

"For the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God". "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

(I Corinthians 1:17; 2:2)

THE CROSS OF CHRIST SETS ME FREE!

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When we say, "the Cross," we do not merely mean the crucifixion of Christ, but the death, the burial, the resurrection, and the ascension to the throne, as well as the glories vested to us believers by way of the Cross. The Cross is not specifically a line of teaching, it is not a department of truth, it is not just another message delivered, *it is the center or hub of all gospel truth*. It is the basis, and the explanation of everything taught. The Apostle Paul says, "I'm determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified"(I Corinthians 2:2). Paul knows nothing save the Cross.

If Leviticus with its myriad of sacrifices, its rivers of blood, means anything, it means that God meets man on but **one** basis, and that is the basis of the Cross. But why does God demand blood and death? Is God sadistic? Even the Son, Jesus, told His audience in John 10:17 that, "Therefore does my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it up again." So, God the Father loves the Son, Jesus because He lays down His life and dies. However, this verse is not just speaking of death, this verse speaks of resurrection as well. Could it be that the only way to resurrection life is through death? Death to what?

Could it be that God has, and operates the Cross, Himself? I believe we are getting to the bottom of the answer as to why God loves the

Cross. There is, and ever will be a Cross in the heart of God! The “Living” source of the whole universe comes out of a death to God’s own self potential of just being for Himself. Therefore, all that we call LIFE is birthed out of death to the potential of self-centeredness. Am I saying that God could have been self-centered? Yes, He is the one and only Person in the universe who said no to being for Himself and chose the way of the Cross which is self-giving love, thereby decided to be a lamb for others.

Remember, personhood means freedom of choice. God created us derivative persons in His own image out of His infinite freedom with the same capacity of choice. Plants and animals do not have this royal capacity. They are created as fixed servants without eternal choice yet fulfilling their purpose as plants and animals.

Since all life springs out of death, then that is why even nature testifies to this truth. There is hardly a page in the book of nature which fails to emphasize the fact that all life springs out of death. Not a tree, not a blossom, not a shrub, not a fruit, but what cost the death of a seed. Just think of what we eat and what we wear—every plant, every animal which gives up its life, does it to give life to others. Do they do it voluntarily? No, only Jesus can do that. But I must say that there is something deep inside every living thing that knows it is being sacrificed for others, and therefore fulfilling a higher purpose for living.

The Cross is the source all of LIVING transforming power in the universe. Paul says in I Corinthians 1:18 that, "For the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God." The Cross is both the instrument of death as well as the source of all life. There has to be Calvary before there is Pentecost; there has to be a Cross before there is a crown, for the power of Jesus' resurrection is birthed out of the slow and agonizing death of the Cross.

The Cross has put to death all that Satan has stolen and ravished in us through the Fall as well as restored back to us all that was lost in Adam and even more. For by the power of the Cross we are delivered, cleaned, healed, restored, regenerated, redeemed, reconciled, justified, sanctified, and glorified. The metamorphic power of the Cross has transformed us both spiritually and genetically from the old creation, in Adam, to the new creation, in Christ. The Cross delivers us from the powers of darkness in Satan, and translates us into the light kingdom of the Son, "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14).

In the Cross, all the cause and nature of separation from God was destroyed, and in Christ's resurrection our restoration and union with God is perfected. The Cross brings us into living union and oneness with God.

The Cross is also the great separator or divider. It is sword of the Spirit which separates the old man (Satan in us) from the new man (Christ in us) (Rom. 6:6); it separates indwelling Sin (Romans 7:17) from Christ who indwells us and is the real us (Galatians 2:20); it discerns the lie from the truth; and soul thoughts and feelings, from spirit realities; it divides fleshly self-effort from the Spirit walk of faith (Hebrews 4:12); it separates independent-self (who we are not) from the unified self (who we really are) (Rom. 7:17) and on and on.

The Cross's purpose is to separate, then cleanse and restores. What we want to underline is the revelation that the Cross separates us from this world (Gal 6:14); from the misuse of the flesh (Gal. 5:24); from Satan's authority, and his jurisdiction (Col. 2:15). The Cross then reunites mankind to Christ, who is the power of New Life, and regaining man's lost paradise.

As Col. 2:11 says, "*We are* circumcised with the circumcision not made with hands". Since Spiritual circumcision happened at The Cross, then the circumcision factor is working in our lives today. The Cross wields death to what is not (false fleshly realities), and life to what is (all that we are in Christ).

