

Ché Ahn's First Encounter With Holy Spirit—and God's Extravagant Redemption

"Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in the likeness of His death, so shall we also be united with Him in the likeness of His resurrection" (Rom. 6:4-5).

When you receive Christ into your life, you also receive the heavenly reality of His death and resurrection. When He was crucified, so were our sinful natures, our sicknesses and our separation from God. When He was resurrected, we were resurrected with Him into a victorious new life.

Our Christian life is a journey with God in which He gives us supernatural power to walk in victory over sin and to bear fruit that glorifies Him. If you feel burdened by a continuing struggle, addiction or heavy past, you can be free and you can change. I want to share with you my own story of being reconciled to the Father through Christ and give you practical insight into how you can receive the reality of the cross into your life.

Encountering the Holy Spirit for the First Time

When I was saved in 1973, I was a drug addict and a high school dropout. I felt about as far from God as you could get. Although my father was a pastor, at that time I was totally disinterested in Christianity, and was experimenting with Eastern religions like Zen Buddhism. My compass was off, but I was hungry for spiritual truth.

One weekend when I was 17, I was at a wild party at my friend's house when I looked around and realized I was actually bored. I found a quiet, vacant bedroom in the back of the house, where I found myself beginning to talk to God. In an audible voice, I cried out, "God, I don't know if you exist. But if You do exist, and what my parents told me as a little boy is true, that You died for my sins and that there is a heaven and a hell, I want you to reveal Yourself to me and reveal the truth to me."

At that moment, I felt a surge of energy envelop my body, touching me with warmth and love I had never experienced before. My mind suddenly cleared as if someone had pulled up a window shade, and I knew that Jesus was real. His death on the cross was a real event, and His act of love was directed to me. I immediately left the room and told all of my friends about my encounter with God, and although they believed I was just high on drugs, this was no one-time event. That encounter with God, and the reality that I could be reconciled to Him through Jesus' blood, changed my life forever.

A Life Reconciled to God

"And you, who were formerly alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and blameless and above reproach in His sight" (Col. 1:21-22).

Now reconciled to God, I broke my addiction to drugs. Not only was I able to overcome sin, I desired to spend my life glorifying Him. When God met me in that back bedroom over 40 years ago, He did not condemn me or tell me how terrible I was; He overwhelmed me with His love and forgiveness. When we truly experience revelation of God's abundant, extravagant love, we begin to walk in "newness of life."

His grace will empower you to change. I encourage you today to think of anything specific that makes you feel far from God.

Then follow these three steps to help you receive the reality of the cross:

1. Draw near to God today. Spend time in His presence, thanking Him for His goodness and listening for His voice (see Heb. 10:19-22).
2. Meditate on the reality of the cross. Jesus' death and resurrection mean that your life can change, and that you are a new creation in Him (see Eph. 2:6).
3. Thank God for what He has done for you, how He has paid the ultimate price for you and for the new life He has given you (see Eph. 2:4-5).

Beginning a New Journey

Even if you have believed in God for years, you may have never fully received the reality of the cross: the fact that you have been resurrected with Christ, and reconciled to your Creator. This Easter, let's meditate on the reality of what Jesus has done for us and how His resurrection also means we can experience resurrection life. God has a wonderful destiny planned for you, including a victorious life in Christ; a full, satisfying relationship with the Father; and incredible purpose. {eoa}

Ché Ahn and his wife, Sue, are the founding pastors of HRock Church in Pasadena, California. Ché serves as the founder and president of Harvest International Ministry (HIM) and the International Chancellor of Wagner Leadership Institute (WLI). With a Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry from Fuller Theological Seminary, he has played a key role in many strategic outreaches on local, national and international levels. He has written more than a dozen books and travels extensively throughout the world, bringing apostolic insight with an impartation of renewal, healing and evangelism.

This article originally appeared at .