

# Crucified With Christ

*The Reality of Walking in the Spirit*



by

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## Introduction

All religions are man's attempt to find salvation. They may appear to be different but each religion sees men trying by their own efforts to please God by works of the flesh. But God has declared that there is salvation only in Jesus Christ. Scripture says, "There is salvation in no one else; for there is no name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved," (Acts4:12) - speaking of **Jesus Christ the Nazarene who was crucified**, whom God raised from the dead. (cf.Acts 4:10) This salvation is by grace, through faith, for the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, "The just shall walk by faith." (Romans 1:17) It is not by works that any man can boast. (cf.Eph.2:8)

If we believe that God raised Jesus from the dead we are able to confess Him as our Lord. This repentance in His Name - turning towards God by a confession of the Lordship of Jesus in our lives - leads to salvation through faith and to the promised forgiveness of our sins

There are many religions and it may seem strange but among these there is a 'Christian Religion' which is not true Christianity. There is a Christian Religion that is devoid of the Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit men are kept from the reality of a true life in Jesus Christ. So it is necessary to distinguish between that which is just religion. even the 'Christian Religion', that requires works of the flesh to try to acquire righteousness, from that which is true Christianity, that requires faith and repentance. True Christianity demands a walk by the Spirit through faith and not of any works of our own. (cf.Ephesians 2:8)

To this day we still see True and False Christianity mixed together as the whole creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God, those who are true sons who walk by the Spirit. (cf.Rom.8:19) But already, as we approach the end of this age, the separation of the tares from amongst the wheat is in progress, just as Jesus foretold, a separation that has yet to fully see the True Church arise and shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. with no tares in their midst. (cf.Matthew 13:43)

The purpose of this booklet is to endeavour to explain something of the 'Spirit led' walk. It is possible the reader has called on the Name of Jesus yet never repented of his own efforts to achieve God's righteousness, and never declared Jesus as their Lord. If one has given their lives to the Lord it is possible that as a babe in Christ they are still trying to walk by sight, by works of the flesh, and not by faith, not fully understanding the Spirit led walk they have been called to. And it is still possible for a believer, having tasted of the things of the Holy Spirit, to return to the works of the Law again forgetting that they received the Spirit by hearing with faith. (cf.Galatians 3:2)

## **The True Believer**

The true believer is one who has been made righteous through his faith in Christ and not by his own works. His sins have been forgiven him because of the price paid by Jesus Christ upon the cross. But Jesus' life has also been imparted to him by grace, causing him to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Not only is the true believer forgiven but he has also been given new life.

The reality of this salvation is that a new spirit and a new heart have been given to the true believer and his heart of stone has been

removed from his flesh and a heart of flesh has been given to him. So it is God has been able to put His Spirit within the true believer to enable him to walk by the Spirit and observe His commands. (cf. Ezekiel 36:26&27)

## The Nature of Man

God made man in his His own image. He is a spirit, who has a mind, a will and emotions - his soul - who lives within a body. Scripture refers to man being made up of spirit, soul and body. (cf.1 Thessalonians 5:23)

So it is that God has put His Spirit within the true believer to cause him to walk in His statutes and be careful to observe all His commands. (cf.Ezekiel 36:27) What man could not do by his own efforts, trying to fulfil the commandments of God, he can now do by the Spirit of God that is within him.

Before he is born again of the Spirit of God man *tries* to walk in righteousness, *trying* not to do the things he hates because sin is still within him. He might desire to do good but finds evil is present within his flesh, realising no good thing dwells in him. But in the true believer, through Christ Jesus the requirement of the Law is fulfilled in those who walk according to the Spirit.

