Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

SAVED IN HIS LIFE— FROM SIN AND WORLDLINESS

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The life of Christ is a saving life. Romans 5:10 says, "For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved in His life." Christians have devoted a great deal of attention to the death of Christ, but not much attention to Christ's life. We may know the term the life of Christ, and we may be familiar with the verses in the Gospel of John where the Lord says that He is life and that He has come that we might have life more abundantly (John 11:25; 10:10). Nevertheless, we must admit that we are short of the genuine experience of life.

PROGRESSIVE REVELATION

The divine revelation in the holy Word is progressive. Hence, although the Gospel of John is wonderful, it does not contain the ultimate revelation. After John and the Acts, we have the Epistles, which are a progression from the Gospels. The seeds sown in the Old Testament sprout in the Gospels, but they grow and develop further

in the Epistles. The harvest of all the seeds, of course, is in the book of Revelation. The seed of life is sown in Genesis 2, in the word regarding the tree of life. Life there refers neither to the physical life *(bios)* nor to the soulish or psychological life *(psuche)* but to the divine life, the life of God *(zoe)*. If we had only the second chapter of Genesis, it would be difficult to understand what life is. Psalms 36:9 reveals more concerning life: "For with thee is the fountain of life." This indicates that God, the Triune God, is the fountain of life. Chapter one of John reveals that life is in the Word, that is, in Christ (John 1:1, 4). When the Lord Jesus came forth to minister, He said clearly that He is life (John 11:25; 14:6). According to the revelation of John's Gospel, life is a living person, Christ, who is the very embodiment of God. Thus, the book of John is a book of life. Life sprouts in this Gospel.

We see the growth of the sprout in Romans. In John 15 the Lord Jesus tells us to abide in Him. However, the way to abide in Christ is found not in John 15 but in Romans 8. Romans 8 reveals that Christ today is the Spirit of life. As the Spirit of life, He is in our spirit. Hence, the spirit in this chapter is the mingled spirit, the divine Spirit mingled with the human spirit. In order to abide

in Him, we need to set our mind, which represents our whole being, on the mingled spirit. The result is life and peace. Therefore, Romans 8 is necessary in order to have the realization of John 15 in a practical way. To have John 15 without Romans 8 is to have the sprout without growth.

In the same principle, many other wonderful aspects of life found in the Gospel of John are developed in the book of Romans. In John we have a vision of life; however, this Gospel does not give us the definite way to experience this life. For this, we need the book of Romans. In Romans life is unveiled in such a way that we can not only know life but also experience it.

JUSTIFICATION AND LIFE

In Romans 1:16 Paul says that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes. Then in the next verse he says, "For the righteousness of God is revealed in it out of faith to faith: as it is written, But the just shall live by faith." God's salvation is by justification out of faith. Although all Christians have heard this, most have missed the ultimate point in this chapter. This matter is not salvation nor justification nor faith. It is life. Notice that 1:17 says

that the just shall live by faith. This verse can also be translated, "The just shall have life by faith." Therefore, the best way to grasp the full meaning here is to say, "The just shall have life and live by faith."

God has saved us and justified us so that we may have life. Justification results in life. Hence, in 5:18 Paul speaks of the "justification of life." God's justification of us in Christ is of life. Justification results in life. God's purpose in justifying us is to enable us to enjoy His life. Adam in Genesis 2 did not need justification because at that time sin had not come in. Man lived in innocence before God. Because of Adam's fall and his involvement with sin, the way to the tree of life was closed (Gen. 3:24) until the Lord Jesus died on the cross to fulfill God's righteous requirements. Christ is our righteousness. When we believe in Him, He becomes righteousness to us, and we are justified by God. Through this justification we are brought back to the tree of life. Therefore, justification is of life, for life, and results in life.

Many Christians concentrate on the matter of justification but neglect the matter of life. Therefore, we need to emphasize one phrase in Romans 5:18—justification of life. The key word

here is "life." Justification is not an end in itself; justification is for life. Have you been justified by faith in Christ? If you have, then you should strongly proclaim that your justification is for life. The just shall have life and live by faith.

