

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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Knowing Christ, and the Power of His Resurrection

by Dan Trygg

“I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, ⁹ and may be found in Him, not having my righteousness out-from-Law, but the one through faith in Christ, the ‘out-from-God-righteousness’ which is on the basis of faith, ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹ in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.” Philippians 3:8-11

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” Romans 6:3-4

The emphasis of most churches at this time of year is that Jesus died for our sins, ...that through His atoning death, our debt of sin was paid for. *When we accept His gift by faith, our sins are forgiven, and we are reconciled to God. We are “justified”, treated by God “just-as-if-I’d never sinned”.* We are acquitted, legally declared and treated as though we were innocent. In Romans 3:24, Paul wrote that we are “being justified as a gift by His grace by means of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.”

In Romans 1:18, *the wrath of God has been revealed*, against all undevotedness to God and unrighteousness of people, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. After describing the advance and pervasive nature of sin, both among the nations who do not know God (1:18-32), and among those who consider themselves to be moral (2:1-16), and even among those who had the revelation of God (2:17-29), **Paul summarized the condition of humankind before God.** We are all condemned, without any basis for thinking that we are righteous before Him. **All have sinned. Every mouth must be stopped. No one can boast before God. Everyone is accountable to Him** (Rom. 3:19,20).

BUT, that is not the end of the story. There is also a righteousness from God that He has now revealed, ...a righteousness offered to human beings as a gift. It consists of a redemption or ransom-price, paid by the blood of Christ, whom God put forth to be a sacrifice of satisfaction to assuage God’s righteous wrath. To any and all who accept this gift by faith, this righteousness of God will be applied to them (Rom. 3:21-26).

BUT, that is not the end of the story, either. That only takes us up through Romans 4. **There is much more** that comes with the gift of God’s righteousness, than simply to “cover” or “pay for” our sin. In Romans 5, **Paul begins to list what we have, now that we are justified by faith in Christ.** We have peace with God, access to the grace in which we stand, and we boast upon the expectation of the glory of God. We can even confidently face difficulties, knowing that they will develop our faith and character. We will not be disappointed in this, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. **God showed us His love while we were still sinners, still hostile toward Him. How much more can we be confident of His love and care, now that we are His** (5:1-11)?

BUT, even that is not the end of the story. Paul goes on to describe how **Christ was a representative head**, much like Adam was. Just as Adam’s action of sin affected all those would be “in him”, in a similar way Christ’s actions affect those who would be “in Him”. **Adam’s sin brought sin, condemnation, death and decay to all humanity who were descended from him.** In a similar way, **Christ’s obedience overcomes sin, brings justification out from condemnation, life and restoration to those who are His.** In fact, **the impact of Christ is much more powerful than the effect of Adam’s sin** (5:12-21). Christ identified with all humanity, and took our sins upon Himself, so that He could pay the debt we owed, and pay the ransom price for our freedom.

Beyond that, however, He took us into Himself, so that we could die with Him. Paul said, in Romans 6:5-8, we were “united with Him in the likeness of His death” and “our old man was crucified together with Him”, so that “we died with Christ”. **This was so that, as Christ was raised from the dead, so, we too, would be united in the likeness of His resurrection, and that we might walk in newness of life. This is the legal basis of our freedom from the power of sin, the Law, and the power of the flesh. In Christ, we died. We died when He died.** In 2 Corinthians 5:14, Paul wrote that he was convinced of this, “that One died for all, therefore all died”. **Our death with Him frees us from the legal bond that sin, death, or the Law could have on us.** The wages (‘paycheck’) of sin is death, ...and, in our union with Christ, *we died.* The penalty for sin *was paid* when we died with Jesus! **We died to sin** (Rom. 6:2). **In fact, we died to all that held us captive.** The requirement of the Law has been fulfilled by our death in Christ (Rom. 7:4-6). **We died to the Law** (Gal. 2:19). We were crucified with Christ, and as a result **our flesh was also crucified in Him** (Gal. 2:20; 5:24). **Even the threat and power of death itself has been nullified**, because we were already put to death in Jesus (Heb. 2:14,15). **Every charge and accusation that could be made against us was nailed to Jesus’ cross, and we died with Him** (Col. 2:12-14).