Through the miracle of new birth the true believer is circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the removal of the body of flesh. This circumcision of Christ enables the true believer to set his mind on the spirit and so walk in newness of life. This new man In Christ died, having been crucified with Him and was also made alive together with Christ when He was raised from the dead. **There is no longer a need to try to die for in Christ the true believer is already**

**dead.** He just has to walk in this reality by faith. But do you *know* this? As believers do we understand this exchange of life that has taken place when we gave our lives to Him that Jesus might give us His? If Christ is in us, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is alive because of righteousness. (cf.Rom.8:10)

## Questioning ‘Death To Self’

Many believers are still **trying** to walk by their own effort, **trying** to die to the lusts of the flesh. Confusion is created when others say that we are to ‘die to self’ as if it were something we have yet to **try** to do.

What is our concept of ‘self’? Jesus, when talking to a lawyer about the greatest commandments of the Law, stated that the second commandment was, “You will love your neighbour as yourself.” (Matt. 22:39) It is evident that unless we love ourselves we cannot love our neighbour as we should. This, however, seems contrary to the idea that we are to ‘die to self’. The actual phrase, however, ‘death to self’, does not appear in scripture yet we often hear this given as an ongoing goal for a Christian. It causes many to return to the Law. This command makes us think that some effort is required on our part to bring our death about. This is far from the truth for we are called to walk by faith and not by works of the flesh. **But more importantly it denies that we are already dead!**

Jesus said, “He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to eternal life.” (John 12:25) The word ‘hate’ in Greek can be used in the sense of malicious feelings to others, but can also be used of the right feeling of aversion towards that which is evil.

It was in this last regard that Jesus said, “He who loves his father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me”, before going on to say, “He who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life shall lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake shall find it.” (Matt.10:37-39)

We need to understand what Jesus meant when He said, "If anyone comes after Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:26-27) This hatred of 'ones own life' by comparison to our love for the Lord cannot be contrary to loving oneself. We need to therefore correctly understand Jesus teaching to love ones own life by losing it. Jesus said, "He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal." (John 12:25)

Though scripture does not say that we are to 'die to self' Jesus did teach that, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, **let him deny himself** and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it." (Matt.16:24)

In trying to understand exactly what Jesus is saying about denying self, losing ones life and hating ones life, it is unhelpful to simply equate ones 'self' with ones 'life' but rather, we must understand that our old 'man' is now dead and we have become a new 'man' in Christ - "a new creation." (cf.2Cor.5:17)

This choice to give up our life for the life of the Lord Jesus begins at new birth but becomes an ongoing daily desire to walk in the will of God, our Father, and not in our own will. It is all about Jesus being Lord and our 'self' no longer being our lord. It is about living in the reality of Jesus life that He has imparted to us when we are born again.

## **Crucified With Christ**

For the new believer who has been born again of the Spirit, it is essential to understand that our old 'man' was crucified with Christ. If we have been born again of the Spirit of God we no longer have to die or *try* to die but we have to realise that our old man is already dead and accept this fact by faith. We have to accept our death occurred on the very day we were born again for not only did Christ come to dwell in us by His Spirit but we were baptised into Christ by the same Spirit. Because we *were* - past tense - crucified with Christ our body of sin

can be done away as we walk in the Spirit. We need no longer be slaves to sin for we have died with Christ in order that we might live with Him. (cf.Rom.6:6&8)

We have to **consider** ourselves dead to sin but is impossible to “**consider ourselves** dead to sin” if we do not **know** that we were (past tense) crucified with Christ. (cf.Rom. 6:6) ‘**Knowing**’ comes before ‘**considering**’. Even though this reality - that we were crucified with Christ - has taken place, we might walk as if our body of sin is still alive. To walk in newness of life we must **know** that we have been united with Christ in the likeness of His death and also in His resurrection, because we have! (cf.Rom.6:4&5) We cannot believe beyond our spiritual understanding. Therefore, **knowing** we were crucified with Christ is essential if we are to walk the walk of faith in newness of life.

