

A New Relationship with Everything

To become a Christian is to undergo a major change in our relationship with everything. Once we are in Christ and Christ becomes our life, we have a new center, a new point of reference from which we relate to everything. In 2 Corinthians 5:17 Paul says, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." The old things that have passed away are the old relationships we had, with *self* as our center. Now the new things that have come are the new relationships we have, with *Christ* as our center. What is new in the new creation? A new relationship with everything, because Christ is our new center and point of reference.

When Christ is our life and center, His relationship with all things becomes *ours*. Before Christ came into us, we related to everything in our lives from our self. Now we relate to everything from Him as our center. Apart from Christ we do not have a proper relationship with anything.

Christ is our relationship with *everything* — both positive and negative. On the positive side, Christ is our relationship with the Father. He is also our relationship with all the saints, the members of His Body. On the negative side, Christ is our relationship with sin, the self, the flesh, the world, condemnation, the devil, and the law.

We must ask ourselves, How are we related to the Father? How are we related to the saints? How are we related to sin? How are we related to our flesh? How are

we related to the world? Oftentimes we have tried to live the Christian life with ourselves as the source. But we must see that apart from Christ we have no life in ourselves (John 6:53). Our life is wholly wrapped up with Him. Our true life has been hidden with Christ in God. Christ is our life (Col. 3:3-4). This means that His history is our history: We died to sin *in Him*, we died to the flesh *in Him*, we died to the world *in Him*, we defeated the devil *in Him*, and we died to the law *in Him*. And now we live to the Father *in Him* and we relate to one another *in Him*. Our relationship with all these realms is Christ.

Let us consider what this means in our experience. How do we relate to the sins we've committed? We relate to our sins with the blood of Jesus (Heb. 10:17-19). How do we relate to our sin nature? We relate by what happened on the cross: Christ died to sin, and in Him we reckon ourselves to be dead to sin. We are alive to God *in Him* (Rom. 6:8-11). When we are oriented to these facts, our partaking of Christ, our participating in Him, becomes rich and full. He supplies to us the victory. The victory over sin and death is just Himself. We do not strive to win the victory. We receive and participate in His victory!

We are all on the same level, so we can all echo the familiar song, "Just as I am, without one plea, but that Thy blood was shed for me . . . O Lamb of God, I come, I come." This is exactly how we should relate to the Lord

IN THIS ISSUE:

- A New Relationship with Everything — Pages 1-3, 6-8
- Christ as the Lion and the Lamb (Part Two) — Pages 4-5

P.O. Box 12277
Scottsdale, AZ 85267

Change Service Requested

Nonprofit Organization
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
Scottsdale, AZ
Permit No. 824

— always coming to Him *as we are*. If you are thinking that you have to do something about yourself — that you have to repair yourself or reach a point of being stronger in yourself to be accepted by God — then you have it all wrong. There is nothing in ourselves that can stand before God (Rom. 7:18). In fact, if we would try to clean ourselves up on our own and come to Him with some merit in ourselves, His analysis would be that all our righteousnesses are nothing but filthy rags (Isa. 64:6). God only accepts one Person — His only begotten Son.

When Christ is revealed in me (Gal. 1:15-16), I have a new relationship with everything. I no longer come from the source of myself. I am no longer the savior of my life. Christ Himself is my Savior. I no longer interact with matters and things apart from Him, as though I am on my own. As a man in Christ, I am in the realm of the new creation, where “all things are out of God” (2 Cor. 5:17-18). Because I have Christ as the center and spring of my life, I now have a new relationship with all things.

Christ — our relationship with the Father

We do not have a separate relationship with the Father apart from the Son’s own relationship with Him. God is not establishing new relationships with us. He has established one relationship — with His Son. And now He gives that relationship away as a gift. This is the meaning of the gift of eternal life in the New Testament. Eternal life is receiving the Son of God into us and participating in His relationship with the Father. First John 5:20 says, “And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.”

John 14:6 tells us that it is *through* Christ that we come to the Father. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes (Gk: is coming) to the Father except through Me.” We are not coming to the Father on our own. Galatians 4:6 gives us a more precise definition of Who is coming to the Father by saying that “God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, Abba, Father.” We are coming to the Father with the Son Himself in our hearts crying, “Abba, Father.” Our crying “Abba, Father” *is* Christ in us crying “Abba.” He says “Abba” in our “Abba” (cf. Rom. 8:15). In other words, we are actually participating in Christ’s own relationship with the Father.

