

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

REIGNING
IN LIFE
BY THE
ABUNDANCE
OF GRACE

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Living Stream Ministry

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THE PRESENT WORKING OF DEATH

The Bible reveals that death comes from sin. As [Romans 6:23](#) says, “The wages of sin is death.” This means that death is the result of sin. It is possible that our understanding of death may merely be doctrinal. When I was young, I was taught that there were two deaths: man’s physical death and the lake of fire, which is the second death. I did not regard death as something in which I was subjectively involved daily. Gradually, however, I discovered that in the Bible a number of verses indicate that death is presently working in us. Death is like a worm that is constantly eating us. Sin ruins us, but it does not eat us. Death is the “worm” that is devouring us day by day.

Death has a number of aspects, the present aspect and the future aspect, the subjective aspect and the objective aspect. After the millennium, all the unbelieving dead will be raised and will stand before the white throne to be judged ([Rev. 20:12](#)). Those whose names are not found in the

book of life will be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death ([Rev. 20:15](#)). Our burden in this booklet is not with this future, objective aspect of death; it is with the present, subjective aspect. At this very moment, the element of death is within our being, endeavoring to kill us.

In [chapters five through eight of Romans](#) the subject of death is covered in a full way. In [Romans 5](#) we see that death entered the world through sin and then passed to all men. Furthermore, as [verse 14](#) makes clear, death also reigns. In [6:21](#) and [23](#) Paul says that the end of the things of which we now are ashamed is death and that death is the wages of sin. [Romans 7](#) is a chapter not only on law but also on death. In [verses 10 and 11](#) Paul declares, “And the commandment which was unto life, this was found to me to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me.” Furthermore, in [verse 13](#) Paul says that sin works “death to me through that which is good.” Therefore, in [verse 24](#) he cries out, “Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?” The death that Paul is speaking about in [chapter seven](#) is not the death coming in the future; it is the death working within us right now.

Paul's situation in [Romans 7](#) was very different from David's in [Psalm 51](#). [Psalm 51](#) is a psalm of repentance that followed a particular act of sinning. In [Romans 7](#), however, Paul was not repenting because he had sinned. [Romans 7](#) is concerned not with repentance, but with death, with the continual working of death within him. Repentance was of great help to David in [Psalm 51](#), but it would have been no help to Paul in [Romans 7](#). It could not have delivered him from the death in his mortal body.

THE STING OF DEATH

In [1 Corinthians 15:55 and 56](#) Paul says, "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? Now the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law." Death is likened to a scorpion, and sin is likened to the scorpion's sting. According to [Hebrews 2:14](#), the one who has the power of death is the Devil. Once we are stung by the "scorpion" of death, the Devil exercises his power to kill us. Thus, Satan has the power of death, and sin is the sting of death. Whenever we are stung by sin, the poison of death gets into us. The result is spiritual killing, spiritual death.

A CONTRAST

At this point it may be helpful to see a sharp contrast between the negative side and the positive side. Satan is opposed to God. When Satan injects himself into man, the nature of Satan in man becomes sin. On the contrary, God wrought into man becomes grace. Hence, sin is opposed to grace. When sin is present and active within us, it becomes evil. But when grace is present and active, it becomes the Spirit. The result of the activity of evil is death, whereas the result of the activity of the Spirit is life. Therefore, Satan, sin, evil, and death are opposed to God, grace, Spirit, and life.

THE SPIRIT AND THE EXPERIENCE OF LIFE

[Romans 8:2](#), putting the Spirit and life together, speaks of the Spirit of life. In the same principle, we may speak of “the evil of death.” Life is God living in us. The very God who lives in us is the Spirit. When God is far from us as the source, He is the Father. But when this very God comes to live in us in a practical way, He is the Spirit. However, if the Spirit is merely in us but does not work within us, we shall not experience

life. As believers, we all know that the Spirit is within us. However, not many of us have a rich experience of the divine life. Hence, although we have the Spirit, we still may be short of life. The reason for this is that the Spirit who dwells in us does not have much opportunity to live in us. We have the Spirit within us, but we may not care for Him adequately. Sometimes we are so fully occupied with our jobs that we have no time for anything else. In like manner, we may be so occupied in our being that we have no time nor heart for the Spirit. It seems that we have hardly any capacity to give ground to the indwelling Spirit. It seems that we say to the Spirit, “I realize that You are very dear to me, but I simply don’t have the heart for You.”

Many Christians hold the mistaken concept that if they neglect the Spirit, the Spirit will depart from them. According to the Bible, however, the Spirit will never leave us once He has come into us. The Spirit does not regard Himself as a guest within us, but as the Dweller, as the Owner of the dwelling.