Once we **know** we have died with Christ and are already dead we can **consider** ourselves as dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus (cf.Rom.6:11) because we were also raised with Him. There is no effort in this, just a belief in what Christ has already done for us. We can now present ourselves as alive from the dead and present our members as instruments of righteousness to God by faith, (v.13) and because we have been freed from sin by the work Jesus has already accomplished in us we can be slaves of righteousness. (v.18)

Very much part of this becoming a reality is that it is no longer our will that we seek but the will of our Heavenly Father, a choice we make by faith from our hearts. Jesus has to be our Lord.

## **Making Jesus Our Lord**

It is possible to believe Jesus was raised from the dead but never having made Him our Lord. Many who have believed in Jesus Christ have not confessed Him as their Lord. It is in confessing the Lordship of Jesus in our lives, and turning away from the carnal nature in which we are born into this world, where our own ‘self’ is lord, that we can have faith towards God. We must not only believe that God raised Jesus from the dead we must also confess that Jesus is our Lord. (cf.Rom.10:9&10) Confessing Jesus as our Lord and our one and only Master necessitates that we then do what He says. Jesus asked the

question, “Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord’, and not do what I say?” (Luke 6:46) Once we have confessed Jesus as our Lord all we do we do for Him. (cf.Col.3:17)

Many have desired to be saved purely by believing that Jesus has been raised from the dead, and yet they have not given up their right to themselves! They, themselves, are still lord of their own lives, and they have not in reality confessed that Jesus is their Lord. This exchange of life is the reality of repentance. It is not only necessary to believe but “*repent* and believe.” Only then do we receive the forgiveness of sins we might desire and only then do we receive the Spirit that changes our life. Many have not yet lost their life that they might gain it. In reality they have never died! Many are not truly saved and so are not able to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ and so make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.” (Rom.13:14) A true walk in the Spirit therefore eludes them.

## **Our New Life In The Spirit**

This new life that we now should live is the essential walk in the Spirit every believer should have. It is not a solitary walk but a walk of intimacy with our Lord. It is possible to still be able to set our minds on the flesh, either through ignorance or disobedience but this means that we miss the high calling of God that should be the reality of every true believer. Many, because they have never made Jesus Lord, cannot embark on this true walk in the Spirit. Every true believer who has been born of the Spirit of God should be setting their minds on the things of the Spirit, not the things of the flesh for the mind set on the spirit is life and peace but the mind set on the flesh is hostile to God and those who are in the flesh cannot please Him. (cf.Rom.8:4-6)

But the good news is that if we have been born of the Spirit we are not in the flesh any longer, if, indeed, the Spirit of God dwells in us. If we are in the Spirit and Christ is in us, though the body is dead because of sin our spirits are now alive because of righteousness. And because the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead now lives in us He will now give life to our mortal bodies through His Spirit who now indwells us. (cf.Rom.8:9-11) A miraculous exchange has

occurred! An exchange that flows out from our spirit and soul into our bodies.

## **Being Led By The Spirit**

If Jesus is truly our Lord we must no longer live according to the flesh but live according to the Spirit, putting to death the deeds of the flesh, not by works, but by walking in the Spirit, setting our minds on the Spirit who brings forth the reality that is now ours in Christ. Thus it is these who are the true sons of God - those who are being led by the Spirit. (cf.Rom.8:13&14)

## **We Are New Creations**

If any man is in Christ he is a new creation, the old things passed away; behold all things have come new. (2 Cor. 5:17) This is the wonderful reality if we have been truly born again of the Spirit, having not only believed but confessed Jesus as our Lord, and have received the very life Jesus came to give. If anyone does not have the Spirit of God dwelling in them he does not belong to Him. (cf.Rom.8:9) In Christ we are no longer dead in our transgressions but God has made us alive together in Christ, saving us by His grace, and raised us with Him and seated us with Him in heavenly places. (cf.Eph.2:6) This reality is confirmed for the “Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.” (Rom.8:16)

## **Not Only Dead But Made Alive In Christ**

So we can understand why Jesus said, “You must be born again.” (John 3:7) It is not an option. But even when this has become a reality in our lives we need to understand and **know** it is no longer I that lives but Christ that lives in me, so that the life we now live in the flesh we live by faith of the Son of God who delivered Himself up for us that we might be born again and receive His life. (cf.Gal.2:20)

We are transformed as our minds are renewed with the understanding of this reality. We then understand that we have been given a new

spirit and our inner man is a new creation. Our understanding catches up with our experience.