When we receive eternal life we receive the Father and Son’s very own relationship. Now Christ Himself is my relationship with the Father. You and I do not have a different relationship with God besides the one Christ has with the Father. This is why after the Lord revealed the one unique relationship in the universe between Himself and the Father, He immediately said, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (see Matt. 11:27-30). This means there is no longer any need to labor and struggle, trying to establish our own relationship with God (Rom. 10:3-4). We only need to come to Jesus and learn from Him. When we do, we are joined to Him and discover that *our* relationship with the Father is actually *His* relationship. We are merging with His relationship with the Father, and this brings rest to our souls.

Because of redemption, God can now give away His relationship with His Son. Galatians 4:4-6 says, ⁴ “But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the sonship. ⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, Abba, Father!” To receive the sonship is to receive the rights, privileges, and relationship of the Son of God. Our God took His relationship with His Son and put it right into our hearts! Now we do not have a separate fellowship with the Father. Indeed, we have been called into the one unique fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 1:9). “Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3).

This relationship and fellowship means that we are not standing upon our own righteousness, but upon Christ’s alone (1 Cor. 1:30). Neither are we dependent upon our condition or status as the basis of our relationship with God. We are not trusting in anything related to ourselves (Phil. 3:7-9). We are nothing and have nothing. So when we wake up in the morning we do not need to inspect *our* relationship with God. Rather we can say, “Lord Jesus, how are You doing today? How is *Your* relationship with the Father?” Never again do we need to doubt our relationship with God since our relationship with God is Christ (Rom. 8:38-39).

The uniqueness of the Lord’s relationship with the Father is emphasized in John 14:6 when He says, “No one comes to the Father except through Me.” When He says, “no one,” it means categorically *no one* (Rom.

3:10-12). No one is coming to the Father except through Him. When He says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” He is saying, “I am your constant relationship with the Father.” So how could we ever sink to the level of morbid self-introspection again? That kind of inward, subjective activity is useless! It is wasted time and energy. My relationship with the Father is Jesus Christ. He doesn’t change. Every morning I can wake up and open myself to God with a released spirit, knowing that my joy, my love, and my relationship with the Father is absolutely wonderful. Oh, what a Christ we have!

Christ — our relationship with sin

The New Testament reveals that Christ’s relationship with sin has become our relationship. Christ is our relationship with sin. God dealt with sin *in Christ*. Then He put us in Christ. So now our relationship with sin is found in Christ. Romans 6:8-11 clearly shows us *how* Christ is our relationship with sin: 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 you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Verse 11 says that we are “alive to God in Christ Jesus.” This is a most astounding fact. I can declare with boldness by the Word of God that I am alive and living to God in Christ Jesus. This truth renews my mind regarding *how* I am alive to God! This is truth that sets us free!

On the positive side, we are alive to God in Christ Jesus; on the negative side, we are dead to sin. Since Christ died to sin once for all, His death to sin has now become my relationship to sin. There is no way to have a victorious relationship toward sin apart from Christ’s relationship with it. Sin is a powerful force dwelling in our flesh (Rom. 7:14-24). To attempt in ourselves to overcome this indwelling sin is to end up in the same condition the apostle Paul experienced at the end of Romans 7 — defeated and wretched.

In Christ’s crucifixion He died to sin once for all. Now in the realm of resurrection He lives to God. In the same way, we died to sin in His death and now in Him we also live to God in resurrection (Rom. 6:6-11). Our history, our life, and our existence are all bound up with

Him. Thus, our relationship to sin is the same as His relationship to sin; that is, it is in the realm of resurrection life. He is living to God and we also are living to God in Him.

To be dead to sin implies that we are living in another realm. Just as a dead person is dead to the physical realm but alive to the after-life (Luke 16:19-31), so also we are dead to the realm of sin because we are alive in the realm of the Spirit and life. According to Romans 8:2, “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.” One realm frees us from another realm. Thus, being dead to sin has nothing to do with our impotent efforts and struggles to overcome sin. Rather, it is a question of what realm we are in.

