

MAN ALIVE!

Colossians 2:11-15

Sam trusted Christ 10 years ago, and received God's gift of eternal life. His life *is* different, but not as different as he'd like.

When he's honest with himself, he admits that he struggles with a number of problems:

- He gets angry with another guy at work.
- Sometimes he's tempted to take something that isn't his—nothing of great value—but something he could use and “no one would know the difference!” –minor tax item?
- At times he struggles with self-centered pride, with what he watches on the internet or cable TV, or with an inappropriate attraction to a beautiful woman

Sam wants to please God, but desire to please Him, and ability to accomplish it, don't always agree.

He's thankful his life isn't what it used to be, but it's still not what he'd like it to be.

Some people are telling him to stop living by *the world's* patterns, and start living by *God's standards!*

But, HOW do you do that?

Knowing a list of rules doesn't give us the ability to live by them!

HOW DO WE DEAL WITH OUR FAILURE to live in a way that pleases God?

2 divergent popular responses:

1) “Nobody's perfect so why try?”

Why set myself up for frustration? => LICENSE

2) “I'll try to DO better, so God will LIKE ME better!”

Performance based => LEGALISM

Neither response is biblical. Neither solves the problem!

HOW DO WE DEAL WITH OUR FAILURE?

How can we live a life which pleases God?

After receiving eternal life, what's the secret to a godly lifestyle?

Is it really just a matter of greater resolve? Of better performance?

Of gritting our teeth and trying harder next time?

We've already seen two fundamental principles for Christian living:

1st PRINCIPLE FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING:

*Like salvation, **Godly living IS RESULT OF FAITH, NOT WORKS!** 2:6-7*

Ocean liner encountered storm

Sailor was washed into the sea. Cry went up, "Man overboard!"

One of the crew grabbed a rope, and threw it over.

He felt a tug on the line.

Peering into the darkness, he shouted to the man in the water, "Have you got the rope?"

A faint reply came back, "No, but the rope has me!"

The exhausted sailor slipped the loop over his shoulders and under his arms, realizing he didn't have enough strength to hold on. Men on board rescued him.

What *WE* don't have strength to do, God does for us.

We take hold by faith & he lives His life through us.

2nd PRINCIPLE FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING:

Godly living IS THE RESULT OF CHRIST'S WORK

*–Not mine! **2:9-15***

TWO THEOLOGICAL PREMISES:

1) The totality of God was in Christ 2:9

2) When we're in Him **WE ARE COMPLETE.** 2:10

Alexander Maclaren: “Though all the earth were covered with helpers and lovers of my soul, “as the sand by the sea shore innumerable, and all the heavens were sown with faces of angels who cared for me and succoured me, thick as the stars in the milky way—all that could not do for me what I need. Yea, though all these were gathered into one mighty, loving creature, even he were not sufficient to protect anyone. We need more than creature help. We need the whole fulness of the Godhead to draw from. It is all there in Christ for each of us. Whosoever will, let him draw freely. Why should we leave the fountain of living waters to hew out for ourselves, with infinite pains, broken cisterns that can hold no water? All we need is in Christ. Let us lift our eyes from the low earth and all creatures, and not look to anyone, as Lord and Helper, “save Jesus only,” “that we may be filled with all the fullness of God.”

Jesus has provided EVERYTHING we need!

One reason Sam struggles (like us!): *we haven't grasped how far Christ's work reaches.*

FOUR ASPECTS OF CHRIST'S WORK IN US:

Each contains THREE CHARACTERISTICS:

Each is because we are “in Christ” [en]

Everything we receive is because we are in Him, NOT because we deserve it.

Each is a past act – already accomplished by Him. [aor.]

Tense refers to act completed in the past. It's *already* done! It's finished!

Our role: recognize what God has declared finished.

Each is based on our identification with Christ—*“together with Him”* [sun]

In each case Paul uses prefix: like in “synergy, synthesis, etc.” => “together with”

We have these four provisions *“together with”* Christ.

That’s basis of our acceptance by God—past, present, or future.

God has accepted us because He sees us united with Christ

He has given us every spiritual blessing *together with Christ*.

