

THE DEAD IN CHRIST

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Romans 6:10-13

6:10 "For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

6:11 "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

6:12 "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

6:13 "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

The beginning of every spiritual achievement is founded in FAITH. From the depths of our sin-prone estate we look to the dizzy heights of Christlike achievements like being "*dead in Christ*," and some of us feel a deep kind of despair in that such an achievement is humanly unattainable. Humanly, yes, but IN CHRIST we can make it.

The first question therefore, is, how do I do it? The answer is loud and clear in the above passage – BY FAITH RECKON it so. This is not some kind of mental or metaphysical exercise of the will, but a God given ability to BELIEVE GOD. The reckoning of the death of Jesus Christ to be my death can only be brought about by the knowledge of His life being my life, and the sure FAITH that the life of Christ in me will kill the Adamic life, which is ever present in the form of sin within my members.

One of the greatest signs of the life of Christ in me is the fact that I can see the Adamic nature within my own members.

There was a day in my youth, when I went to God with the feeling that I thought that I was free from all sin, but He said to me that I should sanctify myself. Naturally I asked Him how, and He told me to watch my members and keep them free from sin. The first few hours were disastrous.... I had sinned with my feet, my ears, my mind, my mouth, and my eyes – there was lusting, idleness, carnal mind, prying ears, and evil speaking. It was quite a shock for someone who thought he was holy. Only the Holy Ghost can reveal one's sin to

himself. The difference between God revealing sin, and the devil doing it, is, that when God reveals sin it blesses the believer, the motive being to lift him up, but when the devil does it is to cast down and deride.

If therefore, we are to RECKON ourselves dead, we need first to know that we are NOT DEAD (dead to sin), but that we desire to be, and that this is attainable through the death of Jesus Christ Our Lord.

If we believe that we are joined to Jesus Christ by His death, and that His death is the death of the Carnal Man within us, THEN our reckoning this to be so will CREATE within us the death to sin which we desire.

This is the first step towards being “*dead in Christ*”. The second step brings us into warfare or confrontation with the forces, which strive to take over and reign within our mortal bodies. One’s mind must be made up not to submit one’s members to sin regardless of the pressures. This is easier said than done. The constant grind of reality is designed by Satan to wear out the saints and to convince the believer that God has left him because of his unrighteousness. Very often this is the very opposite. IF GOD WAS NOT WITH ME WHEN I WAS A SINNER, I would never make it to be saved. I remember the time when God translated me out of a fight, when there was nothing but murder in my heart:

Romans 5:6, 8, 9,

5:6 “*For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*”

5:8 “*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*”

5:9 “*Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*”

If then God is with sinners and takes care of sinners, how much more, then, “*He will never leave nor forsake us.*” Satan is constantly telling the believer that God will leave him because he sinned, this is a lie, as is everything which Satan says.

John 6:37 “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me and him that cometh to me I will IN NO WISE cast out.”

The believer who is struggling to overcome sin must know that he has God for an ally and that the Lord is working every device to bring him from sinfulness to righteousness, even to the very image and likeness of Christ. It is a fact that some of the devices of God are repulsive to us, but then, our thoughts are not like His – all we have to do is to trust Him.

The language in Romans 6 suggests warfare – “*let not sin therefore REIGN,*” suggests that the believer should take away from sin the legal right to his body. Does sin under any circumstance have a legal right to my body, and by what

law? Unfortunately, Yes. In any war the victor has the right to reign over the vanquished. Romans 6:16 states:

6:16 *"Know ye not, that to whom ye YIELD yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"*

The same law that works for us through obedience to the Lord, works against us when we yield to Satan. We obey what we know to do in the Lord, then that ACTIVATES GOD and He gives us power to become His servants. I could not overcome the sin of anger and violence until I obeyed Him in fasting and prayer and He gave me the strength to do it.

"Let not," means that you should not allow sin to reign – this means that if sin reigns in our physical members we are the one who allow it. Some believer complains that God did not give them the power to overcome the sin which overtook him, but in every case of deliverance, the final action belongs to the believer. Jesus said to the man in the Synagogue – *"Stretch forth thy hand"*, it was not until that man obeyed and made the motion, that he was healed. *"Rise up and walk,"* – The command is given the forces of deliverance are activated, but it is up to the believer to do the final act.

In Romans 10:13 the word, *"YIELD"* is again used – *"Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness"* – DO NOT SURRENDER. This is the order from the Commander in Chief in Heaven.

DIVINE ORDER of course is God's order. This order dictates that a man's spirit should be under or controlled by *"the Spirit of God"*; that his soul should be under his spirit and that his body should be controlled by his soul. When one makes a GODLY DECISION, then that person immediately comes under the control of God. In temptation, therefore, resistance is the perfect will of God and the more one resists the stronger one becomes. Let me tell you a story of my personal experience with this premise before I knew the Lord;

In my youth I was prone to violence, but discovered that once I yield to it by striking a blow, etc., that I had no power over my actions. One day my brother and I got into a fight and this great power came over me and told me to kill him. I did not want to do it, but remember being forced to take up a weapon and strike at him. The blow missed and the weapon was imbedded into the wooden post of the porch. The first day I came through the gate and saw the mark on that post, I realized the horror of the deed I would have done against my brother whom I loved so much. I asked God there and then to stop me from ever doing that again. GOD HAD CREATED THE NECESSARY INCENTIVE FOR ME TO ASK HIM. Of course at that time I did not know this to be so. The next occasion that there was a confrontation between us, it was right before the mark on the post and I remembered my asking God to help me. The thought that came through my mind at that moment was directly from God, although at that time I did not know it – *"Your body does not belong to devils"*, *"No force should control your actions but you yourself."* – *"Use your will power to prevent*

yourself fighting.” I was by this time being hit, but would not lift my hand, and I was determined not to retaliate. Sweat came pouring down and my well-groomed black suit and white shirt were wet like a bucket of water had been poured on my head. I WON. The scripture said, “*Resist the Devil and he will flee from you,*” I resisted and he fled. That devil never came back to me, or should I say never overcame me for two long years. After two years he tricked me, and being not sure of me, he was playing for keeps, BUT God again intervened and translated me out of that fight. I was lifted out by a supernatural force and placed down the street. I did not know Jesus as my Saviour but I praised Him that day and now I thank Him personally that “*When I was yet without strength*” He reached down His hand and saved me.