When we see Christ as all in all, He then becomes not only our relationship with all things, but He also becomes the new realm in which we live. Indeed, the way we experience death to sin is not by trying in ourselves to be dead to it. It is by staying in the realm of resurrection. The realm of resurrection is the realm of the Spirit and life (1 Cor. 15:45). In this realm we are automatically freed from sin. The power of sin is broken in our lives by what one servant of the Lord has called “the expulsive power of a new affection.” This new affection is in the realm of the Spirit. It is the love of God poured out in my heart by the Holy Spirit that enables me to put to death the practices of my body (Rom. 5:5; 8:13).

Dealing with sin is not achieved by struggling to overcome it. Rather, we deal with sin by drawing from the life-power of Christ in the realm of resurrection. Instead of interacting with sin as though it was my responsibility to overcome it in myself, I interact with Christ, who is my relationship with sin. In this relationship, sin is a dead thing to me. Because I can exercise my spirit, where I am alive to God in Christ, I come under the expulsive power of a new affection for God and the things of God (Rom. 8:5-6). It is that affection that immobilizes the force of sin in my life. So in the realm of the spirit, indwelling sin forever remains a dead thing to me, because I died and my *new me* is now hidden with Christ in God.

In Romans 6:11 Paul says to reckon ourselves to be “dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.” The Greek word for “reckon” is *logizomai*. It is a mathematical term and can simply mean $2 + 2 = 4$. Such

(Continued on Page 6)

CHRIST AS THE LION AND THE LAMB

— Part Two —

“And I [John] began to weep greatly, because no one was found worthy to open the scroll, or to look into it; and one of the elders said to me, “Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the scroll and its seven seals.” And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders a Lamb standing as having been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.”

— Revelation 5:4-6

In these verses from the book of Revelation, John saw Christ as both the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the slain Lamb of God. Though these two animals are so diverse in nature, they are both used in this passage to depict the resurrected Christ. Why? For two reasons. The first reason is that Christ is all-inclusive. As Paul declared, He is the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and He is all and in all (Col. 2:9; 3:11). And because Christ is all-inclusive, the Spirit uses many items to reveal who and what He is. The second reason is that we, as fallen human beings, have many diverse problems. And for all our problems, we need a Savior. That is, we need Someone who can save us from every problem. Who is this Someone? It is Christ. He is God’s unique solution for all our problems. Thus, Christ is depicted as our Savior in many aspects according to our many problems.

Of course, two of our greatest problems are sin and Satan. And herein we find the reason for Christ being revealed as both a Lamb and a Lion. To save us from our sins, we need Christ as the Lamb of God — the One who takes away the sin of the world. It was this aspect of the saving Christ that we focused upon in the previous issue. To save us from our other great problem, Satan, we need Christ as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. That is, we need the One who is so strong, so fearless, and so victorious. As the Lamb of God, Jesus was meek, condescending, and compliant. He allowed Himself to be led to the slaughter of the cross. But as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, He is assertive, devouring, and dominating. Dominating over whom? we may ask. Dominating over Satan, our dreaded enemy.

Our need for the Lion’s salvation

It is interesting to note that Satan is also revealed as a lion in the New Testament (1 Pet. 5:8). What does this

imply? It implies that Satan dominates fallen man. He holds man under his sway and keeps him in cruel bondage to do his will. In the Old Testament, Satan is typified by Pharaoh who enslaved God’s people in Egypt to build his treasure cities. This is precisely what Satan does to us. He captures, usurps, and subjugates us — we who were created by God for His purpose. He then chains us to whatever he can — as long as it is not the living God. He may chain us through an addiction to alcohol, drugs, sex, money, food, or gambling. He may chain us to some strong and inordinate desire for power, success, pleasure, or looks. He may chain us to some controlling habit or obsession that we can’t seem to shake. He may even chain us to some good endeavors or causes, such as education, philanthropy, or religion. The point is this — Satan as a lion wants to usurp man away from God and keep him under his tyrannical domain.

