

The Crucified Old Man

A Study on Romans 6:6-10

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One of the most misunderstood concepts in Christian circles is salvation. Most folks think of salvation as that time when they initially believed on Christ and received forgiveness for their sin from God. Actually, this is only the beginning or starting point of one's salvation, for salvation is not only past deliverance from the penalty for sin, it is also present deliverance from the power of sin in one's daily experience. God has planned salvation so it has an effect upon a person in his present life and so that one can experience the power of Christ in his life now. God's design is that the Christian be changing daily so that he serves sin less and becomes more and more conformed unto the person of Jesus Christ. God's desire is not only to fit us for heaven, but also to fit us for earth.

REVIEW OF PAUL'S ARGUMENT IN ROMANS 6

Paul asked whether a truly saved person could continue to be dominated and controlled by the sin nature as he was when he was unsaved. His answer? "God forbid!" It is unthinkable that a Christian would want to be continually dominated by the sin nature after having experienced God's grace in salvation. He goes on to say that the Christian has died to sin and no longer wants to live in it. The reason is that through the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit the Christian has been put into a spiritual union with Christ so that he shares Christ's death to sin and his resurrected life unto salvation. Through this union, Christ's work on the cross, where he judged the sin nature, has been applied to the Christian. Although the sin nature has been judged, it has not been taken out of the Christian; it remains but no longer reigns! Paul says that the believer has also shared Christ's resurrection, and so will live a new kind of life.

SAVED TO SERVE SIN NO MORE — Romans 6:6-7

"Knowing this." One has to know or realize that the old man has been crucified before he can operate on this truth. The only way this can be known is by understanding God's Word on the subject.

"That our old man is [has been] crucified [put to death] with him." The "old man" is not the sin nature, but the "old self" of a Christian before salvation. It is the unsaved man with all his habits and desires. It is what we were as unregenerate people in Adam — lost, dominated by sin and under its penalty, objects of God's wrath, and headed for eternal

damnation. The “old man” denotes not our unregenerate nature but our unregenerate life, not our lower self but our former self. The “old man” is our pre-conversion life, our unregenerate self.

This “old man” has been crucified (put to death) with Christ. The moment we trusted in Christ as our personal Saviour and Lord, we were put into union with Christ’s death and our old unregenerate man died. Our total history in Adam was ended and we received a completely new life because we were put into Christ. God, through Christ, will wipe a sinner’s slate clean!

“That [for the purpose that] the body of sin might be destroyed [annulled or neutralized].” The “body of sin” refers to the sin nature, for the sin nature manifests itself through the body. The old man was put to death that the body of sin (sin nature) might be destroyed. “Destroyed” means “neutralized.” It does not mean to become extinct but to be defeated, not to be annihilated but to be deprived of power. God has broken the power of sin in the Christian through union with Christ. The sin nature no longer dominates the saved person as it did before salvation.

“That [for the purpose that] henceforth we should not serve sin.” To “serve” carries the idea of being a bondsman to the sin nature, or being lorded over by it. The old man was put to death and the sin nature judged so that the Christian should not serve sin. The believer does not have to serve sin because its absolute authority in him has been broken or canceled. The fact is, we do not have to serve sin any longer. It is not God’s desire for the Christian to be defeated.

“For he that is dead [has died] is freed [has been justified] from sin.” Initial salvation, when a person is justified or declared righteous before God, comes about because of union with Christ. The believer is free forever from the guilt and penalty of sin.

It is the constant laboring under the consciousness of sinfulness that keeps saints from the kind of glorious life Paul lived. He showed absolutely no sense of bondage before God, but lived in blessed triumph! Why? He knew that he was justified from all guilt by the blood of Christ. He also knew that he was justified, cleared and set free from the sin nature itself. While he was ever conscious that the sin nature was present, he lived in the reality that its power was broken. Whenever he did yield to the sin nature, he claimed the fact that he was justified, and did not live under guilt for that sin. Paul understood God’s grace!

SAVED TO LIVE UNTO GOD — Romans 6:8-10

“Now if [since] we be dead [have died] with Christ, we believe we shall also live with him.” Since we share Christ’s death to sin, we also share his resurrected life. God makes the Christian alive in Christ. This sharing of Christ’s life is not just for eternity, it is also in time. Christ’s life is our life *now*. This gives us the positive power to live a life of progressive victory over sin.

Notice the words “we believe.” Paul believed God’s Word and put it into practice. He had assurance and a settled conviction that he was sharing the life of Christ. Faith must learn to take God at his word. “Father, increase our faith!”

“Knowing [because we know] that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.” The reason we believe that Christ is the constant source of life to his people, enabling them to conquer sin, is that he is an ever-living Lord who will not die again. The whole resurrection has permanent significance. Christ’s resurrection proved that he could die only once. Now he lives forever as the resurrected God-man!

There was a time when death reigned over Christ — when he was bearing our sins and judging our sin natures at the cross. But He rose victorious over sin and death!

“For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.” Christ made a complete and perfect sacrifice for the sins of men. He died just once; that was sufficient. After death, he rose the victor over sin and death for the purpose of living unto God forever.

Lest we miss the point, the Christian has died to sin just once through union with Christ, but he has also been made alive in Christ to serve God continually in his experience.

CONCLUSION

Perhaps you have been thinking that you would give anything to get a new life, to have your past slate wiped clean. Only Jesus Christ can forgive you for sins and put to death your old, sinful life. But you must come to Christ on his terms, not your own. You must acknowledge that you are sinful before God, guilty because of the wrong things you have done, and that you cannot help yourself. You must be willing to turn from your old life to Jesus Christ, acknowledging him as your Lord and Saviour. If you will receive Christ as Lord of your life and Saviour for your sins, God will give you forgiveness of sins and eternal life. He will also give you the power to serve sin no longer, and to live a life unto him.