

8. The Crucified Life

The cross of Christ is lifted up between heaven and earth. Here comes the Father and the whole train of holy angels; and as they approach the cross, the Father bows and the sacrifice is accepted. Then comes man, with his burden of sin, to the cross. It is at the cross that Christ takes the burden of sin and rolls it away. Here mercy and truth have met together and righteousness and peace have kissed each other. And Christ says, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me."

As the sinner falls at the foot of the cross, he begins to marvel, and is abased. What is the reason for this? Why, he sees that there is a transgressed law, and that man cannot keep it, but he sees Christ, and with hope and faith he grasps the arm of infinite power and repents at every step.

The knowledge of the law would condemn the sinner, and crush hope from his breast, if he did not see Jesus as his substitute and surety, ready to pardon his transgression and to cleanse him from all sin.

1. What is the Bible definition for sin?

1 John 3:4

2. What happened to sin through the commandment?

Romans 7:13

Note: This text shows the purpose of the law was not the creation of sin, but the discovery of sin. It was not designed to increase the amount of sin, but to reveal the exceeding sinfulness of sin already existing.

3. What is the law considered to be?

Romans 7:14

Note: If this fact were more generally recognized, people would not try to enforce the observance of the commandments of God. Since the law is spiritual, it can be obeyed only by the power of the Spirit of God. "God is Spirit" (John 4:24); therefore the law is the nature of God. Spiritual is opposed to carnal, or fleshly. So the man who is in the flesh can not please God.

4. How many sins does it take to separate us from God?

Genesis 3:6, 7

Note: The gospel demands holiness, righteousness. Whoever is looking for the soon return of Jesus purifies himself even as Christ is pure. We are called to live a life in Christ. It only took one sin to exclude Adam and Eve from the garden.

5. Why does the law bring us to Christ?

Galatians 3:24

Note: To be justified means to be pardoned. Those who are justified by God receive the righteousness of Christ; for the Savior has taken away their sins. They stand before the throne of God justified and accepted. They have crucified self, and Christ abides in their hearts.

6. What will a person justified by Christ refuse to live in?

Romans 6:1, 2

Note: The soul who sees Jesus by faith, despises his own righteousness. He sees himself as incomplete, his repentance worthless, his strongest faith but weakness, his most costly sacrifice as nothing, and he sinks in humility at the foot of the cross. But a voice speaks to him from the pages of God's Word. In amazement he hears the message, "You are complete in Him." Colossians 2:10.

7. Why was the old man crucified with Christ on the cross?

Romans 6:6

Note: That which is destroyed is the body of sin, and it is destroyed only by this personal presence of the life of Christ. It is destroyed in order that we may be freed from its power, and may no longer need to serve it. It is destroyed for everybody, for Christ in His own flesh has abolished "the enmity," the carnal mind; not His own, for He had none, but ours.

8. What did Christ become for us?

2 Corinthians 5:21

9. What will be fulfilled in us as a result of Christ's sacrifice on the cross?

Romans 8:3, 4

10. How is the born again experience to be maintained?

1 John 3:6

Note: No one abides in Christ, who understandingly breaks the law of God. "He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked." 1 John 2:6

11. What keeps the born again Christian from his old life of sin?

1 John 3:9

Note: Therefore "abide in Him."

12. What is Christ's invitation?

Revelation 3:20

Many have an idea that they must do some part of the work alone. They have trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sin, but now they try by their own efforts to do what is right. But every effort like this will fail. Jesus says, "Without me ye can do nothing." Our growth in grace, our joy, our usefulness--all depend upon our abiding in Christ. It is by abiding in Him--that we grow in grace.

But, I ask, "How am I supposed to abide in Christ?"--The same way I received Him at first. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him" (Col. 2:6). You gave yourself to God, to be His totally, to serve and obey Him, and you took Christ as your Savior. You could not of yourself atone for your sins or change your heart, but having given yourself to God, you believed that He for Christ's sake did all this for you. By faith you became Christ's, and by faith you are to grow up in Him--by giving and taking. You are to give all --your heart, your will, your service--give yourself to Him to obey all His requirements; and you must take all--Christ, the fullness of all blessing, to abide in your heart, to be your strength, your righteousness, your everlasting helper--to give you power to obey.

Your weakness is united to His strength, your ignorance to His wisdom, your frailty to His enduring might. So you are not to look to yourself, not to let the mind dwell upon self, but look to Christ. Let the mind dwell upon His love, upon the beauty, the perfection, of His character. Christ in His self-denial, Christ in His humiliation, Christ in His purity and holiness, Christ in His matchless love--this is the subject for the soul's contemplation. It is by loving Him, copying Him, depending entirely upon Him, that you are to be transformed into His likeness.