

DEAD,
BUT ALIVE
IN HIM

The Foundational Faith

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ETERNAL SALVATION

God is the ruler of the universe and He is the great Creator and He is the holy, pure and righteous One. We are required to be completely pure because God is pure and does not accept anything but purity. God casts us into Hell if we have committed even a single sin, because He is holy, righteous and just and the result of sin is death. And we all have failed God's law, as recorded in the New Testament "***for all have sinned and fallen short of what glorifies God***" (Romans 3:23)

So, we need a mediator because everyone of us has sinned. Who pleases God? Who is God pleased with and accepts? Is it impossible to please God? Yes, if you have no mediator.

It is written that the Mediator is Jesus Christ, son of the virgin Mary, and He is the only Mediator according to His words "***I am the Way, I am the Truth, I am the Life. No one comes the Father, except by me.***" (John 14:6) We know that by faith in Christ we please God and obtain eternal life and that is through Christ by His death and resurrection, because God is holy and we are all sinners and deserve death. But God sent Christ to present His life in place of ours and for us. And we rejoice because God has sent the solution and God rejoices in our faith in Him.

We needed a mediator between God and us and Christ is the Intermediary and he has paid the price of our sin with His death, for this reason we owe God for rescuing our lives. He chose His death voluntarily, to die on the cross. He is the pure, complete sacrifice acceptable to God. He died for us, the world, all of us. And we, the believers in Him, are acceptable to God and we live eternally with God because of our faith in Christ's death and resurrection.

TRUTH, FAITH AND FEELINGS

God gives us the truth and we see some of these facts and others we do not see. And the truth we do not see we know that it is true by faith because God cannot lie. We know what God said; we believe His words and trust Him. Feelings and emotions are not the foundation of truth. If we follow our feelings then we would be in a real predicament and immediate disturbance. And faith by itself does not establish the truth. If we believe something which is false then we are surely going in an unhealthy direction and the result will necessarily be unfavorable.

We will be talking about a subject. The subject is the truth and we believe it by faith even though we do not see it and we do not feel it and we cannot observe it. Then what is this truth?

THE TRUTH IS THAT WE ARE DEAD, BUT ALIVE IN CHRIST

As believers in Christ Jesus we have a most beautiful hope and grace from God because He has given us eternal life by faith in Christ who died and was buried and rose from the grave alive. And Christ is now alive and He sits on the right hand of God and He has all authority. He has given us the strength of His life by which we are able to live a pure life and please God. This means life without sin and transgression.

The truth is, it is not you and it is not me who live. The truth is that it is Christ who lives in us. It is by faith in Christ that we please God. By faith we believe that we have died and have been buried and we have been raised with Him to new life in Him. As the Apostle Paul testifies of this in the New Testament ***“Who lives now is not I, but Christ lives in me.”*** (Galatians 2:20).

WHAT DOES FAITH MEAN?

Faith is belief in something though there is no tangible proof. By faith, we know that Christ has died and has risen from the dead. Though we were not there we heard from others and believed it. We have read that Christ died and rose from the dead and we believed it and put our faith in it. We believe the true news which is presented in the New Testament and the Holy Spirit confirms the truth.

For example, when you sit down in a chair, you believe that it will hold you. When you first look at the chair you set out to sit on it. With knowledge and experience you trust that the chair will hold you. If you have sat in it before then you trust it. But you do not know for sure except by faith, so you sit by faith. And when days have past then the chair will rust and corrode and fall apart and therefore not be able to hold you and it will be ready to fall.

But God’s promises will never end or rust or fall apart. And in this lesson we will solidify the truth that we died with Christ and raised with him, so the bodily life has died and gone away and now we do not live, but Christ lives in us. And in this life on earth we believe in Him and accept His true words.

BY FAITH WE KNOW WE ARE DEAD

We know by faith and not by sight that we died with Christ. God said in His book that we died and rose with Christ and we believe and accept this. To add to the subject, read, study and see what appears in the New Testament and its verses which confirm our death with Christ:

“...we have been buried with him” (Romans 6:4)

“...we died with Christ” (Romans 6:8)

“...if one (Christ) died for all, then all died” (II Corinthians 5:14)

“I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live” (Galatians 2:20)

“...you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” (Colossians 3:3)

“...we died with him...” (II Timothy 2:11)

Christ died two thousand years ago. This death was by His will and not forced upon Him. His death was not our will or our plan nor from our thoughts. But we receive the result of His death by faith even though we do not deserve His generosity and care for us which He showed for us by His death.

