

that is not Him? How dare we call such a great boon and blessing a cost?

Let us long for the day when we're able at last to look eagerly for prices we may gladly pay to follow Jesus. For surely we'll grow in the Lord and His love only so far as we're willing to pay what looks like a price to our independent selves. If you're not yet ready for this, will you make it your prayer that God will do whatever He must to bring you to the place of saying from your heart that you have no right whatever to any independence from God?

We may feel a certain sadness at this death. But this sadness is only part of the disgusting old man, the alien outer man, the rebel flesh. After all, he does not want to die. But this sadness of the independent self is the route to that joy of the Spirit that is our right.

Dead Reckoning

What does it mean to reckon ourselves to be dead indeed to sin? As simply stated in Romans 6:11-14, it means that we are to recognize the reality that, as Christ died for our sin, in our place in Him we died to sin. We are to accept the fact that, as a result, we need no longer to be victimized by sin.

Now, it's clear from this that we still have a problem with sin. If it were already obvious to all that sin had no place in our lives, there would be no need of recognizing, accepting, or reckoning on our place of victory.

There is a second half to this directive on reckoning. It's that we reckon ourselves to be alive to God in Christ Jesus our LORD. Again it is simply that we recognize the reality that in Jesus Christ we are alive to God and all His power for us.

The passage goes on to tell us not to let sin reign in our mortal bodies so we obey their unholy desires, nor to yield our bodily parts as tools that unrighteousness can use as it wills. Oh, you say,

“See, we do have to take charge and make the changes. I knew it all the time.”

Well, not quite. Knowing our tendency to works, Paul goes on to tell us: yield yourselves to God, let go of your self-centered desires to Him, as one who is alive in Christ, and yield your bodily parts to Him to be tools of His righteousness let go of your right to direct them for selfish purposes.

What are you being asked to do? Surrender your right to control yourself and your bodily parts for your own selfish purposes. Relinquish the right of control into the hands of God to do with them as He will. Leave it all with Him to provide His victory.

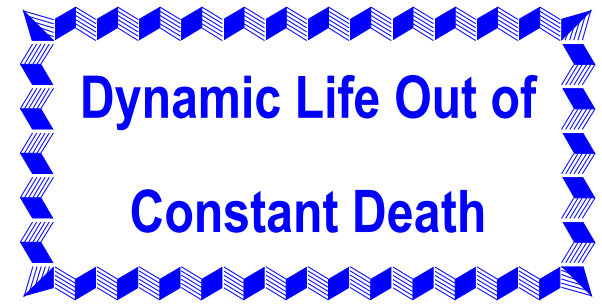
Now, this includes leaving it to Him to do His work in us at His pace, in His time, in His way. Often His way isn't ours. It takes more time than we like. Because we don't see His working, we stop trusting and resting in Him to complete the work. We try our way and fail, or we give up altogether. Again, we miss the blessing and the victory.

This relinquishing everything into His control in rest and peace is also the way we most effectively mortify or put to death the deeds of the body. We are led by the Spirit of God into new dimensions of victory as we rest in our relationship with our Father God and His Son, our Savior (Romans 8:4-17).

The way of works is the way of “bondage again to fear” (Romans 8:15). The way of relinquishing and resting is the way of life and glory. When you choose, choose well. There is more at stake than you can dream!

Write to us and request more copies to share.

Transformed Living Messages by Pastor Marr
ChristLife
PO Box 1033, Niagara Falls, NY 14304
Ph: (716) 622-7320
E-mail: Christlife@Christ-like.net
Visit us at www.Christ-like.net



By: Pastor Ron Marr

“That I might live to God. 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.”

Galatians 2:19-20

“Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus our LORD. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 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.”

Romans 6:11-13

During a discussion period of a class I was conducting on new life in Christ Jesus, an active church member suggested that death to self was the key. My response was that indeed it could be if it were more than theology and theory. That person never attended another session! Later it became evident that the same individual had been living in unconfessed sin.