Yet, we must realize that a lion not only dominates. He also devours. He feeds upon his prey. It is an awful thought, but do we realize that Satan likes to feed upon us? The devil starts out as a serpent at the beginning of the Bible (Gen. 3:1) and ends up as a great red dragon at the end of the Bible (Rev. 12:3-4, 9-10). How did he grow from a little serpent to a big dragon? By eating men. He prowls about with a voracious appetite, seeking someone to devour.

How is it that Satan devours us? Peter indicates that anxiety is one of his ways. In his first Epistle, Peter exhorts us to cast all our anxiety upon the Lord because He cares for us (5:7). He then warns us to be sober and watch for our adversary the devil, who as a roaring lion walks about seeking someone to devour (5:8). Notice the connection between verses 7 and 8. In verse 7 is anxiety. In verse 8 is the devouring of the devil. Have you ever had the feeling when you are anxious over some concern, especially as you turn the matter over and over again in your mind with your stomach churning in knots, that something is eating you up? It feels like you are being consumed by something. Quite often you are — by Satan!

But anxiety is only one of his meals. There are others such as fear, despair, hopelessness, jealousy, and anger. Have you ever been gripped with fear to the point that you feel paralyzed? Have you ever languished in despair and hopelessness for days or even weeks on end? Have you ever been overtaken by a fit of jealousy and anger that precipitated words or actions that you now regret? Outwardly, these kinds of emotions may seem like they are simply “you.” In other words, they appear to be purely human and natural. And often they are. However, sometimes, especially when such feelings are prolonged and intense, there is something more at work than what is human and natural. There is a lion at work. Spiritual

forces of wickedness are behind it. Satan has caught you and is devouring you in that feeling of fear, despair, jealousy, or anger.

Another area that Satan feasts upon is our thought life (2 Cor. 10:4-6; 11:3). We experience critical thoughts, suspicious thoughts, and lustful thoughts. We experience accusing thoughts against us. Often these thoughts are not welcome or wanted. Indeed, it is against our will that they enter into our minds. Yet so often we seem powerless to stop them. Not only so — they also come at us like a barrage. It is not a matter of an occasional thought floating through our mind, but the thoughts come in rapid-fire succession and with a demonic force behind them. It seems as though we can't turn them off. We might even make a conscious decision to stop thinking about a certain matter, but then we find our mind fully engulfed in it 15 seconds later. What is this? Again, we might surmise that this is simply "me" — something merely human. But often there is more at work than our human frame. A lion is at work devouring our thought life.

What is the devil's goal in all of this? To destroy us. Satan hates man because of the central place man occupies in God's eternal purpose. Man was created to bear God's image and to bring in His kingdom, and thus destroy Satan's kingdom. This is why Satan does all he can to damage and destroy man. But we must realize that Satan attacks man not only individually, but also corporately. Why? Because the most devastating threat to his kingdom of darkness is not the individual believer, as spiritual as he may be, but the builded church. Recall that the Lord promised, "I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). It is the builded church that stands up to and brings down the gates of Hades, which represent Satan's kingdom. This is why the devil has done his best to ruin the church throughout the centuries. He will inject critical and suspicious thoughts into our minds against other members of Christ's Body with one goal — to disintegrate the church.

The Lion of the tribe of Judah

Against such a powerful enemy, we need a Savior. And we need a Savior who is stronger than our foe — One who can overcome and dominate the devil. Admittedly, we are no match against the power or wiles of the enemy. We need Someone on our side who is able to gain the victory and ascendancy over Satan on our behalf. Who is such a One? Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome! (Rev. 5:5). This is Jesus Christ! He has overcome Satan. He has utterly defeated him. He defeated him during the temptation in the

wilderness. He defeated him throughout His whole life and ministry. And He defeated him at the cross. Jesus Christ won the battle, and now He is Victor! He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah who has overcome.

This title, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, refers back to Jacob's prophecy over his twelve sons (Gen. 49). Jacob told his son Judah that he would be as a lion, with his hand upon the neck of his enemies, and that the scepter would never depart from him (vv. 8-10). This means that a Lion out of the tribe of Judah would defeat His enemies and then rule and reign as a King. Thousands of years later, the apostle John revealed that this Lion was Christ, the powerful Conqueror from the tribe of Judah who defeated Satan, brought his cruel tyranny to an end, and established the kingdom of God.

