

The Death and Resurrection of our "self" life

Just as the fact of the death and resurrection of the Lord is the ground of one's acceptance of Jesus Christ, so the principle of death and resurrection to man's "soul-life" is the basis of one's life and service for Christ Jesus.

One cannot be an effective servant of God without knowing this principle of death and resurrection. Even Jesus Himself served on this basis. Before His public ministry ever began, He submitted Himself to baptism. He was baptized not because He had any sin, but, rather, because of the figure of death and resurrection. When Jesus took His stand on this ground, it was then that the Holy Spirit came upon Him and He began His ministry.

Everything Jesus did on earth, even though it was prior to His actual death on the cross, was done with **the principle of death and resurrection as its basis.**

If the Son of Man has to go through death and resurrection, in figure and principle, in order to do the work of God, *can we do otherwise?*

JOB IS A PICTURE OF THIS PRINCIPLE OF DEATH AND RESURRECTION

No one can effectively serve God without knowing the working of this principle of death and resurrection in their life.

Let's look at each Gospel!

Each of the four passage we will show - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John - all have something in common. In each of these Gospels, the Lord is speaking concerning the "**SOUL**-ACTIVITY OF MAN." God is saying that the **soul** of man must be dealt with by bearing the cross daily and following Him.

As we have seen, the *soul-life* (or, natural life of man) is the old man of the flesh, or one who lives by his *emotions, intellect or will*. God states that this "old man" has been crucified with Christ on the cross. Three times in the book of Galatians the "crucifying" aspects of the cross is referred to as a thing already accomplished, however, the "soul-life" of man continues . . . alive, and demanding . . . with him.

There is an unending, day-by-day, need for the "cross" to operate in the life of the believer. This "crucifying of the soul-life" is a life-long service, laid down by Jesus in the words, "Let him (the believer) **deny himself** . . . [the word "self" is the same Greek word as "soul"] . . . and take up his cross **daily**, and follow Me" [Mark 8:34].

Death must remain an abiding principle of the believer's life,
for the losing of the "soul" and the uprising of his "spirit."

When the believer lives a "natural" life, he becomes a slave of his *emotions, intellect and will*. He goes ahead at full speed, letting his "soul" direct his life. If the believer's life is to be pliable to the Lord, then the seat of his natural energies - his *emotions, his intellect and his will* - must be brought, by way of the cross, under Christ's control.

WHEN DEATH HAS BEEN WROUGHT OUT IN THE BELIEVER'S "NATURAL" LIFE, THEN HE FINDS THAT GOD WILL RELEASE HIM INTO RESURRECTION.

The believer will discover that more than anything he has lost is given back to him!

While the principle-of-death is at work in the believer's "soul-life," the principle-of-life is at work, directing, empowering and animating his "spirit" with fresh divine life. Hence- forth, what the believer has lost is brought back, however, when it is touched with a new value, his "spirit" is under heaven's control.

The believer still has his "soul," in the same way he still has his "body." He still has full use of his faculties, however, his "soul-life" is not now his life-spring. He is no longer living for the cravings of his "soul." He uses it, but he lives "by his spirit." The "old man" has been finally, and forever, crucified [Romans 6:6].

The believer's decisions, and actions, are influenced by his "soul-life" if he lives on the natural plane, ungoverned by the Holy Spirit working through his "spirit-life." His "soul-life" influences his whole course of action.

Let's look at these passages from the four Gospels:

Matthew

In Matthew 10:37-38, Jesus said, "*Anyone who loves his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. Whoever finds his life [his "soul"] will lose it, and whoever loses his life [soul] for My sake will find it.*"

Christ is warning the believer of the danger of the subtle working of his "soul," turning him away from the path of God. The key is, "*The believer lose his soul,*" that is, he most no longer allow his "soul" to fulfill its desires. He must "lose" it!

It often is not any definite sin that is keeping the believer from following the Lord all the way, but, rather, his course is diverted by some perfectly innocent, natural, affection - or an intellectual approach - or the action of the believer's unsundered will.

Mark

Mark 8:34-35, "*Then He [Jesus] called the crowd to Him along with His disciples and said: `If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life [soul] will lose it, but whoever loses his life [soul] for me and for the gospel will save it.*"

This teaching of Jesus came at the time when Peter, because of his love for the Master, began protesting Christ's going into Jerusalem, saying, "*Lord, do not do it, pity Yourself, this shall never come to You.*" Peter was appealing to Jesus to spare Himself and the Lord rebuked Peter, as He would rebuke Satan, for "*caring for the things of men and not the things of God,*" after which came the teaching of the passage above in Mark 8:34-35.

