

Lesson Three: I Am Alive and Free

- I. We WERE crucified with Jesus. This was a one-time event. Now we are alive.

Galatians 2:20¹

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

- A. When it came to dying, Paul taught the believers that we have already died. We've been raised.

Colossians 3:1-5

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. ⁵ Therefore (because of verses 1-4) put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

1. Paul is reasoning with the Colossians. Instead of laying down the law about not sinning or telling them they need to die to self, he reminds them that they ALREADY DIED and were RISEN. He isn't telling them to die again, he's telling them to have dominion over—put to death—evil desires. We are able to do this because we are dead to sin.

- B. Just as Jesus was crucified once and now lives, so it is with us.

Romans 6:1-14

1. Paul does not say we *need* to die to sin, but that we already died to sin. It makes no sense for someone who is dead to sin to live in it.

¹ What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? ² Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

2. We died and were buried with Jesus.

³ Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ^{4a} Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death,

3. We died. That is true. But THEN we were resurrected with Him. We now walk in “newness of life”.

^{4b} That just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,

4. The sinful sinner that we were, our old man, died. The body of sin has been done away with. We are no longer slaves of sin.

⁶ Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. ⁷ For he who has died has been freed from sin.

5. Just as Christ died once, so we died once. The life we now live, we live to God.

¹ Underlining, boldface, and parenthesis in the NKJV was added by the author of these notes for clarification.
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⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, ⁹ knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. ¹⁰ For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. ¹¹ Likewise (in the same way—just as Jesus died one time but is now alive) you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

6. “Therefore”—because we died to sin and are alive, we have the power to not allow sin to rule us. We don’t have to obey our body’s lusts. Our sinful *nature* is dead, but we live in *bodies* that can have strong desires. Our new nature, which is the **ONLY** nature we now have, gives us power to present ourselves as instruments of righteousness as those who are **ALIVE** from the dead.

¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. ¹³ And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

7. The next verse almost seems to come out of nowhere, but it is crucial to understanding why we are free from sin. We are no longer under law which could only point out our failures, but not change us. We are under grace—the grace that caused God to give His only Son in death for us—that allowed us to be crucified with Him and which gave us His life.

¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

C. We are ALIVE with Christ having raised and ascended with Him.

Colossians 2:11-14

In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, ¹² buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. ¹³ And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, ¹⁴ having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Ephesians 2:4-7

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

II. Because we died and now live, we are free from judgment and wrath.

John 5:24

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting LIFE, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”

Romans 5:8-10

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through

Him.¹⁰ For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

- III. As we read in Romans 6 verse 14 the very reason we are free from sin's dominion is that we are under grace and NOT law. In fact, we also DIED TO THE LAW and are FREE FROM THE LAW.

Romans 7:4-6

Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God (fruits of righteousness).⁵ For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death (fruits of sin).⁶ But now we have been DELIVERED (set free) from the law, having died (PAST TENSE) to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit (referring to grace) and not in the oldness of the letter (referring to the law).

- A. We DIED to the curses of the law.

Galatians 3:13 NASB

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree")

- B. Believers who try to LIVE this grace LIFE by employing what they are DEAD to, namely, the law, will find that sin is strengthened in their lives.

1 Corinthians 15:56b

The strength of sin is the law.

- C. So, even though we DIED to and FREE from sin, when the LAW REVIVES in our lives, we can once again be enslaved to sin, even though our new creation wants to do what is right and doesn't want to do what is wrong.

Romans 7:15-25

For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. ¹⁶ If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. ¹⁷ But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. ¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. ¹⁹ For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. ²⁰ Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. ²¹ I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. ²² For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. ²³ But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴ O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

1. There are three main views of the preceding verses.

- a. One, this is a description of the normal Christian's struggle with sin. Even though this is commonly taught, most commentators actually reject this view in light of what Paul said in Romans 6 and 8.
- b. This leaves two other views; first that Paul is describing his struggle with sin when he was an unbeliever trying to live under the law.