We have obtained eternal life from faith in the death and resurrection of Christ. We have not seen heaven yet, but we believe in it. And by the same faith we obtained the death with Him. And even though we see the body alive, we believe that our bodies are dead and we believe this according to the New Testament.

What does ‘dead’ mean? And how can it be? How does our death effect our life? Let us read a story which helps us understand.

THE DEAD BROTHER

There were two brothers and for their whole life they were contrary and quarreling. They had a large farm which was left to them by their father after his death. They had an agreement between them to not cheat or lie. But each of them lied and cheated the other and violated their promise. One day after sharp words and fighting between them one started to leave and when he arrived to the door he collapsed, dead. And when the other saw his brother lying on the floor, dead, his face did not show sadness but he began to curse his brother and beat him cruelly and forcefully. But his dead brother did not respond to him and did not curse and, of course, did not hit him. The live brother saw in his brother's pocket a back of gold and money, so he took the money (and was not concerned with the dead man's wife or kids) and he searched for more. At that moment a bag of money fell from his own pocket next to the dead man's hand and the dead man did not take it because the dead man had died and he had stopped sinning.

In the same thought we understand that we are dead and buried with Christ. We received His death by faith and we are dead to sin. The temptation to curse and the temptation to violence and the temptation to steal do not affect the dead. Is the dead jealous? Is the dead greedy? Do the dead commit adultery? Of course not. Temptation does not affect the dead.

WE SEE THAT WE ARE ALIVE. SO, HOW CAN WE SAY WE ARE DEAD?

You might say, *"I am not dead and I have feelings and thoughts and desires!"* But you understand that you are dead by faith and not by sight.

Our faith is like Abraham's faith who believed God and trusted Him even though he saw the opposite. It was impossible for him to become a father and he did not have a son and especially since he and his wife were old. But Abraham trusted and believed God when God said to him *"You will become a father of many people."* God said the truth and God is truthful. And Abraham trusted Him and finally at the end of his life God blessed him with a son. That was God's miracle for Abraham. Even though we did not feel that we are dead we believe and trust the words of God like Abraham. We believe in the Source of the promise and He is the One God and the One God does not break His promise. And live like Abraham and our faith is like his faith not visible or felt but believed.

We trust God and do the right thing by faith. We trust that we are dead with Christ. But there is another thing, God said that Christ has risen and lives in us and by that we have obtained the new life in Christ.

ALIVE IN CHRIST

Let us finish the verses we started above, with the truth that Christ lives in us:

"...just as Christ was raised from the dead through the power of the Father and His glory, we too live a new life." (Romans 6:4)

"...so we believe that we also will live with him." (Romans 6:8)

"If anyone belongs to Christ, then he is a new creation. The old has gone and the new has come." (II Corinthians 5:17)

"...Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live, I live it by faith, faith in the son of God who loved me and sacrificed himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)

"...Christ, He is your life..." (Colossians 3:4)

"...we live with him." (II Timothy 2:11)

WE HAVE BEEN FREED FROM SIN

We are dead and a dead person does not sin. Christ lives in us, and Christ does not sin. We have been freed from the power of sin because sin does not have control over the believers in Christ. There is no reason or excuse that justifies sin. As said in the New Testament **“Everyone who belongs to Him [God] does not sin...”** (I John 3:6) **“The sons of God do not practice sin, because God's nature is in them. They cannot even sin, because God, He, is their father.”** (I John 3:9) After our death with Christ we have been born anew, a new birth in Christ through His death and resurrection and He is now the spiritual leader through love, like a father's love.

The New Testament and its verses confirm our freedom from sin:

“And we know that our old man has been crucified with Christ, so that the practice of sin has stopped in our being so we are not servants of sin. For he who has died, has been set free from sin.” (Romans 6:6-7)

“It is necessary to consider yourselves dead in regards to sin, but alive in the way of God because you belong to Jesus Christ.” (Romans 6:11)

“You, in the past, were slaves to sin, but thanks be to God because you have obeyed from the heart the pattern of teaching which was given you. So, now, you have been set free from sin, and become slaves to righteousness.” (Romans 6:17-18)

“You have been freed from sin and have become slaves to God. And the result is a righteous life, then eternal life.” (Romans 6:22)

“Return to reason as is necessary and don't sin...” (I Corinthians 15:34)

“But be righteous in all you do, because the One who called you, He, is holy. And He says in His book ‘Be holy because I am holy.’” (I Peter 1:15-16)

There is no passage in the New Testament that permits that we sin, but on the contrary; verses say that we have conquered sin. The victory is not because of us, but because of Christ. Are there verses that indicate that we are under the control of sin? God forbid! These verses encourage a righteous life, a life that pleases God. There is no verse that allows a person to commit an unrighteous act. There is no excuse for doing an evil act. We should flee from temptation to sin and back away from those who practice sin and they call themselves believers in Christ.