SAVED IN HIS LIFE

In Romans 5:10 Paul says that "while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son." The death of Christ is for redemption, justification, and reconciliation. But all this is for life. As Paul goes on to say in this verse, "Much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved in His life." We have enjoyed the benefits of Christ's death; now we need to enjoy His life. He who died on the cross for our sins is now living within us and for us as our life. Just as we participate in the death of Christ, so we also need to experience the life of Christ. The life of Christ is Christ Himself living within us.

This life saves us from all kinds of negative things. It is not the life of Christ, however, that saves us from hell or from God's judgment, because we have already been saved from these things through the death of Christ on the cross for our sins. Although we were sinful and destined to be eternally condemned by God, Christ's

death has solved this problem. Therefore, by the death of Christ we have been saved from hell and from the eternal judgment of God. This salvation has been accomplished once for all. Nevertheless, Paul says that "we shall be saved in His life," indicating that we still need to experience the saving life of Christ.

From what are we saved? If we would answer this question fully and in detail, we would need to mention hundreds of items, including temper, disposition, self-pride, and jealousy. Everyone has a problem with temper or with the natural disposition or with self-pride or with jealousy. How much we need to be saved in the life of Christ! Although we need to be saved from hundreds of items, in the book of Romans the Apostle Paul deals with just a number of major things from which we need to be saved, including sin, worldliness, naturalness, individualism, and divisiveness.

SAVED FROM THE LAW OF SIN

Let us first consider being saved in life from the law of sin. Romans 8:2 says, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed me from the law of sin and of death." This verse speaks not merely of sin, but of the law of sin.

All negative things such as temper and self-pride are related to this law. The reason you cannot overcome your temper is that your temper is involved with the law of sin. There is a certain law that causes you to lose your temper, to be proud, and to be jealous. For example, if I throw a ball into the air, there is no need to pray that it will fall to the ground. The law of gravity will automatically cause the ball to fall. Likewise, we need no help in losing our temper, for we lose it spontaneously according to the working of the law of sin within us. Furthermore, there is no need for us to try to be proud or jealous, because the law of sin produces pride and jealousy in us. The speaking of lies is also an issue of the law of sin. Christians know that they should not tell lies, but in one way or another nearly all Christians have lied, even if it was just in putting on a false appearance or expression. Lying, like all other sinful things, is not something we are taught to do; it comes from the law of sin within us.

In order to impress you with this fact, I would like to use the word "law" as a verb. The law of sin "laws" us; we all have been "lawed" by this law. We simply cannot escape the "lawing" of the law of sin within us. According to 8:2, this law of sin is also the law of death. When this law "laws"

us, we are involved not only with sin but also with death. Only in the life of Christ can we be saved from this dreadful law.

Many great philosophers, especially the Chinese ethical thinkers, have tried to conquer this law. Certain Chinese philosophers spoke of the war between the principle and the lust. This is just what Paul refers to in Romans 7:23: "But I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and making me a captive in the law of sin which is in my members." What the Chinese ethical thinkers have referred to as the principle is the law of good, and what they have referred to as the lust is the law of sin that brings us into death. By our own efforts we are unable to conquer the law of sin. The only way to be free from this law is the way revealed in 8:2: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed me from the law of sin and of death."

THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE

Romans 8:2 speaks of the law of the Spirit of life. God is not only the Spirit, but life also. The very God who is the Spirit is life in us. Because this life is the Spirit, the Spirit is called the Spirit of life. Every life has a law, and the Spirit of life

also has its law. The law of the bird life is to fly, the law of the dog life is to bark, the law of the cat life is to catch mice, the law of the chicken life is to lay eggs, and the law of the apple tree life is to produce apples. There is no need to teach an apple tree to produce apples, for in the life of an apple tree is a law that "laws" it to produce fruit of its own kind. Our fallen life also has a law, the law of sin and death. As believers in Christ, we have eternal life, the divine life, the life which is actually God Himself. Because this life is the highest life, its law is the highest law. The law of the Spirit of life is the spontaneous function of the divine life. Therefore, we have the highest life with the highest law and the highest function.

