



## NOT I, BUT CHRIST

We've been learning that our life with Christ is a process – a journey to our divine destiny. Christians have made a choice to reject sinful humanity's default destination and they now pursue their pre-ordained life with Jesus. Our walk with Him involves four intertwining experiences that we must be engaged in continually and progressively.

The first experience is **Discovery**, a series of breakthroughs in receiving God's revelation of Himself and His plan and will for us. At certain times, it may seem like this experience is merely a cognitive activity. But the Holy Spirit continually brings His wisdom and gifts into our experiential life.

The next experience is receiving a **New Spirit Life** from the Holy Spirit. We experience rebirth at the same moment that we receive salvation in Jesus Christ. From then on, we can live the Holy Spirit's fruit in our new spirits.

The next experience is **Ministry** to one another. Christlikeness is best demonstrated in our loving service to others. Jesus made it clear that His disciples truly follow Him by losing their self-centeredness in servanthood. It is when we unselfishly use the Holy Spirit's gifts in ministry that we walk in the supernatural.

The next level is what brings about our transformation into Christlikeness. In other words, the Christian's entire life must become **Christ-Centered**. It is in this phase of our journey that we move away from religion and Christianity becomes relational to us. At this point, Christ is all to us – all the time. He is all we need, He is all we want, and He is all we have.

The apostle Paul reached this experiential level of Christ-centeredness. He simply declared, *"To me the only important thing about living is Christ."* (Phil. 1:21 NCV) He moved away from his religion of strict law-keeping in order to walk in freedom to become like Christ. Towards the end of his life, he could say, *"I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him."* (Phil. 3:7-9 NLT)

How did Paul reach such a point in his Christian walk? He discovered the principle of "Not I, but Christ." This principle involves our co-crucifixion, co-burial and co-resurrection with Christ (Rom. 6:3-5). The heavenly reality is our old self has been crucified and buried with Christ and now we have a new life. But we do not live this new life separately and apart from Him. This new life is Christ Himself.

Paul clearly stated this spiritual principle in **Gal. 2:20**: *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."* (KJV)

Our co-crucifixion is an accomplished fact. There is nothing else we can do to crucify our old self. Besides, only Christ Himself can do this. The Gospel of grace tells us that we no longer have to attempt anything in this area. It's done and over.

Paul also says that *"not I, but Christ liveth in me."* The Gospel also tells us that we do not have to attempt to do anything in our present life to become Christlike. Christ is living within us instead of us living by ourselves. God has installed Christ within us to be our life. Our new life is the Lord Jesus living in us. And because He lives in us, He overcomes for us. There is nothing that Christ cannot overcome. God did not give Jesus to be our example. He gave Christ to be our life.

Many of us have a problem overcoming impatience. We try our best to be patient and most of the time we can only do it for a short time. (Isn't it humorous that patience by its definition is being patient for a long time?) Here's what I have discovered: According to the "Not I, but Christ" principle, God does not help us overcome. He does not give us more patience to overcome our impatience. Christ within you is your victory.

The Christ-centered life is not the Lord giving us the strength to be holy or pure in our thoughts, attitudes and actions. The Christ-centered life is simply Christ living within us to overcome sin on our behalf. It is Christ being obedient in our place, praying in our place, and being patient and humble in our place. Christ lives in us to do everything for us.

When you believe in and receive Jesus as Savior and Lord, Christ becomes yours. God has given Christ to us to be our life. He is God's life implanted within us. His life enables us to live a life on earth that is just the same as the one Jesus lived in His ministry. I believe that God is raising up a new race of people – people who have Christ within and who depend on Him to live out His life in them.

The Lord does not want us to be ordinary people. He wants us to live a life that God's Son lives. He wants us to speak what no man could speak. He wants us to do what no man could do. He wants us to experience what no man could experience. He wants us to face what no man could face. When *"not I, but Christ"* lives in me, I can live such a life.