God put us into Jesus, in His death, so that by faith we might receive His gift of grace, and **be made alive together with Him**. *Just as we were united with Him in death, so we can be united with Him in the likeness of His resurrection*. We died with Him, so that “those who live might no longer live to themselves, but for Him who died and rose on their behalf. ...Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he or she is a new creation, old things have passed away, behold *new things* have come to be” (2 Cor. 5:14-17). **Our union with Christ is the basis for our freedom and our new life**, “For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also **in Christ all will be made alive**. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming...” (1 Cor. 15:21-23). “For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were *aroused* by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. ⁶ But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter” (Rom. 7:5-6). **We are born into Adam physically; we are born into Christ spiritually, as we embrace Him by faith** as our Savior and our King (Jn. 1:12,13; 3:3-7; 1 Pet. 1:23). ***Our new birth actually is a manifestation of the resurrection life of Jesus***. “He has caused us to be born again to a living hope *through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*” (1 Pet. 1:3).

We live in the overlap of two ages, ...the present evil age (Gal. 1:4), and the age of the kingdom of God. We experience the realities of both of these eons. We are still “in Adam” until we die, or Christ returns, and then that old nature will slip away. But, we are also *now* “in Christ”. We *are* children of God, though what that fully entails has not yet been made evident in us (1 Jn. 3:1,2). When Christ returns, we will be glorified, and our new nature will be fully revealed. **Now, as children of God and disciples of Christ, our challenge and calling is to put aside the old self** (who was crucified to us – Rom. 6:6) with its evil practices, be renewed in our perception of who we are and what God is calling us to do, **and put on our new self so that we learn to operate in the power of the Holy Spirit working in and through us** (Col. 3:1-17; Eph. 4:22-24). The new life that is ours in Christ, often translated as “eternal life”, is literally, “age-type life”, or life of the age to come. It is life of the kingdom of God, the heavenly kingdom, which God intends for us to operate in. **This is “resurrection life”**.

Jesus had said, **“It is the Spirit who gives life”** (lit., ‘makes alive’ – Jn. 6:63). The apostle Paul said the same phrase, explaining how God makes us adequate, capable or qualified as servants of the new covenant (2 Cor. 3:6). **The Spirit makes us alive. It is what makes the new covenant distinct from trying to live by keeping the Law in our own strength. We need an infusion of life to empower and enable us to live differently.** In another passage, Paul states, “If Christ is in you, *though the body is dead* because of sin, *yet the Spirit is life* because of righteousness. ¹¹ But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, **He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to** (lit., ‘make-alive’) **your mortal (‘dying’) bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you**” (Rom. 8:10,11). ***This is the distinction between those who are only in Adam, versus those who are in Christ.*** “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,” (1 Cor. 15:22,23). And, again, “So also it is written, ‘The first man, Adam, became a living soul (lit., ‘a soul *living*’).’ The last Adam a life-giving Spirit (lit. ‘a Spirit making-alive’, or ‘life-making’)” (1 Cor. 15:45).

So, how do we experience the power of the resurrection? Certainly, when Jesus returns, we will be raised from the dead, but it seems that **this life is available to us now**. Absolutely! **It is important to recognize that this is an “alternative life”**. It is not the normal, natural, self-generated life that most people walk in. It is not life in the flesh, by self-effort, self-discipline or self-will. **It is the life of God’s Spirit motivating, energizing and enabling us to live by His power. As an “alternative life”, it requires that we put aside, or “die to”, our earthly, natural, self-generated efforts.** In Ephesians 4:22-24, Paul said that we must “put off” the old self, be renewed in our perception, and “put on” the new self. Often, **to experience the life of the Spirit, we must “die to” the life of the flesh** (or self-effort). In 2 Corinthians 2-4, Paul describes different ways the life of God is revealed through us. It is like Christ’s fragrance, or a letter written upon our hearts that people “read” through what we say and do, or the radiance of God’s glory. He says that **the “life of Jesus” is made visible, as we bear the “dying of Jesus”**. We are confronted by hardship, called to make sacrifices, or even face persecution as we follow Jesus. **When we willingly “die” to self-interest, fear, or self-comfort, and choose to follow the Spirit, He will empower and enliven us.** Paul said that “the life of Jesus will be manifested, ...made visible or tangible..., in our lives. ***People will see Jesus in us. That is the resurrection power of Jesus’ life filling and enabling us to live a more-than-natural life, ...the power of the resurrection!***

People often want to soft-pedal the message of following Jesus, ...or present an entirely different message! Jesus said that, if we want to follow Him, we need to deny our natural selves, take up our cross and go where He leads (Lk. 9:23). **Jesus will lead us in the way of the cross, because the resurrection life is released and made visible, as we follow Him there, walking in faith and in love.** We will best know Him, and His overcoming power, as we walk by faith through the things that challenge our natural lives. Therefore, “...we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal (‘dying’) flesh” (2 Cor 4:11).