



Topic: Dying for the Manifestation of Christ in ME

Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

~ 2 Corinthians 4:10-11 (KJV) ~

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INTRODUCTION

It is a beautiful thing to know that Christ can be manifested in us. But what does this truly mean and how does it really happen? From the very moment the Lord, by His grace, saved me He placed me in the presence of what I like to call the “Saints of Old”. I use this term in describing the men and women of my past because they stood in Christ representing something contrast to what some of us see today. The saints of old stood firm in preaching and teaching that if one is to live for Christ in the fullness of Christ, one must be willing to die to themselves. I have many points of reference in my past of my spiritual mother and former pastor, Dr. Ruby Prideaux, telling me how important it was for me to die to myself. I must admit, early on when she would make such comment, it sometimes didn't sit well with me; I was sometimes offended at her even suggesting that I wasn't right in my actions. The truth of or should I say the proof of what she would say being right is the fact that my behavior was in fact not at all like that of a Child of God. Now, let me pause and say that I wasn't demonstrating the behavior of one still in sin; I was just not demonstrating the behavior of one who had been redeemed from sin. My attitude was off skew; my way of handling the things I was encountering was not on point. Let me just say, in some cases, I was responding to life and life's issues as I had responded prior to accepting the Lord as my Savior. I believe back then, I could utter the same words the apostle Paul uttered in the book of Romans, chapter 7 verses 18 and 19 “*I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.*” Like the apostle Paul, I knew that my flesh was flawed. While I desired (had the will) to perform what I knew was good and right in the eyes of God, how to perform it was the part that I knew not. The apostle acknowledged that he was a wretched man...the New Living Translation says...*Oh, what a miserable person I am, who cried out...who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* This is the beginning point for us all once we embrace the salvation of God. While saved and now embracing a heart for God through our heart for Christ Jesus, we are yet undone. There is so much work to be done to bring us to the place where the fullness of Christ Jesus is made manifested in our body (flesh). ***Are you willing and ready to do the work?***

OUR STUDY

Our study text is taken from chapter four of the apostle Paul's second letter written to the Corinthians saints. The apostle begins this fourth chapter explaining that because of God's mercy, he does not lose heart in his ministry. It is God's mercy and God's grace that we too have been given in our pursuit to live

for Christ that we too will not lose heart nor faint. The apostle pens in verse two that the hidden things of dishonesty must be renounced; that we mustn't walk in craftiness, nor should we handle the word of God deceitfully. Skipping down to verse 7 in this fourth chapter of 2 Corinthians, we see that there is something of value in each of us who have given our life to God through His Son Christ Jesus.

2 Corinthians 4:7 (KJV)

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

This value or “treasure” as the King James Version text calls it within us is the light of the gospel, the message of Jesus and the glory of God reflected in Jesus. With that shared, it beckons that we are to let our life be the light that carries the gospel message of Christ and bring glory to God. Now, this is **only** possible or can only be manifested in us if we have totally and committedly submitted our life to Christ. We must be willing to give up all for the knowledge and excellency of Christ being manifested in and through us.

Philippians 3:7-8 (NLT)

- 7. I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done.***
- 8. 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.***

I personally love this text because the apostle Paul has arrived at a place in his life wherein he understands the value his life has when it is lived in Christ opposed to the value his life has living outside of Christ. The apostle Paul's life prior to his meeting the man called Jesus on the road to Damascus was one of prestige. He was circumcised (on the eighth day) in accord with the Abrahamic covenant; he was a pure blooded citizen of Israel and a member of the tribe of Benjamin; he was a real Hebrew if there was ever one; he was a member of the Pharisees who were known for demanding the strictest obedience to the Jewish law; he was so zealous that thinking he was doing right by God, he persecuted the early church; and as for the law, the apostle Paul obeyed it without fault. Yet, he has come to experience Christ in all His glory and it left the apostle Paul understanding the real worth of life.

My brother and my sister, until we have encountered the truth of who Christ is, we too will place the value of this life on those things that, in actuality, have no real value. We must arrive at the same point the apostle Paul arrived at...*what I thought was valuable in my life, I now consider worthless when I look at what God through His Son Christ Jesus has done in my life. I have come to the place where I have discarded everything that does not promote my relationship with Christ and lead me to becoming all God intended for my life.*

The manifestation of Christ in ME.

It is God's heart desire that the life of Christ be manifested in all of His children. But how does this happen? What must I do to see the manifestation of Christ? First let's look at what manifestation is. The Cambridge Dictionary defines manifestation as “*a sign of something existing or happening*”. This tells us that the life of Christ must exist or be happening within us in order for us to manifest the life of Christ. The Bible doesn't specifically say a lot about manifestation; however, it does remind us in the Bible repeatedly that God is in control, and we are not. When we try to control our own lives, we lose sight of God's sovereignty, His trustworthiness, the perfection in His plan, and the abundant life He offers. So in truth,

when we allow God, through Christ to control our life the end result will be the manifestation of Christ, His sovereignty and the perfection of His plans for our life operating in us.