- i. *Since Paul described his pre-Christian performance under the law as “blameless” in respect to the righteousness which is in the law (Phil. 3:6), it is difficult to conclude that he is describing his pre-Christian struggles.*
- c. The other view (with which we agree) is that He is describing the believer’s struggles with sin, who tries to live the Christian life under the very law to which they are supposed to be dead and free.
- b. We believe the answer to which view is more logical is found in this passage.

Romans 7:9-11

I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. ¹⁰ And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. ¹¹ For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.

- a. *Paul was born under the law and was never at any time without the law before he came to Jesus.*
- b. *When he was born again, he became dead to the law and ALIVE.*
- c. *Sin “revived” means that sin came alive again. Paul was in sin while under the law. When He came to Christ, he was free from sin and dead to the law. When the law revived, he died again.*
- d. *There is no one as miserable as a Christian who is living under law.*

New American Bible Commentary for Romans 7:13-25 reads: “Far from improving the sinner, law encourages sin to expose itself in transgressions or violations of specific commandments (see Romans 1:24; 5:20). Thus persons who do not experience the justifying grace of God, and Christians who revert to dependence on law as the criterion for their relationship with God, will recognize a rift between their reasoned desire for the goodness of the law and their actual performance that is contrary to the law. Unable to free themselves from the slavery of sin and the power of death, they can only be rescued from defeat in the conflict by the power of God’s grace working through Jesus Christ.”

- D. Paul wrote that he “died daily” which many have come to conclude that he is referring to dying to self, to sin, to the world, etc. A closer examination in context reveals that Paul was saying no such thing but rather referring to the suffering and persecution he experienced as a result of preaching the resurrection—the gospel.

1 Corinthians 15:30-32

And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? ³¹ I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. ³² If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!”

- 1. What Paul was saying was that he suffered continually—daily in preaching the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Why suffer if there is no resurrection—just forget about it and live however we want for in the end we all just die and that’s the end of it. In no way is he referring to our need to die to self, etc.
- 2. Paul is saying that he died daily by means of the opposition he faced as a minister of the New Covenant, and certainly all those who live the gospel will suffer persecution. Yet, he is not speaking in terms of his or our need to die to self and sin. Certainly the man who penned Romans 6 knew that he was already dead to and free from sin.

E. The following passage describes what happens to us when we come to Christ and suffer as His followers.

Luke 9:20-26

He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

Peter answered and said, "The Christ of God."

²¹ And He strictly warned and commanded them to tell this to no one, ²² saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day."

²³ Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross (daily), and follow Me.²⁴ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. ²⁵ For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?²⁶ For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels.

- a. **The context of this passage is extremely important.** Jesus had just told His disciples plainly that He would suffer, be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, be killed, and rise again. In this context, he tells them to deny themselves and take up their crosses (daily), and follow Him. Then in verse 26, he speaks of not being ashamed of His words. It is safe to conclude that Jesus is referring to both things when speaking of dying, that of being crucified with him as Paul said he had been in Galatians 2:20, and to suffering as a result of proclaiming the truth about Him as Paul also called dying.
- b. **Mark 8:34 and Matthew 16:24 are in the exact same context as Luke 9:23, with one glaring difference. Only Luke 9:23 adds the word "daily".** The addition of this one word, changes the whole meaning of the passage from a one-time death to a series of deaths. According to the NKJV (the one above), the word "daily" does not appear in the The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text². So we conclude based on the following evidence that "daily" does not belong in this Scripture.

IV. There are many other laws which are not specifically religious which tend to weigh us down.

A. We DIED to the basic principles of the world.

Colossians 2:8, 20-23

Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

*²⁰ Therefore, if you died with Christ **from the basic principles of the world**, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to **regulations**—²¹ "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,"²² which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the **commandments and doctrines of men**?²³ These things indeed have an **appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body**, but are of no value against the **indulgence of the flesh**.*

1. **Of course, we must obey the laws of our land.** If you speed, you will get a ticket. If you commit a felony, you will go to jail. We are commanded to obey the laws of our land as long as they do not go against the word of God (Rom. 13). However, there are other

² This is an ancient Greek version of the New Testament used by many Bible translators.

standards (laws) the world often burdens us with, and like all laws, they usually come with a threat or a curse.

