

From Death to Resurrection in This Life

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:[a] The old has gone, the new is here!” (2 Cor. 5:17).

The physical death and resurrection of Jesus Christ become a metaphor of what is supposed to happen within us while we are still on this earth. A resurrection implies that there is a prior death. What does this death and resurrection look like for us in this life?

“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been set free from sin” (Rom. 6:3-7).

Baptism is the ceremony or sacrament of our death to the law of sin that Paul describes in Romans 7:14 through 8:2. This law is the human weakness that we all share. It makes us do the things that we don’t want to do, and not do the things that we should. It is not just a theological concept. Its effects are present in all of us whether we believe in it or not. We are born with it. It makes us vulnerable to excessive worry, anger, unforgiveness, compulsions and addictions—anything that we have difficulty controlling.

The law of sin is what keeps us inordinately attached to the things of the world. *“In which you used to live when you*

followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath" (Eph. 2:2-3). This is our natural state without God.

Second Peter 1:4 speaks of *"having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."* Our lust for things is what keeps us earthbound. The things themselves don't have to be removed from us in order for us to be sufficiently detached from them. The lust needs to be removed. Changing locations is not the answer because we take our lusts with us wherever we go. Vacations don't help for very long.

"What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? ... Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 7:24; 8:1-2). *"It is the spirit that enlivens; the flesh profits nothing"* (John 6:63) *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"* (2 Cor. 5:17). How do we enter into this place of resurrection and freedom from the law of sin?

"Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 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. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the

law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:8-14).

Those that were under the Mosaic Law were not freed from being dominated by the law of sin. Christ had to complete His death and resurrection in order for the grace of freedom to be made available for us. This grace is contained in the Holy Spirit which was poured out at Pentecost after Christ ascended. This is why Jesus said that *“It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you” (John 16:7)* *“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Rom. 8:13-14).*

Grace is received by humility toward God. We yield ourselves to God. This is basic biblical spirituality. First Peter 5:5-7 describes this well: *“Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”* We rest our minds on Him; then He brings us His rest. Christ’s Spirit within us carries the peace and strength that sanctify us. The fruit of the Spirit is what our resurrection in this life looks like (Gal. 5:22-23).

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