THE EASY YOLK

When we accept the life by faith in our death and resurrection with Christ, then we receive an easy yolk. A yolk is placed on the shoulders of an animal in order to pull a plow or cart. Christ says **“Come to me, all who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke on you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy and my load is light.”** (Matthew 11:28-30)

Why is the yoke easy? Because the burden of trying to overcome sin has been lifted from our daily life. Therefore we live the current instant moments free from sin. A dead person does not sin and Christ does not sin, so Christ leads us in every moment for the glory of God.

For example, when you walk with God and see difficulties in front of you, whether difficult or simple it is possible for you to say, “*Lord, I cannot do this thing. I am unable to face it, Lord. You face my situation and solve it.*” Jesus rejoices when you trust Him with this faith. He came into the world to give us new life, new life on earth and eternal life in heaven. And according to God’s inspiration in the New Testament, “***He bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we may die to sin and live righteously...***” (I Peter 2:24)

And when the result is good it is because of Christ’s work while we are dead. So, pride is impossible except in Christ and His work.

THE CORRECT FOUNDATION

Our death and resurrection with Christ is the starting point and our acceptance of His death is in contrast to our self protection or fear. Our death and resurrection with Christ is in contrast to the strategies which we establish to try to protect ourselves from sin. There are human strategies that face the problem of sin and fight it, but in the end they are not enough to be successful. The one who is successful is the one that accepts their death and resurrection in Christ who died 2,000 years ago and invites Christ to live His life in them in each moment. Christ has completed the victory over sin for us.

If we build a philosophical system or any other system apart from Christ then we build its foundation on something reasonable but not dependable. And if this is my foundation then it is possible that it would cause mental and emotional and even physical problems because its foundation is not built on the death and resurrection of Christ. Any other foundation except Christ will fail.

We do not live our lives with God daily, but we live it moment by moment and in this moment you are with the Lord, this moment you are reading, now and not yesterday and not tomorrow and not an hour ago and not after an hour. Now the Lord speaks to you by His Spirit. Now, you fellowship with the Creator of the universe through your spirit and through His Spirit.

Dear Reader, follow His voice and His commands even if the command is easy or hard or not logical, but the command is righteous, of course. Follow Him and testify of His work as He does it. His work is more beautiful than any work from you or your thoughts. It is possible that you can serve others even in the lowliest way or do the necessary work according to what the Lord says in His moment. Because you are not concerned with yourself but you are concerned with the Lord, and He cares for you.

THE WALK IN FAITH

When we understand our freedom from sin, meaning that sin does not control us, by our understanding of this we are free to grow in Christ through faith and our works. Christ has successfully conquered sin and death. It is not possible for us to say that we fight sin because it is already defeated, and if we were to fight it, God forbid. This success is the good news for us who are in Christ.

The New Testament establishes the foundation of our new life; it is by the death of Christ and His resurrection from the dead. There are parts in the New Testament that state that we have participated in His death and resurrection. And on this foundation, the New Testament explains to us how we are to live this new life.

If we build our knowledge on the study of self and behavior it would be in the way of philosophy, logic or worldly rudiments, and if we applied it, our life would likely be better for a time. But Christ promised and delivered to us a joyful life from His fountain because He is the fountain of life and we receive this new life through faith in our death and resurrection, because the door to life in Christ is always open. We receive our new life by faith; the new life is the life of Christ in us.

Let's look at a few books in the New Testament that explain how this foundation is essential to our doing good works:

ROMANS

The book of Romans from chapters five through eight establishes our death and resurrection with Christ. On this foundation he encourages good works and action from chapter 12 ***“Then, my brothers, as God has had mercy on you, I plead with you to present yourselves to Him as a holy, living sacrifice that God is pleased with...”*** (Romans 12:1) We present our lives to God as holy, and this is not possible except through Christ, not through our works.

JAMES

“My brothers, since you believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, then do not show prejudice if you possess faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ.” (James 2:1)

It is mentioned in the verse that you are not to discriminate between people if you have faith in Christ. We do this good work on the basis of faith. Faith means trust in Christ and His work, the best of His works was His death and resurrection from the dead and we believe in our death and resurrection with Him. If we were not able to join in His death and resurrection then Christ died without benefit and without meaning.