Destroying the works of the devil

Now we must realize that Christ's victory over Satan was not just His victory, but ours as well. The Lord Jesus so dominated the devil and so defeated him that he was rendered powerless before us. This is why John says, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). Every work that Satan has wrought over us is undone by Christ. Every chain by which Satan has held us in bondage has been broken. Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to announce the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed" (Luke 4:18).

This is wonderful! We have been completely set free from the tyranny of Satan. He has no authority to rule over us nor does he have any power to hold us. Yet even more wonderful is the fact that we have been released to now participate in God's purpose. Recall that John wept profusely because no one was found worthy to open the scroll of God's administration to carry out His eternal purpose. Sin and Satan had frustrated God's purpose from being fulfilled through man. And as a result, man's existence was one of complete vanity. So John wept. But his weeping turned into worship when he beheld the resurrected Christ — the Christ who, as a Lamb, removed the problem of sin; and the Christ who, as a Lion, removed the problem of Satan. The devil, who so frustrated God's purpose, has been defeated! Now the scroll can be opened. Now God's administration to carry out His eternal purpose can proceed. Now man can be conformed to the image of Christ, the church can be built, and the kingdom of Christ can come.

— To be continued

— Kirk Eland

(Continued from Page 3)

an equation is reliable and can be counted upon every time we use our calculator to do some addition. By using the word “reckon,” Paul wanted to convey that we can rely upon Christ as our relationship with sin just as we rely upon the facts of mathematics. For example, when you wake up in the morning and it is stormy weather outside and the electrical power has failed, it does not change the fact that $2 + 2 = 4$. Whether it is good weather or bad weather, two plus two will always equal four.

In the realm of the Spirit, to reckon means to trust and rely upon what exists in that realm. What exists there? Victory over sin in Christ Jesus! No wonder Paul broke forth in Romans 7:25 and declared, “Thanks be to God *through* Jesus Christ our Lord!” At that moment he saw Christ as his relationship to sin. Sin could no longer intimidate him. He was freed from the torment of sin because he saw his new relationship with sin in the Person of Christ. Instead of living in the mode of being miserable and wretched, he started operating in the mode of thanksgiving. When we experience Christ in this way — as our relationship to sin — the church will become increasingly a life-giving expression of Him.

Christ — our relationship with the flesh

In John 3:6 the Lord Jesus said, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” By using the Greek perfect tense (signifying a present, permanent state) for the word “born,” He conveyed two important facts: first, the realm of the flesh never changes; and second, the realm of the Spirit never changes. These two realms are separate from each other. They are mutually exclusive, and even oppose each other (Gal. 5:17).

When we receive Jesus Christ into our life, we need to realize that our flesh does not change at that time. Neither will it change in the future. Rather, when we receive Him, it is our spirit that is born again. Our dead spirit is begotten of the divine Spirit and comes alive (Eph. 2:1; Rom. 8:10). Indeed, our newly-born, mingled spirit becomes the source from which we live as believers. It is into our regenerated spirit that Christ comes to dwell. From this place He Himself becomes our relationship with the flesh. Thus, our relationship with the flesh is Jesus Christ *as He* lives in our spirit and *as we* walk according to spirit (Rom. 8:3-4).

There are many aspects of the flesh — the lusts of

the flesh (Gal. 5:16), the will of the flesh (John 1:13), the mind of the flesh (Rom. 8:6-7), and the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19), to name a few. The flesh has feelings and reactions, as well as deeds; and many times we are subject to these things. Thus, we have a close relationship with the flesh.

Concerning his own flesh, Paul had to admit, “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells” (Rom. 7:18). Also, in Colossians he warns the believers that if they relate to the evil flesh with a religious flesh they will encounter certain defeat (Col. 2:18-23). How then can we be related to our flesh, if the flesh cannot overcome the flesh? The answer to this question is found in Galatians 5:24-25: ²⁴ “And those who are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” The phrase, “those who are of Christ Jesus,” tells us how we are to be related to the flesh. It is simply by our belonging to Christ Jesus that the flesh is crucified.