The Cross is the intercessory principle that we walk by, for Jesus told us to "take up our Cross and follow him" (Matthew 16:24). He also told us if any man does not bear His Cross he cannot be His disciple (Luke

14:27). Pretty strong, but it shows the seriousness of operating the Cross in our daily lives, instead of walking in the ways and tensions of the flesh which lead to death.

“You are dead,” the bible declares to us in Colossians 3:3--your life is hid with Christ in God. Consider yourself dead to the misuse of your bodily members Colossians goes on to declare. Stop lying...stop declaring the lie about yourself. Know that you have already put off the “old man” with his deeds. Did you hear that! You have already died and put off the deeds of the flesh. Consider it so, because according to your faith you are made whole. But also consider it true that you have already put on the “New Man” who is renewed after the image of Him who created you. You are whole, complete, and lacking nothing. That is what the Cross has done for you.

The shortest distance between two points is a straight line. The shortest distance to the road full of glory is also a straight line, right through the pain, and the suffering of life. Therefore, embrace your pain, your negatives, and your crosses. By that you will discover that the power of the positive is in the negative. That is the way to glory is through suffering; and embracing the pain leads to victory (Romans 8:18).

The Cross is the power of God, the means for transformation, and the only way for walking in victory in our daily lives. Love it, embrace it, and know the perfect ways of God.

The Bible in Colossians 1:20-22 declares that there are two aspects of the Cross. It says, "Having made peace through the *blood* of His Cross, by Him, reconcile all things unto Himself," and then in verse 22, "In the *body* of His flesh through death to present *you* holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight." Also, the book of Romans unfolds to us its revelation of the blood and the body. The first 5 chapters presents to us salvation by faith and the forgiveness of our sins by the *blood* of Christ (Romans 3:25; 5:9). While, Romans 6-8 presents the provision from the nature as well as the power of sin, by the *bodily* death and resurrection (Romans 7:4).

The blood satisfied God's justice, while the body death satisfies us with the power of His resurrected life daily saving us from sin's dominion. "Much more (certainly), now that we are reconciled, that we shall be saved (daily delivered from sins' dominion) through His (resurrection) life" (Romans 5:10-Amp.).

Let us now consider both the *blood*, as well as the *body* of Christ. We will look at the blood side first. Our God meets us in our fallen and blinded condition and offers us the provision of His precious blood for the forgiveness of our *sins*. Sins in the unbeliever are the action or outer manifestation of a sinful satanic nature. Yet, we are so blind and outer minded, at this point, that all we can recognize is our outer sins. We don't know and cannot see that it is really a spirit manifesting itself

through us producing the very sins we are seeing (Eph. 2:2-3). All we know is that, "I have sinned; I am guilty of sin; I need forgiveness; I need a Savior," and rightly so, we are guilty sinners, and we are in need of a Savior. I see the wisdom of God in not revealing His secrets too soon. If sinners knew that it was Satan producing sin through them, then they might try to justify themselves and try to sidestep true heart repentance.

The New Covenant is based on the death of the "testator;" "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is valid only after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator lives. (Hebrews 9:16-17) Therefore, "without the shedding of the *blood*" of Jesus Christ, there is no remission for sins, no deliverance, no restoration, nor is there any salvation at all (Hebrews 9:22).

It is only through the actual shedding of the BLOOD of Christ that the Bible can declare that "we have redemption through his *blood*, the forgiveness of sins" (Eph. 1:7); we have peace with God, "through the *blood* of his Cross" (Col. 1:20); we are elect through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 1:2); we are redeemed by "the precious blood of Christ" (I Peter 1:19); we are cleansed daily by, "the blood Jesus Christ" (I John 1:7); and we are "washed from our sins in His own blood" (Rev. 1:5). Now, we sing a new song unto our God "for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by the *blood* out of every kindred, and tongue,

and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priest; and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 9-10).

So, there is saving power and deliverance in the *blood* of Christ for the forgiveness of our *sins*. Many Christian songs were written with the blood of Jesus in mind, one that comes to my mind, and is one of my personal favorites, is: "*There is Power in the Blood.*" Yet, has there ever been a song written called, "There is Power in the Body Death?" Or, has much at all been taught on the "*Body Death?*" I believe the reason that not much has been written is because the meaning of the *body death* is hardly know nor understood by the Christian world.