For example, if Abraham did not trust God he would not have presented his son as his sacrifice. His work was clear proof of his faith. Therefore, you, Dear Reader, do you walk and do your work on the basis of your death and resurrected with Christ? Do you receive the gift of God that you can be sinless in every moment?

PETER

“Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who by his great grace, and through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, He has made us born again to a living hope.” (1 Peter 1:3) ***“Therefore, ... Be holy, for I am holy.”*** (1 Peter 1:13) Our works are not to earn us something earthly or to be more acceptable to God. No, we are holy through Christ only. God has given us eternal hope through Christ. Effort put forth because of His work is our praise and thanks to God. God accepts us as complete in Christ. Christ is the only one acceptable to God and we are acceptable through Him only and not through our works.

WHY DO SOME HESITATE TO BELIEVE?

There are some people who hesitate to accept their death and resurrection with Christ, who died 2,000 years ago. One of the reasons they hesitate is that they trust in themselves and their works. We indeed work hard but we do not tire doing things that God has already done. If you try to do the things that God has already done then you are ignoring of His gift to you. We participate with God by welcoming His gift and trust Him to do His works through us.

There are things that are from God that He encourages us to do. There are required commands from God, like, memorize the New Testament, read or listen to it, obey what is commanded in it, and follow His Spirit. But none of these things above will make you righteous or guiltless. We are only righteous through faith in Christ's work. We consider our bodies dead by faith. If you

do not believe the victory of Christ over sin then this means that you are trying to work to finish something that God has already completed.

Some others do not believe in their death and resurrection with Christ because they think that it is difficult to stop sinning. But Christ, He is able to live a life without sin and He lives in you and you live in Him and the dead body does not sin. So, when you face difficulties and injustices, it is necessary to rejoice as Christ, Paul, Peter and James say in the New Testament. You can rejoice because Christ rejoices for you. And it is not mentioned that when you face difficulties that you despair but it is mentioned that you rejoice and that is on the basis that you are dead and you have hope of eternal life because Christ lives in you and He faces all the areas in your life. A dead body does not sin, neither does Christ.

Some others do not believe except what they experience or feel and they say *‘It is not possible that I died and raised with Christ I do not believe that I am not under sin’s power.’* The problem is not the truth. The problem is your faith in Christ. Dear Reader, I ask you to believe the truth that you died and rose with Christ and by this faith you will witness the work of God in your life.

Some others are affected by the past and say *‘I have sinned many times and blackness lives in my life. So, how, in the future, could my life be clean and white and live in the light?’* This is like you trust in the past to know the future. This trust in the past is wrong and leads to hopelessness and despair. But instead believe what God has done, that He has resurrected you with Christ and freed you from the power of sin. I encourage you, Dear Reader, to believe in Christ, in His power, and believe He is holy and able to save you from sin.

In actuality we live in the moment. And in this moment you and the Lord are together, you listen to Him and He listens to you. It is not in the future and not in the past but right now. Right now you are with God by faith. Christ said that He is like a vine the source of life and you are like a branch and you receive life from Him in every moment. You believe that you have died and risen and it is not sin that controls you but you are under the control of the Spirit of God, when you accept by faith your new life with Christ in every moment. Dear Reader, believe in Him in every moment because he always accepts you.

OBSERVATIONS ON SOME VERSES

There are some verses that some people explain in way that is not right. Let us look and read these verses and expressions in order to more understand the truth of the death and resurrection of Christ and us with Him.

1. *‘Take up your cross and follow me’* (Matthew 10:38-39, 16:24-25, Mark 8:34-35, 10:21, Luke 9:23-24, 14:27, 33) In context Jesus is saying to you, Dear Reader, *“Be convinced of me with all your heart even if it costs you this loss of life and your kids and family. And if this is not the case then you do not follow me. Because you only have one lord and not two, either you choose the world or you choose me.”*

These verses do not mention that we improve in thought or mind or feelings bettering ourselves. But Christ confirms that we are to follow Him with all our heart. If we do not, then we are great losers. Are you ready to die for His sake? Are you ready to obey Him even though it risks your life and the life of your family? I think that your answer will be ‘yes’ because you have died and risen with Christ by faith and you know that you have obtained eternal life through your faith in Christ.