What was happening? Peter was listening to his emotions, and intellect, and he reacted to these *natural* instincts. Jesus said that this is not the way God does things. The believer must "*die*" to his "*soul*" desires, and learn to listen to God - by his "*spirit*,"

Luke

In the Gospel of Luke, chapter 17, Christ again deals with the matter of the believer's "*soul-life*," however, this time it is in relation to His return to earth.

Notice Jesus is speaking of "*the day when the son of man is revealed*" (verse 30), as He draws a parallel between the day that He will return to earth with the day that Lot went out from Sodom (verse 29). He refers to the "*rapture*" of the saints in verses 34-35, with the words, "*One will be taken, and the other left.*"

In between Christ's reference to the calling of Lot out of Sodom (verse 29) and this allusion to the gathering of the saints to Himself (verses 30-32), there come these remarkable words in verses 31-32: "*On that day no one who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything. Remember Lot's wife.*"

"Remember Lot's wife?" - Why?

Verse 33 answers, "*Whoever tries to keep his life [his "soul"] will lose it, and whoever loses his life [his "soul"] will preserve it.*"

This passage in Luke 17, teaches the believer what his reaction should be to the rapture. It states plainly, "*Lose your soul for Christ's sake.*" The moment Christ returns to earth the believer will discover his heart's real treasure. Is it God or, is it, like Lot's wife, the "*things*" one's soul craves?

That "*precious thing*" which the believer goes downstairs into the house to get, is enough to pin him down - a "*peg*" that holds him to earth.

Note. Jesus is speaking of "*marrying, planting, eating, selling,*" all perfectly legitimate activities with which there is nothing essentially wrong, however, **it is occupation with them, to the extent that the believer's heart goes out to them, enough to hold him back.**

The real question is, "*Where is the heart?*" The Cross must work in the believer a true detachment in his "*spirit*," from being guided by his "*soul-power*." The believer must not be so preoccupied with his "*soul*" activities that, in listening to their cry, he allows his emotions, intellect, or sheer self determination to make his ultimate decisions.

John

John 12:24-25, "*I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life [soul] will lose it, while the man who hates his life [soul] in this world will keep it for eternal life.*"

Again, Christ is speaking of the inward working of the Cross . . . the losing of the control of the believer's "soul" . . . in order that his inner life, his "spirit," might come to life and take charge. The believer's nature is, here, depicted as a grain of wheat dying in order to increase. The end in view is fruitfulness!

The picture Christ draws here of the believer's nature is that of a grain of wheat with life in it, however, unless the outer life dies, it will "*abide alone*." The believer's life has power to impart life to others, however, to do so, the outer life [his soul] must die.

Jesus Christ passed into death in order for His divine life to emerge in many others. He let go of His life that believer might receive it. He "*made His soul an offering for sin*," [Isaiah 53:10]. He cried to His Heavenly Father, "*Not My will be done, but Thine*." It is this aspect of Christ's death that the believer is called to die. There must be "*conformity to His death*" whereby the believer **loses** his natural life in order that, in the power of Christ's resurrection, he becomes a life-importer (directed by his "spirit") sharing with others the new life of God which is in him.

2 Corinthians 4:11-12 states, "*For we who are alive are always being given over to death, for Jesus' sake, so that His life may be revealed in our mortal body. so then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you*."

Now, some have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and received this "*new life*" in Christ, however, Christ's divine life is not overflowing and imparting life to others because it is scarcely making itself apparent, even in the believer's own life.

God's Word teaches that the reason there is so little sign of life, where life is present in the believer, is that the "soul" is enveloping and confining that life of his "spirit," like the outer shell envelops the grain of wheat. The believer is living by his "soul-powers" and is working and serving his natural strength, instead of drawing his life from God. His "soul" stands in the way of the springing up of his new life in the Spirit!

God tells the believer to "*lose his soul*" because, only by doing so, is there fullness of joy!

The believer will pass through periods of "*death*" - God will allow him to go through this experience when it will seem as though everything of value to him is slipping from his grasp, however, afterward, he will find that everything is given back to him in glorious resurrection, and nothing can measure the difference between what was before and what now is!

What does God's Word mean when it teaches the believer to "*take up his cross daily and follow the Lord*"? This command, found several places in Scripture *always* follows the words, "*deny self*." These passages are referring to the act of denying one's "soul" from dictating attitudes and actions.