Our text in 2 Corinthians 4:10 says...always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. The first step toward our manifesting Christ in us is that we must experience the death of Christ for His life to be manifested in us. By experiencing, we must identify with Christ's death knowing that through this death came life in our life. Life is ministered by dying. There is a dying to self that we must do in order to have the life of Christ manifested in our life. The concept of dying to self is found through the New Testament. It expresses the true essence of the Christian life, in which we take up our cross and follow Christ. When Christ gave His life on the cross standing in our place, He in essence, gave up His worldly life for us so that we could live the life of God's Spirit in the world. It was through Christ's death that we gained the power of God's Spirit necessary for us to now experience the dying to self needed for us to experience being born again. Dying to self is part of being born again; the old self dies and the new self comes to life. The apostle Paul explains to the Galatians the process of dying to self as one in which he has been "crucified with Christ", and now the apostle no longer lives, but Christ lives in him. The apostle Paul's old life, with the propensity to sin and to follow the ways of the world, is dead, and the new Paul is the dwelling place of Christ who lives in and through him. Dying to self is manifested in that our sinful nature with its passion and desires have been crucified. Where we once pursued selfish pleasure, we now pursue, with equal passion, that which pleases God. The fullness of the life of Christ will not be manifested in us unless we have given up all of our old or sinful ways of the world we once lived under. Remember, dying to self is never portrayed in Scripture as something optional in the Christian life. It is a mandatory choice if we are to be the manifestation of Christ in the world.

Why must I die?

John 12:24 (NLT)

I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives.

This passage of Scripture speaks volumes concerning how death leads to the manifestation of the glory of God. In this verse, Jesus tells us that unless something dies, it can't bring forth the new life it is capable of bringing forth. In predicting His death in these few verses, Jesus says in the verse prior to verse 24 (verse 23)...“Now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into His glory”. Here Jesus is speaking of death as a necessary factor to the Son of Man enter into His glory. As we die to the things in our life that are contrary to the ways and will of God for our life, we allow the glory of God to manifest.

Let's look at a few things we can identify that **MUST** die in us in order for Christ to be manifested.

1. The first and obvious thing that must die in us is **Sin**. We must die to the life of sin that resides in the old man. Being dead to sin mean we renounce it once and for all. This is called “repentance” or changing your mind toward sin. It means that you were once the lord of your own life, but from this point forward, you are going to do an about-face and follow Jesus as the Lord of your life.
2. Now that we have truly from heart repented and been converted from our old man, the work begins on mortifying or putting to death the deeds of the old man (flesh). Romans 8:13 tells us that “if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live”. From this text we glean the powerful message that we are not left on our own to put

to death a part of us that has been around since. Clearly in ourself, we do not have the power to affect this change in our nature. But thanks be unto God that by His Spirit working in us we can mortify or put to death the deeds of our old man (flesh). It is up to us to submit to the power of God's Spirit with our mind made up to work in cooperation with God's Spirit to kill out any and everything in our life that is contrary to the ways and to the will of God for our life.

3. We must acknowledge the parts of us that God's Spirit reveal about us that are contrary. We mustn't make any excuses for nor allow them to remain active in us. Understand it is the Holy Spirit's assignment to shed light on every area of our life that is still under the control or domain of our flesh and under the control of the enemy of God and of our soul. King David understood this very well when he was confronted about his sinful (fleshly) act committed when he had an inappropriate relationship with a woman and later conspired to have her husband killed. The Lord sent the prophet of God to King David to expose his sinful action (*c.f.*, 2 Samuel 12). David accepted his action as being directly against the holiness of God, repented unto God and asked God to create a clean heart and to renew a right spirit within him. We must die from the spirit of denial that we are imperfect.
4. Our flesh, which is weak, is often powerful, opposing our resolve to follow Jesus as we ought. It's a paradox that we often experience the weakness of our flesh in the strength of its sinful cravings and compulsions. We can say that the flesh wants what it wants and unless it is put to death, the flesh will seek out what it wants until it gets it. It is my personal opinion, that we often times underestimate the power of our weak flesh which always operate in opposition to the Spirit of God. The apostle Paul told the Galatian church...*For the flesh lust against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. (c.f., Galatians 5:17).* When we look at this verse in the New Living Translation, it hits home a little more...*The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires.* We see that unless we die to the flesh, we will always be at war with the Spirit wanting to lead us down the right path where Christ will be manifested in us.