In Christ's body death, he set us free from the embodiment of sin. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin" (Rom. 6:6-7). "The body of sin" is embodied in an mentality which falsely believes we are independent beings separated from God. This is really Satan's mentality.

Satan declared in Isaiah 14:14, "I will be like the most high God!" He was not trying to be evil, he was trying to be good. He was trying to become just like God, sufficient in himself. Therefore, he brought into being original sin, which is self-sufficient-self, operating as a independent-self. These same lies were put into Adam at the fall and past on to us, as our deadly inheritance.

Satan declares, "I will." This is saying that the creation has a separate will apart from the Creator, or a will of his own. Then as he says, "be like," which means that he tries in his own strength to be like the Creator. Satan was the first one of all creation who mistakenly thought that he had a life of his own, and tried to be good by imitating God. This made him a counterfeit god, a liar, and a deceiver.

These satanic lies were imparted to us at the Fall and remain hidden deep in our consciousness. Even as a Christians we carry them around as grave clothes from the past. Don't we Christians say, "I will try to be like Christ." What we really mean is that we love Christ for saving us, and we want to have his self-giving love manifested in our character. These desires are absolutely right, but we think that we must perform these desires in our own strength. Here lies our problem. We do not and cannot have the power apart from "the divine nature" of Christ in us. For the human is not a producer, or performer, it is a simple receiver.

The Bible clearly defines the human as temples, slaves, vessels, branches, and wives. None of these bible types have the capacity to perform in and of themselves. They only contain, and express the life of another. Therefore, we humans have the one simple function of receiving and spontaneously expressing the life of the one who indwells us.

The Old Testament symbols were shadows of New Testament realities. An example of this is in 1 Cor. 3:16, "Know ye not that ye are the

temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Now what is the function of a temple? The temple in the Old Testament was the building that housed the Holy-of-Holies, which contained the Shekinah-Glory. It was not the glory itself, but it was the container for the Glory.

The Bible calls us slaves. "Being then made free from sin, you became the slaves of righteousness" (Rom. 6:18). What is the function of a slave? A slave has no freedom or life of his own, for he is bound to his master. He must do what his master tells him to do. II Peter says, "for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." The human has never been what we think of as an independently free agent. We have always been in bondage to our master, either Satan or Christ.

The Bible also calls us vessels. "That he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy" (Rom. 9:23). What is the function of a vessel? A vessel is designed to simply be available to contain liquid. The cup isn't the coffee, and the coffee isn't the cup.

The Bible calls us branches. What is the function of a branch? John 15:1-4 says that Christ is the vine, we are the branches, and without Him we can do nothing. It's obvious that a branch apart from the vine cannot produce fruit, yet we Christians falsely think that we can produce good works apart from the Holy Spirit. We also think that we can produce good works with God's help. This too is a delusion as well. God can't help us be like the vine, we are the branches. A

branch simply rests in the fact that it is a channel through which the vine produces the fruit.

In addition the Bible calls us wives. We are “dead to the law by the body of Christ; that you should be married to another even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God” (Rom. 7:4). What is a wife? A wife is the loving other half of her husband. God sees the two as “one flesh.” A wife cannot produce a child apart from insemination by her husband. Similarly, we contain Christ, and He produces the fruit of the Holy Spirit through us.

Now what about Paul’s dilemma, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?” The light came to Paul when he saw that the human is not the producer of good or evil. The human is a neutral being, and not self-producing. This self-sufficient energy is “**sin that dwelleth in me**” as Paul clearly brings out in Rom.7:17. Indwelling sin is Satan in our flesh manifesting himself in a myriad of self-centered forms: self-sufficiency, self-effort, self-righteousness, and self-hatred, self interest...self, self, self.

It is, me believing and operating as if I have a life of my own....my own power, my own strength, my own righteousness, and my own needy independent-self. The human has a life, but not a life of its own. We have never been an independent-self, or a just me. We have always been indwelt by a deity nature, either Christ or Satan. This lie about the human self was put into mankind at the fall and continues to

dominate mankind's consciousness until we are, by God's grace, awakened to Satan's insidious hold on us.

