my word, THEN you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free”. If it is true, you know it, and it will make you free.

We generally say, “Ok, here’s what bugs me about myself and about life. If Jesus is real, or if such and such a message is true, then it will fix this thing in me and it will do it by next week”. But the Lord impressed on me not to box Him in with all of my me-centered ideas, and to just spend some months really focusing in on seeing the truth. Just seek to have the truth revealed in me, and forget for a while about my selfish expectations.

How Is Adam Dead?

A number of people have asked me what it means that Adam is dead. I keep quoting Scriptures that say Adam is crucified with Christ. If Adam is dead, then why does he still seem to be so alive?

Well, Adam is dead. Adam was brought into the death of Christ and wasn’t resurrected. But Adam didn’t, thereby, cease to exist. In order for us to understand this, we’re going to have to define the word death. Sometimes when we think of the word “dead” we think of “ceasing to exist”. We think of a state of inanimation. But that is actually not a good biblical definition of the word dead.

Biblically speaking, dead doesn’t mean a ceasing of existence or a state of inanimation. Death, biblically speaking, simply means separated from life and from the One who is Life; cut off from the land of the living (which Christ is). Death is a state where there is no participation in Life. It is quite an active and animated state. It can be totally active, and still be dead.

You see this in a lot of Jesus’ words. He often said things like “Let the dead go bury their dead”. Let those lacking spiritual life go bury the physically dead. Or He’ll say to the Jews “Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you have no life in you”. And yet they’re standing right in front of Him seemingly quite alive.

Death is the state of being separated from Life. Death can be active and busy, but it is still death because there is nothing of true Life in it. Yet death doesn’t know it’s dead, until it sees Life. That is exactly how Adam is dead. He is permanently, eternally, cut off from all that is Life. He has been brought into a permanent state of judgment, separation, where nothing of his kind will ever know Life. There is no Life in him.

But that doesn’t mean that he has ceased to exist. There is a difference between existence and Life. The Adam nature still exists. It can still have expression in you.

But there is no Life in it at all. There is no Life in Adam. That is finished. Whatever you might experience in Adam, whether it seems good or bad, is death, because in him there is no Life at all. There's been a judgment on that kind. "When one died for all, all died". Adam is dead to God.

What is carrying my cross, or dying daily?

In light of the fact that the cross of Christ finished the work, crucified Adam, put him away together with his creation, and made all things new in Christ, what does it mean for me to carry my cross, or die daily?

Carrying your cross, or dying daily, is the reality of the cross of Jesus Christ now working in you. It is where what is finished by Him and in Him starts to bear fruit in you. All that is not of Him is cut down and thrown into the fire. In other words, it is your daily experience of coming to know His death as your death, and His Life as your Life.

Carrying your cross may or may not have anything to do with physical or emotional pain. You see, it's not your sufferings or your death that bears the fruit of His life. Look at these verses:

- *"Always bearing about the **dying of the Lord Jesus** in the body, so that the life of Jesus also might be revealed in our body". 2 Corinthians 4:10a*
- *"That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of **His sufferings**, being made conformable to **His death**". Philippians 3:10*

You'll notice here, and elsewhere, that we are being conformed to His suffering, His dying, and His death. He is the only one who died the death that leads to Life. He died to sin. He died to the Adamic man. He died to the old creation. That is the death that needs to be working in us if we are going to know His resurrection Life.

This death of Christ is not something that can be performed by you. It was performed by Him, but is true of you because He is your Life. Consequently, it must be revealed in you. That might sound confusing at first. It did to me. We have teaching resources available on our website that explore the reality of how this cross works in us in greater detail. But for the purpose of this study, let me try to summarize it like this -

Adam and his world, having been put away from God through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, must now be put out of our darkened, earth-bound, carnal, sense-based, and flesh-loving soul through allowing God to crucify that world to us and

us to the world. This is the cross we carry. It's a cross that steadily removes from our heart, desires, and view, everything that the cross of Jesus has put away.

Yet, His cross works only as He is revealed. Only in the seeing of Him do we ever see what is not Him and allow it to fall away from us. Only in the light does our darkness pass away.

How do we teach this to kids?

Some people have asked me what to do with kids. They don't want to put their kids under the Law and just say "do this" and "don't do that". They don't want to raise them up with legalism and bondage. They want them to learn Christ. They want Christ formed in their children. But the children are too young to really understand the cross or know Christ as their life.

Well, I think that's a really good question, and one that I've pondered because I have four kids. There's a little saying that I have come to use when faced with questions like these. It goes like this: "Self control is necessary when self is still in control". In other words, if a person is completely living in the flesh, it is appropriate to exercise self-control.

We obviously can't just let our kids run wild and live totally by whims of the flesh simply because they're too young to learn Christ. And so, it seems to me that self control is helpful as long as self is still in control. You have to teach your children the righteousness of God so that they know what is good and righteous and so they'll do their best to relate to others in these ways.

Remember, the Law isn't evil. Paul says that the Law is holy, righteous, and good. What's not good is the flesh. What's not good is that we can't walk according to the Law. The Law is weak because of our flesh. (Romans 8:3) But that doesn't mean it's the enemy. It just means that it brings us to a place of seeing our need for Christ.

You could make the same argument for the civil laws of our land. Why should we try to enforce civil laws? I mean, if it's not Christ, it's nothing anyway. Well, yes and no. Obeying civil laws is not the same as manifesting the life of God, that's for sure. But, for the sake of society, for the sake of relationships, and for the sake of safety it is not appropriate to let the Adamic man do what is right in his own eyes. Law is necessary when man lives in the flesh.

It seems the same to me with kids. Yes, teach them what is right and wrong. Of course enforce proper behavior. But, when they are old enough to begin to hear, start sharing

with them the truth of the gospel. Share with them that there is a new life, a new creation, a new covenant. When they are old enough, teach them the truth and ask the Spirit to reveal what it means to walk in the spirit and no longer carry out the desires of the flesh.

Why do you often quote from a Literal Bible?

I really like Literal Bible translations primarily because I really like to know, as close as I can, exactly what was written. But that is not to say that I don't like some of the more popular English translations. I think that several of our translations are good, trustworthy, and helpful.

The problem that you occasionally run into is this: a translator can only bring over into his language what he understands himself. If he reads a verse in the original Greek, he has to, at some point, say, "Hey, I think I know what that means, and here's how we would say it in English". But, can you see how that allows for a significant measure of personal interpretation? Can you see that the translator is saying, "I think Paul probably means x y z".

Often they are right. But sometimes, I've found, they are not. There are times when they deliberately (and they will tell you this plainly) change a word or a verb tense to try to "make it make more sense in English". Again, often this is helpful, but there are times when, rather than clarify, it actually obscures something of the original intent of the author.

So I always have a few literal translations on hand. And I'm always checking things in the Greek or Hebrew just to make sure that I know what was really written. A literal translation is not a necessity, but it is a good study aid to have on your shelf. I would certainly recommend buying a literal translation.

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