There is an urgent never-ending quest you and I must be willing to embark upon in order for Christ to be manifested fully within us.

Why must Christ be manifested in ME?

I pulled up to the church on the other day and noticed the marquee on our front lawn had been changed by those who regularly handle posting a message of encouragement for those passing by the church building. The marquee read...*If Christ Is All You Have, You Have All You Need.* There is nothing more precious nor important than the presence of Christ. Everything flows from the presence of the Lord. If you have Christ, you do have everything you need. Without Christ, we have nothing that matters or that lasts. See, when Christ is manifested, everything changes. The apostle Paul told the saints at Colossae...*For in Him (Christ) dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power (c.f., Colossians 2:9-10).* Wow, what a powerful message this is to know that when Christ is manifested in me, I am complete in Him. Truth be told, nothing and no one can complete us except Christ. There have been people seeking completeness in other people and in material things. Remember, the flesh is never satisfied; when it gets what it thinks it wants, it's only a matter of time before it wants something different. But when Christ is made manifested in us, the longing we once had that we sought to satisfy with everything but Christ, will be filled. If I had time in this lesson, I would share my

testimony of how I sought after things and more things and more things and people and more people to satisfy or fill the emptiness within me before I came to meet the man Christ Jesus. Oh but, the minute Christ came into my life, what I had been longing for that I thought I could fill on my own was immediately quenched and after 36 years, I am still satisfied with Christ Jesus alone.

Let's look at the blessings that come from the manifestation of Christ in us.

1. When Christ is manifested in us, extraordinary things happen. Our lives are changed, miracles occur, and nothing is the same. The presence of Christ marks the difference between an ordinary day and an extraordinary, miraculous day. Our outlook on life and life's issues are in contrast to how we looked at life and how we viewed or dealt with the issues of life prior to Christ. We are aware of the presence of Christ in us; we see things we would not see otherwise and events occur that could not be accomplished any other way. In the manifestation of Christ, we hold to the truth that no matter what life dishes our way; no matter how difficult the days and times may be, we know for certainty...*that all things work together for good for those who love God and who are called according to His purpose (c.f., Romans 8:28).*
2. The glory of God is revealed in us when the manifestation of Christ abides in us. The apostle Paul told the saints in Ephesus...*Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us (Ephesians 3:20).* Notice the apostle Paul didn't say...*"according to the power that worketh in heaven"*. This lets us know that we have a role in the operations of the miraculous in our life. The glory of God is manifested in our life according to the power that works in us. The power at work in us is the manifestation of Christ. As we allow the fullness of Christ to be made manifested in us, the blessing is that our faith will grow and cultivate into a faith that believes God for all things.
3. Lastly and probably the most important is that through the manifestation of Christ in us, we will begin to assimilate the fullness of the characteristics of Christ Jesus. Several years ago, I taught a lesson entitled "Association Breeds Assimilation". In this lesson, we shared that to assimilate is the process of transformation of a person into a dominant influence from within their surroundings. We talked about the more time we spend in an environment or in a state of mind, the more we are conformed to that environment or state of mind. The more we allow Christ to take up residence in our environment, the more we will begin to assimilate Christ. If we want to be like Christ, we must be in the presence of Christ. Our walk must be Christ like; our talk must be Christ like. In other words, we must be fully committed unto Christ that we begin to mirror Christ in all we are and in all we do.

CONCLUSION

The true Christian life is a call to manifest Christ in our lives. Christ delights in us spending time with Him so that we can have the opportunity to see and understand His ways, to comprehend His decisions, His reaction, and His nature. As we spend time with Him, Christ will give us the power and authority to manifest Christ in our life on a daily basis. It is important for us to understand that we are not referring to imitating Christ; we are called to live the true Christ-life; to be the manifestation of Christ; to be the light (knowledge) of Christ in a dark world. The Gospel of Matthew tells us that...*We are called to be the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? (c.f., Matthew 5:13).* Salt serves as a preserver; something that keeps things from decaying. God has called us to serve as such in a world that is rapidly

decaying. The Gospel of Matthew goes on to tell us that... *We are light of the world; like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden (cf. Matthew 5:14)*. God has called us to share the light of the Gospel of Christ in the world; to be the light that leads men out of darkness into the marvelous light of God. We can only fulfill this calling upon our life as we allow Christ to be made manifested in our life. The power we have received from Christ is all the power we need to open our heart, mind and spirit and allow the presence of Christ to come in. Our true spiritual growth is determined by the extent to which Christ is manifested in and through our life. The manifestation or revelation of Christ in us is essentially the understanding and expression of His character; His life and glory through us. So, my brother and my sister, let's not waste the precious time God has given to us. Let's seize every opportunity we have to manifest Christ in every place we go!

God's peace and blessing be upon you.

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