1. **WE ARE CIRCUMCISED WITH HIM 2:11**

As in physical circumcision, in Christ the flesh has been removed.

Our self-centered nature—our attempt to “do it ourselves”—is stripped away.

In Him we have true circumcision—that which changes the sinful heart.

Phil. 3:3 For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh.

Circumcision was the prerequisite to become part of God’s people.

Didn’t cause salvation, but individual was identified with God and His people.

We pagan Gentiles weren’t circumcised in the physical, ritualistic sense.

Therefore, we weren’t part of God’s people.

But now, since we are in Christ, we are circumcised in the TRUE, spiritual sense.

We have become part of God’s new people, the church.

Our circumcision is not a physical circumcision, but spiritual—in the heart

**SINCE WE'RE IN CHRIST,
GOD HAS MADE US PART OF HIS PEOPLE**

We've been changed—the flesh has been removed!
We're no longer like the world around us!

2. WE ARE BURIED WITH HIM 2:12a

In several passages Paul says we were identified with Christ in His death—therefore, we are *dead to sin*.

Through “baptism” =

“Baptism” has various nuances— Use in dye industry

Result of process: cloth and color became identified.

Used in figurative sense: “to be identified with.”

We are *identified with* Christ in His death—buried together with Him.

Rom. 6:4-11—*We are dead to sin through identification with Christ.*

We should consider ourselves dead to sin but alive to God.

SINCE WE'RE IN CHRIST, WE ARE DEAD TO SIN

We don't have to serve it!

3. WE ARE RAISED WITH HIM 2:12b

Just as Christ didn't stay in the tomb, neither did we remain dead.

God raised Christ from the dead and gave Him new life.

M. R. De Haan was to participate in conference. A few days before, they received a clipping, reporting his death. Word quickly spread. Confusion caused by death of a local minister by

same name. DeHaan said, "When I arrived at the conference, I found a crowd of curious people. I selected Revelation 1:18 and shocked them by saying, 'The reports you heard about my death are true! I did die, but I am now risen from the dead and am alive forevermore.'

We were dead in our sins, but in Him we have been given new life.

Every believer can say, *'I have been crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live.'*"

God has given us power to leave our dead state and enter a new life.

"through faith in the power of God which raised Him from the dead"

Great Easter truth is not that we will live again after death—that isn't the great thing—but that we are new here—not that we will live *forever*, but that we have new life *now!*"

SINCE WE'RE IN CHRIST, WE ARE RESURRECTED WITH CHRIST =>

4. WE ARE MADE ALIVE WITH HIM 2:13-15

Previous condition: "We were dead" (pres. ptc.)

Previously, instead of being dead to sin, we were dead in sin.

Sin controlled and we deserved death because of offenses against His law.

We had no hope of enjoying God's blessing.

God gave us life—source of power which enables us to please Him.

Previous prerequisites: (aor. ptc.)

In order to give us life, Christ had to deal with 3 prerequisites:

First He did this, THEN He gave us life:

Three problems from old life had to be dealt with first.

Something occurred BEFORE action of main verb—before He gave us life!

– **Sins forgiven 2:13**

Before giving us new life, Christ forgave our offenses of God's law.

We had broken the law.

We were guilty and had to be punished, in this case, death.

God forgave all offenses. We owe nothing.

– **Condemning decree canceled 2:14
(erase, take away)**

2nd prerequisite: before giving us life, Christ had to annul decree standing in our way.

Result of trial: condemning decree against us.

Decree was a barrier which blocked our way to God.

The decree was nailed to Christ's cross.

Custom: nailed charge over head of criminal on cross—like Pilate

Charge against us was nailed to His cross, rather than ours.

He bore charge/punishment on His cross; annulled charge against us.

List of charges against us has been erased.

HE erased it.

Our slate is clean before God. We can come to Him confidently.