CRYING TO GOD FOR HELP brings a person under DIVINE ORDER. It is the perfect will of God that man should take God for his helper and saviour. Truly, God who knows man’s heart, might even put him in a crying-out position in order that His Great Love might be able to reach down and help him. The Father could have sent messengers to the Prodigal Son to alleviate his suffering and to stop him from having to feed with swine, but that would have frustrated His own plan, to have the son come to his senses. The hard grind of the pigsty experience brought him to his senses, therefore that experience, though terrible it was, was not evil but good. When we are in the throes of suffering, it is difficult for us to see God’s goodness in allowing us to go through these things. When God called me at the first He came to me one day in the rest room and demanded that I vacate my job NOW. I did it immediately, more out of fright than obedience. I discovered that I was to be promoted the next day to be the Chief Accountant.

From the moment I walked out of that Government position, I was on a financial downhill. We eventually learnt to live without MONEY. We did not go to the grocery store at weekend or regularly, but lived on whatever God sent when He sent it. The question was, God why are you doing us this? We did not find out why until TWENTY YEARS after when He called us to come to the United States and told me that I yet had one problem which needed correction before I was ready – that I should earn enough by preaching to pay my bills and upkeep - I quickly agreed, Yes Lord, I said, is that not normal? He never answered; He just made me a proposal – “You take care of my business and I will take care of yours.” The years have proven the absolute accuracy of this word to be of the Lord. Since that time we have not had to even think about offering when we are invited to minister in any place. Let us not reject the HOG-STY EXPERIENCE for it is working righteousness in us.

WHO ARE THE DEAD IN CHRIST ?

So far we have talked about dying to sin, but what are the signs of being dead in Christ. Those who are dead in the natural have no feelings, and are

not involved in the things of the living any more, so it is those who are dead in Christ are not involved in carnality and sinfulness. They do not willfully sin, would be more specific;

I John 3:23 "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

3:24 "And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth IN HIM, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us."

Those who abide in Christ are dead – dead to sin. If sin calls they will not answer because they are dead, but if righteousness calls they will answer and be ready to obey. It is like a machine that is tuned to one frequency and will not be stirred by another.

2 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

The terminology "*in Christ*" means under the headship of Christ, or in other words, be in the body of Christ. The beginning of the NEW CREATION MAN therefore is IN CHRIST. When Christ becomes the head of the individual, then that person is in Christ. Christ comes into the believer in order to take the believer into Christ. The believer has Christ within his spirit when he is baptized with the Holy Ghost and not before then. This is clearly stated in John 14:17 that there are two operations of the Holy Spirit – with and within.

The dead are those who have crucified the flesh:

Galatians 5:24 "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

God hides those who are dead in Christ,:

Colossians 3:3 "For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God."

Jesus heals us spiritually, not just naturally by His stripes:

I Peter 2:25 "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes we were healed."

The believer is being asked of God to attend his own crucifixion every morning he rises. Being dead to sin is not one mighty act of sacrifice and it's all over with, but a daily uphill task of bringing the members of one's body under Divine Control. The man whose eyes are used to roving will find that his eyes will, even without his conscious participation, BUT when he submits this condition to God, he will as it were catch up himself just before he commits the crime.

THE DEAD IN CHRIST ARE THE FIRST RESURRECTION:

I Thessalonians 4:16 "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the DEAD IN CHRIST shall rise first."

If this passage stood alone then it might not have carried out the point of the dead in Christ so strongly, but in the light of several other scriptures, it is definitely saying that the "dead in Christ" are the FIRST RESURRECTION.

I Corinthians 15:22 "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

15:23 "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

This passage was dealing with the resurrection of the dead and verse 23 tells us that there will be a certain order in the resurrection. All Christians will not be resurrected or changed at the same time, but that there is a FIRSTFRUITS company which are those who are in Christ. This is the true meaning of this passage. You will notice that it did not say Christ the firstfruit, but FIRSTFRUITS. We see here that the word Christ here means the many membered Body of Christ with 'the Head Jesus Christ' already risen and the Body now ready to come forth.

"If ye be then risen with Christ....." The only way we are risen with Christ is if we are part of His body.

Colossians 1:18 "And he is the head of the body the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead: that in all things he might have the preeminence."

Revelation 14:4 "These are they which were not defiled by women (the false church); for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the FIRSTFRUITS unto God and to the Lamb."

This is the grandest of the grand prizes. The firstfruits being untouched by the Tribulation will be the OVERCOMERS which Romans 8:19-23 talks about. They will overcome first, their own soul nature, then the world and the Devil. The last victory they will gain will be over death even as they are changed or resurrected to immortality and incorruption. When you overcome your mental attitude, your emotional yearnings, your self-will, and your human desires, through the Blood of Jesus Christ, then you have just begun to be an overcomer.

Nevertheless, the day that we make that covenant with Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that might well be the greatest day of our lives. Let us therefore make the Covenant to Go the Whole Way with Christ – to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