We then understand that not only have we been given a new spirit but we have also been circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the removal of the body of flesh by the circumcision of Christ. (Col.2:11) This separation of our inner man from our body of flesh enables us to live by the Spirit as we set our minds on our spirit. We do not need to **try** to achieve a walk of righteousness by works but through faith we are to walk in the newness of life that we already have. We are not to **try** to count ourselves as dead, for we would be doomed to failure, but we must come to **know** that we have already died and have already been crucified with Christ and already raised with Him.

## **Taking Up Our Cross Daily**

The cross we take up, therefore, is not to deny 'self' by works of the flesh but rather by faith walk in this newness of life - by the Spirit - **not to do our own will but our heavenly Father's**. Our daily prayer and our daily desire is that the Father's will be done in our lives: "Father not my will but your will be done," becomes our way of life. This is the confession Jesus taught us to pray every day. (Matt.6:10) In this there is no need for 'self' control only abandonment, a giving of ourselves to the Lord, that He might live His life through and in us.

## **Temperance - a Fruit of the Spirit**

To speak of 'self control' or the control of 'self' suggests that effort is required to accomplish our walk as believers but such works of the flesh always fail. There are the many references in some translations of scripture that speak of 'self control'. The Greek word, "enkrateia" is often translated as 'self control' rather than by the English word 'temperance'. But it is not by the exercise of self control, by an exercise of our will, but it is by the operation of the Spirit of God in our spirit that we walk in righteousness. 'Temperance' is one of the nine fruits of the spirit, a result of a Spirit led walk, not an outcome of the exercise of will: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, **temperance**; against

such things there is no law. (Gal.5:22&23) This fruit comes from our 'being' not by our 'doing'. It is the fruit we bear when we walk in Christ Jesus.

So Paul teaches, "Now those who belong to Christ Jesus, the flesh is crucified with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." (Gal.5:22-25). Some bible translations say those who belong to Christ "have crucified" the flesh but in reality it is not us who do the crucifying but we must accept that we *were* (past tense) crucified with Christ when we gave our life to Him.

Let us be assured that 'temperance', like all other fruit of the Spirit, is displayed and walked in without any effort of the flesh. The truth is that **if we walk by the Spirit we will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.** Not because our will is empowered but because our heart is changed: "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh." (Gal.5:16)

## **Put On The New Man**

So as we spiritually understand the reality that has already been accomplished in Christ let us put on the new 'man'. As concerning our former manner of life we lay aside our old self that was being corrupted after the lusts of deceit. Let us put on the new man that after God has been created in righteousness and holiness of truth." (Eph. 4:22 - 24)

This exhortation to put on the new man, that Paul gave to the saints in Ephesus, is the same as his instruction he gave to the church in Rome, to set their minds on the things of the Spirit, not the things of the flesh: "For those who walk according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh but those walk according to the Spirit, set their minds on the things of the Spirit". (cf. Rom.8:5) This reality is achieved by faith and can be a reality if we have been born again of the Spirit of God.

## **Should We Fail**

Because our will remains it is still possible for the true believer to sin and walk in darkness, if he has his mind set on the flesh. If we walk in

darkness our fellowship with God is immediately effected and it also effects our fellowship with our fellow believers. But “if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9) If we sin our right standing with God is broken but as we turn again to Him and “walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7)

So let us seek the grace of the Lord to walk by the Spirit and no longer walk in works of the flesh. This is the new life we have been called to. May the true sons of God now be revealed - those who are being led by the Spirit. (cf.Rom.8:19&11)

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