The Gospel of John speaks of the Spirit and also of life, but it says nothing of the law of the Spirit of life. In this matter Romans 8 is a progression from the Gospel of John. In Romans 8 the concept of law, the spontaneous function of life, is added to the Spirit and life. Because the Gospel of John does not speak of the function of life, this book does not give us the way to apply life. But with the law of the Spirit of life spoken of in Romans 8:2, we have the way to apply the divine life.

The law of the Spirit of life sets us free from the law of sin and of death. The way to cooperate with this divine law is to set our mind on the spirit. When your temper or any other negative thing rises up in you, do not attempt to suppress it. Instead, turn your mind, your being, to the mingled spirit and call on the name of the Lord Jesus. The mind set on the spirit is life. This life has a law, a spontaneous function, that sets us free from the law of sin and of death. By setting our being on the spirit, we spontaneously apply the divine life within us to our situation, and we are set free. When we are freed from the law of sin in this way, we have the sense that we are in the heavens and that sin is under our feet.

However, we are naturally inclined to try to deal with the negative elements ourselves. Sometimes even little children are so stubborn that they refuse the help of the mother and try to solve their problems alone. It is much better for a child to simply enjoy what his mother can do for him. Likewise, the way to be saved from the law of sin is to set our being on the spirit and to enjoy the spontaneous working of the divine life.

Philosophers have exhausted themselves in their efforts to deal with sin, but they have not been able to find the way. As we have seen, the

way is found in Romans 8. Praise the Lord for the divine life in our spirit! Our spirit today is mingled with and indwelt by the divine Spirit, and we can set our mind upon this mingled spirit. By doing this we have the way to be set free from the law of sin and of death. Our responsibility is simply to cooperate by setting our mind on the spirit. Whenever we set our mind on the spirit, the law of sin and of death is overruled.

SANCTIFICATION IN LIFE

In the life of Christ we are saved not only from sin but also from worldliness. Romans 6:22 says, "But now, having been freed from sin and having been enslaved to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life." In this verse we have the matter of sanctification. None of the books I have read on sanctification relates sanctification to life. On the contrary, most of them merely say that sanctification is a change of position through the blood of Christ. However, 6:22 shows that sanctification is related to life and that it is a matter of life.

The sanctification revealed in these chapters of Romans is not outward, positional sanctification but inward, dispositional sanctification. To be sanctified is to be saved from being common

or worldly. By nature we all are common and worldly. Not only our outward conduct and behavior must be separated from the world, but even our disposition, our very being, must be separated also. In buying a pair of shoes, you may be careful not to purchase a worldly style. However, if you consider only the style, you may be sanctified in buying shoes, but this is not the inward sanctification by life. In order to be sanctified inwardly by life in buying shoes, you should set your mind on the spirit, pray to the Lord, and ask Him what kind of shoes He would like to wear. If you contact the Lord in this way, the inward anointing will teach you what shoes to buy. Then you will buy shoes not according to religious instructions or concepts, but according to the inner life. If your daily life is according to the inner life, not according to teachings and regulations, you will not be common or worldly in buying a pair of shoes. But the main point is not buying the proper shoes; it is that even in the process of buying a pair of shoes you are sanctified inwardly by life. Neither your shoes nor your being will be common. Sanctification is not merely outward behavior; it is altogether a matter of our inward being, which is governed by the law of the Spirit of life.

The inward anointing will also affect the way we style our hair. Concerning the length or style of our hair, we should pray, "Lord Jesus, what about my hair? Lord, I care for You and for the law of the Spirit of Your life. Lord, You are living within me. In the matter of my hair, I want to cooperate with the law of the Spirit of life." If you pray in this way, you will be dispositionally sanctified, and you will know how your hair should be cut. Do not be concerned about either the praise of others or their criticism. Instead, simply care for the law of the Spirit of life within you.

THE BEST WAY TO GROW IN LIFE

Dispositional sanctification is not only a matter of life; it also brings more life to us. The best way to grow in life is to be dispositionally sanctified by life. The more we are sanctified within by life, the more life will be imparted to us. The more you cooperate with the process of inward sanctification, the more life you will enjoy. For this reason 6:22 speaks of "fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life." Sanctification is brought about by life, and it also brings in life. It is wholly a matter by life and for life. The more we set our being upon the spirit, the more we are

separated from the world and all that is common. Such a sanctification issues in more life for our growth in life.

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