To "*deny self*" refers to the "soul" . . . (the seat of man's affections and intellect) . . . that plays such an important part in decisions and actions, being brought into subjection to the working of the Cross. "*Bearing the cross*," an *inward* act, is a continuous process . . . a step-by-step following after Christ's death to self. The Cross is brought to bear upon the believer's "soul" to bring about death to these natural endowments - his emotions, intellect and will.

Even though one is born-again – and his “spirit” has been made alive, he still has a "soul" to contend with. His emotions, intellect, and will are not to be "put away" all together, but rather, now, the Holy Spirit, through the believer's "spirit-life," rules. The believer **uses** his "soul-power," but the soul does not **rule** him.

Believers are to "have faith unto the saving of their **soul**" (Hebrews 10:39). 1 Peter 1:9, also, teaches, that "the goal of our faith is the salvation of our souls," Luke 21:19 states, "It is by endurance [persistence] that you will secure possession of your souls."

What are these verses referring to?

When one is born-again, by accepting Jesus Christ into his life, his "spirit," which was "dead in trespasses and sin" [Ephesians 2:1], is made alive [John 3:6], he has the divine life of Christ Jesus within his "spirit." However, the believer's "soul" - [that is, his emotions, intellect and will] - needs to be brought under the control of the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is as the believer brings his "soul" - [his emotions, intellect and will] - under the control of the Holy Spirit that he grows to spiritual maturity.

The believer does not "lose his soul" in the sense that he does not have one. His soul is still there with its natural endowments, however, now the Cross is brought to bear upon it to bring it into death, and then, as God may please, to give it back in glorious resurrection power!

Paul speaks of this in Philippians 3:10, when he expresses, "I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the **fellowship of sharing in His suffering**, becoming like Him in His death."

The mark of "death" upon the "soul," bringing it to the place where it is always subordinate to the believer's "spirit," not assert itself independently, is the work of the Cross.

A man of the caliber of the Apostle Paul, with all the natural resources which are hinted at in this third chapter of Philippians, so distrusts his own natural strength that he could write to the Corinthians, "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power" [1 Corinthians 2:2-5].

The cross was a symbol of death. It stood for the abrupt, violent end of a human being! The man who took up his cross and started down the road - *was not coming back!* He was going out to have his life ended. The cross struck cruel and hard, and when it had finished its work, the man was no more. God can not approve of any of the fruits of the "old life." The believer must leave his old life at the cross, allowing Christ to raise him to new-ness of life!

Whenever God allows the believer to go through some difficult time, the question is, "*To whom will he listen? Where will he acquire his guidance? Does he acquire it from his 'soul' powers or from his 'spirit' - made alive in Christ Jesus?*"

It is important that one keeps in mind that whenever one is born-again . . . **it is his "spirit" that is made alive.** This new life in Christ Jesus desires to control his "soul-powers" and to change his attitudes and actions into Christ-like-ness.

Just as the believer's five physical senses have a certain spectrum to which they are sensitive, so does his "spirit-sense" have a spectrum to which it is sensitive and God has made it possible for the believer's "spirit" to increase its sensitivity!

There is a certain sensitivity of one's eye to the spectrum of light – a certain area to which the eye has perception to light – and there is a certain sensitivity of one's ear to the spectrum of sound – the extent of these perception can be increased through training, or application of various instruments – so it is with the believer's "spirit." It, too, can have its sensitivity increased.

HOW TO INCREASE THE SENSITIVITY OF ONE'S "SPIRIT"

The believer must learn how to allow his "spirit" to be led of the Holy Spirit. He must increase his "spirit-sensitivity" and this is accomplished by the Word of God!

Jesus said in John 6:63, "*The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.*"

In Matthew 4:4 Jesus said, "*It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'*"

The believer "*receives with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save his SOUL*" - James 1:21.

As the believer consumes the Word of God into his "spirit," he will:

(1) **Set his affections on things above** - Colossians 3:2

(2) **Renew his mind** - Romans 12:2 – And, he will,

(3) **Submit his will to God's will** - Matthew 26:39

1 Peter 1:9 states, "*Receive the end of your faith, even the salvation of your 'souls' . . . (verse 22) seeing you have purified your 'souls' in obeying truth.*"

Hebrews 10:39 states, "*Believe to the saving of your 'soul'.*"

The believer's "spirit" is made alive when he accepts Jesus Christ, however, God desires to also bring the believer's "soul" - [his emotions, mind and will] - under His control and this is accomplished through the believer applying God's Word into his life!