Are you one who is “of Christ Jesus”? To be of Christ Jesus means that you do not have a separate life from Him. You are wholly identified with Him. You do not have a separate relationship with the flesh. Because you are of Christ Jesus, you *own* His relationship with the flesh. His relationship with the flesh is not a long, drawn-out battle with it; rather it is a one-time crucifixion to it. The word “crucified” in Galatians 5:24 is in the aorist tense in Greek, indicating that a blow was dealt to the flesh in the past that was decisive, complete, and final. That blow was dealt to the flesh on the cross of Calvary two thousand years ago.

How we are related to the flesh is wrapped up in the answer to one question — Are we of Christ Jesus? That is all we need to answer. We don’t need to examine whether or not we have any potential to overcome the flesh. Neither do we need a good record or a string of victories that we can boast in. Nor do we need to look at our condition to see whether or not we feel like a crucified person. We just need to answer one question — Are we of Christ Jesus? If so, we have crucified the flesh. Paul says it — if we are of Christ Jesus then we have crucified the flesh. This means that Christ is our relationship with the flesh.

In Galatians 5:24 our relationship with the flesh is an established fact in Christ Jesus. Then verse 25 shows us the application and experience of this fact: “If we live

in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” To “live in the Spirit” in this verse is equivalent to being “of Christ Jesus” in the preceding verse. Thus Christ, in the realm of the Spirit, is our relationship with the flesh. But for this fact to become our experience over and over again in our daily life, we need to walk in the Spirit.

The Greek word for “walk” in Galatians 5:25 is a specific military word, rather than the more general word for “walk” used in other places in the New Testament. It has the sense of “keeping in step with the Spirit.” This could be likened to a group of soldiers marching down the street, keeping in step with the cadence of the drummer. Their steps are very deliberate and specific. It is the same when we walk in the spirit. Christ is in us, in our mingled spirit. He has already dealt a blow to the flesh. Now we must keep in step with Him whenever our flesh rises up to be fulfilled. This means we take a deliberate and specific step in spirit at the moment our flesh manifests itself. When we keep in step with the Spirit, the Lord Himself is our relationship with the reacting flesh. We just say, “Amen, Lord, I love You!” Or call out His name, “Lord Jesus!” By interacting with Him in this way, we keep in step with the Spirit and execute the crucifixion over our flesh.

The main point in dealing with the flesh is to not interact with it. We do not dare to handle it on our own. There is only One who is qualified to handle it, and He was incarnated to do so. He became flesh (John 1:14) and lived a victorious life in the flesh (Rom. 8:3). And now in resurrection He has become a life-giving Spirit in our spirit to supply to us His triumphant relationship over the flesh. All we need to do is keep in step with the Spirit — pray a little bit, call “Jesus” a little bit, shout to God a little bit, sing a little bit. Just keep in step with the Spirit.

You may say to me, “I can’t overcome my flesh. I have already tried over and over again and failed.” I will respond by saying, “That’s right! Of course you can’t!” If you and I have a relationship with the flesh based upon ourselves, we are finished. We all must come back to Christ — to see Him as our relationship with the flesh and then just keep in step with the Spirit.

Christ — our relationship with the world

When we as believers allow Christ to be our relationship with the world, we will find ourselves living in the realm of the “new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15).

This new creation is the church, also described in Colossians 3:10-11 as “the new man” where “Christ is all and in all.” To have a practical church life in this realm requires a decisive dealing with the world — with both the evil world and the religious world. These two worlds are always opposing God’s perfect will, which is to have the church as a pure expression of Christ (Gal. 1:4; Rom. 12:2; 1 John 2:15-17).

The apostle Paul speaks concerning his relationship with the world in Galatians 6:14-15: ¹⁴ “But God forbid that I should glory 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.” Paul lived in the realm of the new creation and experienced the crucified Christ as his relationship with the world. The cross of Christ was the point of reference for Paul by which the world was crucified to him and he to it. According to Paul, in these two verses “the world” is something opposite from the “new creation.”

When our relationship to the world is Christ, we are crucified to the world and it to us. That means we are released to live in the new creation — in a different realm with different goals and values. In this realm, the system of the world under Satan’s dominion is nullified. Our priorities are not the same. Rather than being usurped by this age with its worldly preoccupations, our time and energy are for God’s will and purpose.