The outer law is God schoolmaster to drive us to see the manifestations of the hidden culprit, Satan causing us to believe in ourselves. The demands of the outer law in Romans 7 bring out Paul's hidden sin which is self-effort--that is, any activity based on self-sufficiency. Self-effort based on self-sufficiency is the hidden root sin of the believer in Romans 7. Independent-self is the flesh trying to be good by its own flesh power. But it is really Satan in disguise.

The good news is that the Cross has put Satan out. He has no rights to our humanity. Through the Cross our humanity is set free from Satan's dominion, and as Romans 6:13 says, we are "instruments of righteousness." Paul saw that our striving to become righteous is an evil form of self-righteousness. Instead of striving to become, he saw that the only way the human functions is simply, by faith. By faith, Paul agreed with God, "Christ is my life and my righteousness." Any just me trying to be good is my old deluded satanic self-life.

Paul's problem was never his precious human self; his problem was Satan disguised as Paul making him think that he was an independent, separate self. Likewise, we are set free when we see that our real problem **is not us**, but Satan's strivings in us (Rom.7:17). Equally, the solution **is not us**, but is Christ's resurrection power in us (Gal.2:20). It is Satan's voice in us saying, "I am the evil problem," or "I should be

the solution.” Both are lies.

How do we untangle a lie? By simply replacing the lie with the truth. **If we speak the truth, the lie will untangle itself. If we try to untangle it, it will entangle us.** By the leap of faith, we declare that what God says about us is absolutely true. God’s word says in Col. 3:3-4 that we are dead, and Christ is our life.

Paul was not just Paul, he was Christ living in Paul’s form (Gal. 2:20). Galatians also says that the wrong use of our flesh was crucified with Christ (5:24). The whole purpose of the cross was to “destroy the works of the devil”(I John 3:8). And as we see in the Hebrews letter, Christ accomplished that work at Calvary: “through death Christ might **destroy him** that had the power of death, **that is, the devil**, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bandage”(2:14).

The Cross totally delivers us from Satan’s insidious lies that falsely hold us in captivity. II Cor.5:21 declares that God “hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” At the cross Christ died as us (“made sin.”) Therefore, in that death, the satanic nature went out of our bodies forever. In his risen body, representing us, Christ raised us up with His own nature of holiness! Christ replaced Satan in us. **Therefore the Gospel is an exchange of gods.**

The blood satisfied God, while the body death satisfies us. Col. 1:20 says that we are reconciled by Christ's **blood**, but in verse 22 Paul brings out the second work of the cross. "In the **body** of His flesh, He might present you holy, unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight." It is one thing to know we are forgiven by faith in His precious blood, but it is far more to know that **we** are holy, total, and complete.

Jesus prophetically declared in John 17:21-23, "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in oneness." This perfection prophesied by Jesus 2000 years ago, can become a real and living reality in us today.

That satanic, independent life of our own was crucified with Christ 2000 years ago, and by faith, we are joined to Christ in his resurrection. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself to me"(Gal. 2:20). Christ is our peace, Christ is our strength, Christ is our joy, and Christ is our life. For peace, strength, joy and life are the attributes of a person, and Christians contain that person.

A radical replacement takes place in our spirit centers, for we are exchanging the deluded-self for a resurrected Christ-self. It is an exchange of identities. There often is a crisis period while this miracle is taking place. We are "being conformed into the image of the Son, and being "transformed by the renewing of our minds." It is likened to

a butterfly coming out of an cocoon. Do not touch this process; it is God's work, just stand fast in the truth. For, "faithful is he that calleth you, he also will do it."

The Cross of Christ has already set us free from self condemnation (Rom.8:1), and made us partakers of the "divine nature" (II Peter 1:3-4). And by a simple word of faith, embracing these precious promises, we can all enter into this promised oneness. There is nothing left for us to do except just believe these promises by faith. I Thes. 5:24 says that "Faithful is he that calleth you, he also will do it."

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Self-acceptance will replace self-condemnation as we leap by faith into the truth that we are "whole, complete, and lacking nothing"(James 1:4). Miraculously, we begin to accept ourselves, just like we are, and not try to change ourselves. We accept our negatives instead of trying to conquer them, knowing they are the essential background to faith. All the things we have hated about ourselves and considered liabilities now become our greatest assets. As we walk in the Spirit of who we

really are, the Spirit transmutes our flesh into an expression of righteousness, or Spirit right-use-ness. And the perfect oneness that Jesus prophetically declared in John 17, "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfected in oneness," bursts into being as a living reality in us today.