Martin Luther's dream: He was visited by Satan, who brought a record of his life, written in his own hand. The tempter said, "Is that true?" Luther confessed it was all true. Scroll after scroll was unrolled, and the same confession was wrung from him again and again. Finally, having brought Luther down in misery and guilt, the accuser was about to leave. Suddenly Luther turned and said, "It is true, every word of it, but write across it all: *'The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin.'*"

– Rulers and authorities disarmed 2:15

Before Christ could give us life, he had to disarm those in authority who would have condemned us.

Authorities accuse us of sin and discredit us, before God and men.

Christ has removed basis they might take hold of to accuse us.

Having triumphed over them on the cross,

God made exhibition of them, like enemy conquered and taken prisoner.

Plutarch describes 3-day "Triumph" given Roman General Aemilius Paulus after capturing Macedonia. Great scaffolds were erected for spectators. All Rome turned out, dressed in festive white robes.

First day: 259 chariots displayed statues, pictures and images taken from the enemy.

Second day: their armor was paraded on wagons. Followed by display of silver taken.

Third day: their gold and captives were displayed.

King's chariot and armor, then his servants, his children, and finally the defeated king himself.

After the defeated, came the victorious General, followed by his troops, singing songs of triumph.

In His death, burial, and resurrection, God defeated evil powers, making a public spectacle of them, far greater than the Roman Triumph.

**HE has triumphed over every enemy;
now we triumph together with Him.**

SINCE WE'RE IN CHRIST, WE HAVE NEW LIFE

Romans 6: we remind ourselves continuously we died with Christ, we were buried with Him, resurrected with Him, and have new life in Him.

Continual reminder should revolutionize our thought pattern!
Nothing's left for us to handle.

Christ did it all. We are complete in Him.

CHRIST HAS REMOVED EVERY BARRIER TO FELLOWSHIP with God **AND HAS GIVEN US NEW LIFE!**

This is the basis for authentic, satisfying godly living—

We are free from the guilt of past failures

We have been forgiven

We are no longer bound by our old lifestyle

We don't have to be tied to the opinions & criticisms of others

We can accept ourselves AND love others like us

We can live with confidence about the future.

In Christ we have all we need.

We have been made part of God's people

We have died to sin.

We have been given new life, eternal, complete & satisfying.

We have been freed from guilt and from the power of every evil authority

What more could we want?!!!

Daniel Hugon was convicted of murder. His lawyers argued he had extra Y chromosome, and this caused Hugon to be born a killer. Experts testified that the additional Y chromosome did not make him a killer, but could create behavioral problems. Jurors concluded Hugon was "unbalanced from birth" and should receive lighter sentence. Hugon's case describes us all. We all have "behavioral problems" and are "unbalanced from birth." We all come into the world with **the "S" chromosome**--for Sin.

Two former members of Charles Manson "family," responsible for mass murders.

Charles Watson incarcerated in prison for his part in murders. He became model prisoner for years, trusted Christ in 1975. Although still in prison, he married and had a family. He sought and found forgiveness for sex orgies, drugs and murder, including from daughter of one of his victims.

Bruce Davis received two life sentences for murders committed by Manson family. He found a relationship with God and a Christian wife. These relationships gave him direction and purpose. He teaches Bible class and models faith in prison.

If God can forgive such people, he can forgive **ANYBODY!**

Lloyd Ogilvie: **“Christ is all we need.**

**With Him we have all things;
without Him all the things we have amount to nothing.”**

*Why, then, do we continue to condemn ourselves,
and one another?*

Why can't we accept ourselves as we are in Christ?

Why do we keep believing Satan's accusations?

World's philosophy says it can't be true. It's too easy.

We prefer to struggle to establish our own righteousness.

We remain condemned under guilt we heap on ourselves when we fail to live as we think we should, in our own strength! Rom. 10:1-4

If we would accept this truth and trust Christ, *not just for our salvation, but also as the basis for daily living*, we would find that **in Him we have everything we need.**

Instead of insecurity and condemnation, we find security and confidence before God.

Let's not allow ourselves to be judged by anyone, even ourselves! => **2:16**

How would you help Sam with his struggle?

What's the answer he needs?

How often do you think Christians face this kind of struggle?

*What can we do about it? **Acknowledge the greatness of what Christ has already done for us!***