When Christ is our relationship with the world, it issues in the church as the new creation. The church is the *ekklesia* (Gk: ἐκκλησία), which means the “called-out ones.” This is the nature of the church — being assembled as the called-out ones. When I am out of the world, I am in the church. The fact that we could meet as the church means that we are out of the world. We are out of the world because Christ is out of the world (John 17:15-16).

The cross is our once-and-for-all dealing with the world. We are not trying in ourselves to deal with the world. It has been dealt with in Christ through His cross. Now we glory and boast in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, because by it the world has been crucified to us and we have been crucified to it. The world is a dead thing to us and we are a dead thing to it. We no longer live according to the world’s values. Rather, we value the new creation, where Christ is all and in all.

(Continued on Page 8)

(Continued from Page 7)

Christ — our relationship with condemnation

Christ has also become our relationship with condemnation. Have you ever considered what your relationship with condemnation is? Many times we live under a stream of condemning thoughts from the enemy. We relate to these thoughts by coping with them in some way or another. Sometimes we try swatting them like flies. Or we attempt to replace them with new resolutions and promises to God that we won't fail again. Or we just sink into depression and we live feeling condemned.

God's answer to this spiritual disease is found in Romans 8:1: "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." In other words, not being condemned has nothing to do with your past record or your present performance. Nor is it dependent upon your ability to cope with your thoughts. It is strictly a matter of *where* you are. Where are you? Are you *in yourself* or are you *in Christ Jesus*? If you are in Christ Jesus, then you can shout "Hallelujah!" You can tell condemnation that you are now related to it in Christ. Because you are included and hidden in Him, all the arrows of condemnation have to come to Him. Of course, that is unthinkable! Christ cannot be condemned. So you cannot be condemned! Thus, you need not shrink back in coming to God. You can draw near to God through Him (Heb. 7:25).

Because Paul is so clear about being a person in Christ who cannot be condemned, he begins to boldly challenge everyone in the universe. It is as if he was saying, "Are you (whoever you may be) going to condemn me? Are you going to bring a charge against me? Come and listen to me!" In Romans 8:31-34 he declares, ³¹ "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us."

Paul totally ignores the possibility of being chargeable or of the condemnation being legitimate. He does not give any ground for anyone to say anything against

him. He does not answer the charges with himself, his record, or even his victorious Christian life. He only answers with Christ Jesus. It is Christ who died! It is Christ who is risen! It is Christ who is at the right hand of God making intercession for us! It is Christ who is our relationship with condemnation!

Our problem is that we have been in a relationship with condemnation for such a long time that we live with our conscience deflated and our spirit down. We can't enjoy God because we are flooded with condemning thoughts. At those points we have to boldly declare, "Condemnation, I don't have a relationship with you anymore. My relationship with you is now my Christ." We all need to learn this lesson from an older brother in the Lord. He is about 90 years old and ready to meet the Lord at any time. I heard him give the following testimony: "You know what I do when the devil comes and starts to condemn me? I say, JESUS! HE'S HERE AGAIN!" Oh, brothers and sisters, that is what we need to declare when those condemning thoughts come streaming in — "JESUS! HE'S HERE AGAIN! THE THOUGHTS ARE HERE AGAIN!" We don't handle condemnation with ourselves. We handle it with Christ, because He is now our relationship with it. Indeed, Christ is our relationship with everything! *

— Bill Freeman

* This article is edited from the booklet, *Christ — Our Relationship with Everything*. This booklet may be ordered for \$2.50 postpaid from **Ministry Publications**, P.O. Box 12222, Scottsdale, AZ 85267 • Phone: (602) 948-4050 • Fax: (602) 922-1338.

the Christian

the Christian is a nonprofit monthly publication of **Ministry of the Word, Inc.** This paper is for the spreading of the truth of God's Word and the building up of the Body of Christ.

Subscription to *the Christian* is free and will be sent upon request. Any donations to Ministry of the Word, Inc., to further the publication and distribution of *the Christian* will be appreciated and are tax-deductible: P.O. Box 12277, Scottsdale, AZ 85267.

Ministry of the Word: (800) 573-4105 / (602) 948-4050

E-Mail: MinWord12@aol.com

Internet Address: <http://www.thechristian.org>