Few of us adequately understand the significance of the cross in our daily lives. At the cross our Lord Jesus Christ dealt sin its death blow. This is no less true than as though it were already fully evidenced as it some day shall be by sin's total annihilation.

DYNAMIC LIFE OUT OF CONSTANT DEATH

When we first accepted His finished work for us, we accepted the death blow for all sin in us. We died to any right to independence from God that we ever claimed or supposed we had. Of course, we little realized it then! But the question now is whether we have fully accepted this fact: I died with Christ.

False Freedom

Could our internal reaction secretly be, “How terrible that I can’t be independent!”? Oh, what fools we are! Can we actually want to be independent from God? Why? What do we expect to gain? Freedom from God, of course.

How could we desire freedom from an all-loving, all-caring, all-sufficient, infinitely perfect God? What kind of freedom is that? The freedom to continue in the pain and agony, the guilt and torment, the heartache and distress, the uncertainty and disillusionment, the alienation and loneliness that separation from God has visited on the whole human race, and very personally on me, isn’t very free. Surely only a twisted mind could want it, a mind twisted by inner enslavement to sin in the name of freedom from God.

Whenever we reassert a supposed right to some independence from the Lord, we grieve His Spirit and limit His working in us. But it isn’t only God we grieve; it is also ourselves. We harm many others, too, not only our family and friends, but that significant section of the human race that our extended influence eventually reaches. We’ve foolishly and destructively reclaimed our supposed right to independence from almighty God as though that were a battle we could actually win!

Liberty in Enslavement

True liberty is in our willing enslavement to Him. Our hope is in utter hopelessness in ourselves,

joyous hope in Him alone.

Inadequacy is an asset, not a liability, so at last we may be cast on Him. His adequacy is in His life. Ours is in our death, that we might gain His life. Our hope is to stop looking to ourselves, depending on ourselves. Our hope is to begin joyously looking to and depending on our wonderful Lord.

Now, when it comes right down to daily practice, what is the resource I turn to in every need, myself or the Lord Jesus? What and who do I draw upon?

When almighty God is willing to be my source and resource for everything, why should I be foolish enough to choose anything less? Oh, that in everything we would just cast ourselves joyously and hopefully on Jesus.

Singleness of Heart to God

We no longer occupy the position of slaves to our own foolish, sinful independence from God. We died with Christ to sin in us so that its claim on us is forever finished. We need, first, to stand on that encompassing deliverance in newness of life: In Christ I died to any right to any independence. For this reality to function, I must accept its relevance for me in every here and now. I no longer have the right to choose what I will do, only to seek to discover what the Lord wants so that, by His enabling, I might joyously do nothing else.

We might just as well settle right now whether we’re going to continue to claim a supposed right to independence from God, or whether we’ll recognize we have no such right.

“A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.”

James 1:8 KJV

Something in us wants so desperately to please God

without having to relinquish our supposed right to the selfish desires of the flesh. My friend, it simply can’t be done.

The Choice Should Be Obvious

“Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.”

Joshua 24:15

Let your life’s attitude increasingly become all for Jesus and nothing for myself separate from Him. Our supreme life-goal is to please and glorify our majestic, loving, Creator. He alone is worthy. Whether we like it or not, we aren’t worthy of any attention.

Let’s learn that to the extent we live to please Him, we die to our self-pleasing. To the extent we live to please ourselves, we die to Him and His realm.

Rather than running frightened from the very thought of dying to our selfish pleasures and desires, let’s pray that God will enable us to look for opportunities to die to all that is not of Him. So may we live to all that is of Him.

That’s a tall order! More accurately, it’s impossible, at least for our independent selves. But “you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you” (Romans 8:9). Besides, we’ve already died with Christ to sin. All that remains is for us to look away from ourselves to Him, His peace, and His provision.

Grace Is Free

Every step in grace is a free gift from God. Why, then, do we say its cost is the relinquishing of all