2. *'I die to myself'*
We do not die as the expression says but Christ, He has died and risen from the dead. We consider ourselves dead and risen with Him by faith. Our death has been completed according to God's Word and we believe Him. Our death has been completed 2,000 years ago by Christ. We are unable to do this work nor add to our death nor help the body die. But we believe that our death with Christ has been completed.
3. *'I choose to die' or 'I choose death to myself' or 'I choose my death today'*
Paul testifies that his intent did not help him kill fleshly desires in him and did not help him conquer sin. And we are sure that our intention does not help us kill fleshly desires in us because our intention will eventually fail. God condemns such efforts and confirms our experiences of failure. He sent Christ and finished the work for us. So, we receive the new life with Christ by faith and not by intent or desire.
4. *'For I want to do good but I am unable to do it. The good I want to do I do not do it, but the evil which I do not want to do, I do it.'* (from Romans 7:17-19)
Some of the believers use these verses as an excuse for their sin. But let us clarify the context. In the text Paul writes to people who follow the Law of Moses as if he, himself, Paul, lives under the Law of Moses. Paul's purpose is to agree with their thoughts and discuss with them in a certain way to make it clear to them that the end of their efforts in the law leads to failure. Paul has them imagine how to solve a problem like the situation they are in, so that they see through the illustration that the strength of the law does not stop sin. Our efforts to follow the law does not keep us from sin. Faith in the death and resurrection of Christ alone keeps us from sin. And our works prove our faith.

So, in verse 25 Paul gives them the only solution and it is Christ through our death and resurrection with Him. Therefore we are not under the control of sin, but under the control of Christ in our new life. Therefore, now through Christ you cannot say "*I want to do good, but I am not able to it.*" But the opposite, we praise God who has given us Christ's power and keeps us from sin.

5. *'We must put to death our fleshly desires'* (from Colossians 3:5)
On the basis of our death and resurrection with Christ we do not participate in evil. It is obvious from the context of the book that we are dead and raised with Christ by faith. There is no expectation that we would sin because God has conquered sin for us. It is unreasonable that we live in sin today and that we think it will be less tomorrow, and even less next year, as if the strength of Christ depends on our obedience. We believe we are in Christ, and in Christ no one is under the power of sin. We know we are dead to sin so we flee from sin because Christ lives in us today, tomorrow, next year and for eternity.

It is written in past tense that we "***put off the old man***" (Colossians 3:10) and past tense "***have been clothed with the new man***" (Colossians 3:11). So, on the basis of this we believe and follow the command written in the present tense "***it is necessary that you put to death your evil tendencies which are in you***" (Colossians 3:5). This means we believe and follow the death and resurrection of Christ. To walk in the present tense is to believe the truth, to apply it, to accept our death and resurrection with Christ. So if someone believes, then it is necessary for them put to death the evil. Let us believe in Christ.

Notice that it does not say that you change in moral character or in body but "***you grow in knowledge***" (Colossians 3:10). Faith is based on knowledge. And we know we have died and been raised with Christ; we receive this knowledge by faith.

6. Paul admitted to a weakness, and some say that ‘weakness’ was sin (see II Corinthians 12:8-10).

However, Paul does not say the weakness is sin. His weakness is like our weakness. We are unable to excel mentally or bodily because our strength is limited. We are unable to think or do everything at the same time because our mental and physical strength are limited. And there is no one that jests about sin. But Paul jests about his weakness and rejoices in it because the power of Christ is obvious in it.

All these phrases above might mislead our thoughts about ourselves and our duty to God and our flesh. The phrases above might lead us to think that we must get better or become more like Christ or that our efforts will bring us closer to God. But the work has been done. We can never be more like Christ or closer to God than we were when we received Christ’s death which happened 2,000 years ago for us.

One who focuses on their self and becomes pleased or displeased with their self is deceived. Our focus is on Christ. Our death and resurrection has been completed in Christ. Believe by faith in Christ and you live in Him!

If you try to die a second time it is like one who paints over an expensive original painting, ruining the original. God has created the original and the original is Christ.

CONCLUSION

What do we say? What is an appropriate expression of faith for this truth? Maybe we can say, according to the New Testament, *‘In this moment I am dead but Christ lives in me.’* Or, *‘I have died with Christ and Christ is alive.’* Your death and resurrection has been completed 2,000 years ago with Christ.

When you face something you might say *‘Oh Lord, I am unable to do this thing, but I know that You are able to do it. Because I am not alive, but You are alive in me, You do it with Your work.’* And your faith in God’s strength pleases Him and He rejoices in your trust in Him. God works in every moment and He deserves all praise.

Let us believe that the foundation of our life is Christ. Christ is the important one, not us. Our lives are built on our death and resurrection with Christ. Death does not grow. Death is the beginning of life in Christ by faith.

And lastly, a verse from the New Testament:

“For the love of Christ controls us, since we have concluded this, that Christ died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised.” (II Corinthians 5:14-15)

Amen.