- a. Dietary laws
- b. Exercise laws
- c. Ecology laws
- d. Political laws
- e. Keep up with the Joneses Laws
- f. Social standing rules
- g. Community involvement expectations
- h. What's cool and what's not
- i. Don't have an opinion that differs from the majority
- j. Family expectations
- k. Cultural "norms"

V. I DIED to the world and the world to me.

Galatians 6:12-15

As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. ¹³For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.¹⁴ But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.¹⁵ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

- A. In verses 12-13 Paul is talking about the Judaizers in Galatia that wanted to boast in their converts who follow a perverted gospel, one which begins in grace but then seeks to be perfected by keeping laws.**
- B. In verse 14 Paul boasts in the cross of Jesus by which we have been CRUCIFIED (DIED) to the world and the world has been CRUCIFIED to us.**
- C. In verse 15 we see that obeying laws is not what matters. What is important is that we are new creations taught by grace and not by law.**
- D. John also wrote in 1 John 2:15, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." This shows us two things, one being that if the love of the Father is in us (if we are born again) we will not love the world. It also shows that our participation in rejecting that from which we've been FREED is necessary just as is true with sin. We still have the ability to sin or love the world, but a true believer will not be content with being dominated by either. Our heritage is FREEDOM.**

VI. We are no longer sinners with a sinful nature. We are new creations with a new nature.

2 Corinthians 5:17

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away (perished, gone away); behold, **all things** have become **new**.*

- A. We are not sinners. We are the righteous.**

Romans 5:15-19

But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. ¹⁶ And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. ¹⁷ For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) ¹⁸ Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. ¹⁹ For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. (Sinner and righteous are opposing terms.)

- B. Some say that there are certain sins from which a person cannot escape. In these verses we learn that because we are righteous and NOT sinners, we are free from ALL SIN.**

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Do you not know that the unrighteous (speaking not of believers but of non-believers, sinners, those who have not been born again) will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

- C. Again, our effort is required; not to make the changes, but to cooperate with them. We are to put on the new man because we are no longer as we were.**

Ephesians 4:17-24

This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk (the non-believing Gentiles), in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸ having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; ¹⁹ who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. ²⁰ But you (believers) have not so learned Christ, ²¹ if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: ²² that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³ and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

- VII. The church has spent so much time trying to get believers to DIE, that we scarcely speak of the LIFE that Jesus DIED to give us.**

John 3:16

For God so LOVED the world that He GAVE His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting LIFE.

John 4:14

“Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting LIFE.”

John 10:10

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have LIFE, and that they may have it more abundantly (superabundantly).

Titus 3:4-7

But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, ⁵ not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal LIFE.

1 John 5:11-13

And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal LIFE, and this LIFE is in His Son. ¹² He who has the Son has the LIFE; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. ¹³ These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal LIFE.

VIII. We are free!

John. 8:36

So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed (really, certainly, truly free).

A. Here are a few more things from which we are free.

1. Released from fear of death, the devil

Hebrews 2:14-15

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

2. Free from fear and Timidity

Romans 8:15

For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear (alarm, fright, terror), but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

1 John 4:17-18

Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear (alarm, fright, terror) in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

2 Timothy 1:7

For God has not given us a spirit of fear (timidity), but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

3. Freedom from worry and anxiety

Philippians 4:6-7 *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

1 Peter 5:7 *Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*

IX. Stand fast in your freedom!

Galatians 5:1 AMP

In [this] freedom Christ has made us free [and completely liberated us]; stand fast then, and do not be hampered and held ensnared and submit again to a yoke of slavery [which you have once put off].

Galatians 5:1 Contemporary English Version

Christ has set us free! This means we are really free. Now hold on to your freedom and don't ever become slaves of the Law again.