Many years ago I read a book in which pictures were used to signify the work of the Spirit. A dove, representing the Spirit, was pictured as coming into people when they believed in the

Lord and flying away when they sinned. Because many seeking Chinese Christians received something from this book, we spent a great deal of time to refute the incorrect teaching that the Spirit will leave a believer if he sins. [Ephesians 4:30](#) says, “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in Whom you were sealed unto the day of redemption.” The Spirit may be grieved within us, but He will never leave us. The Spirit remains in us, but He may not be given the opportunity to live in us as He desires. Hence, we have the Spirit, but we may not have life in our experience.

When some hear that we can have the Spirit without experiencing life, they may argue that it is impossible to have the Spirit without life. However, it is a fact that when we do not allow the Spirit to live in us, we do not have the divine life in an actual and practical way, although we may have life in position or in name. For example, do you express the divine life when you lose your temper? At such a time you are in death, not life. Doctrinally speaking, every believer has life. But in reality life is the living Spirit. Thus, only when the Spirit lives in us as well as dwells in us do we have life experientially. Firstly God is grace to us, and then grace is active as the Spirit in us. The result is that we experience life. The principle is

the same with Satan, sin, evil, and death. Firstly Satan is sin in us, and then sin is active as evil. The result is death. This understanding of life and death is based on our experience.

THE SENSE OF DEATH

Satan, the one who holds the power of death, has injected his evil nature into us as sin. Thus, even an infant, who seems to be so innocent and lovely, has the nature of sin. Because a child is born in sin, sin is in his very nature. However, it takes time for sin to come forth in acts. As the years go by and the child grows up, this sinful nature becomes manifest. When sin becomes active in his being, it becomes evil, and the result of evil is death.

As believers in Christ, even we ourselves may be under the killing of death daily. In our experience, sin becomes evil, and evil becomes death. For example, we may easily be killed as a result of gossiping. We can recognize the symptoms of death and know when death is working in us. Some of the symptoms of death are darkness, emptiness, restlessness, and dryness. We who minister the Word know that any deadness within us can hinder us in speaking. If I lose my temper a short while before I am to speak, I may

find it very difficult to speak in the meeting. The blood washes and cleanses me, but it takes time for the deadness to be swallowed up. Whenever we sense death within us, we must go to the Lord, deal thoroughly with Him about it, and experience not only the cleansing of the blood but also the anointing, which is the living of the Spirit within us. The result of the anointing is life. Then if we speak according to the living Spirit, our speaking will be full of life.

Many of the sisters are deadened not only by gossiping, but also by shopping. The sisters who overcome in the matter of shopping are truly reigning in life by grace. Shopping is a great test to the sisters. For this reason, it would be very difficult for a sister to stay away from the department stores for three months. But if the sisters do no unnecessary shopping, they will see what a great difference it makes in their experience of life. If the sisters can overcome the matters of gossiping and shopping, they will be overflowing with life in the church meetings.

My objective in giving these examples is not to deal with shopping or gossiping; it is to deal with death. Moses gave the children of Israel many regulations. In contrast, Christ does not give us regulations; He imparts life into us.

COOPERATING WITH THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE

[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.” In our experience, we may find that the law of the Spirit of life does not always work as effectively as Paul indicates in this verse. The reason for this is that we want the law of life to overcome certain things such as our temper, but we may not give the law of life opportunity to do whatever it chooses in us. Because we hate our temper, we want the law of life to overcome it. Therefore, we assign the law of life to do this task. But we should not assign the law of life to do specific things and then prevent this law from doing other things. On the contrary, we must give this law the opportunity to work in any way it desires. Although the law of the Spirit of life is one, it governs thousands of items. For example, it will govern the way we cut our hair and the way we live at home.

If we do not cooperate with the law of the Spirit of life within us, we shall immediately be deadened. Death is more ugly in the eyes of God than sin is. Death is abominable to God; He hates it. Gossiping may not be sinful, but because it is

a matter that brings in death, it is abominable in the eyes of God. It is an insult to the living God. Day after day, we insult the living God who indwells us. Because so many Christians are deadened within, it is impossible for them to have continual experiences of life.

CONTACTING THE THRONE OF GRACE

In order to experience life as the Spirit living in us, we need to come to the source of life, God, the Lord, under the cleansing of the redeeming blood of Christ with an open heart and spirit. If we remain open to Him all the time and are willing for all the insulation to be removed, the current of the divine electricity will flow within us. In this way we shall receive grace. As [Hebrews 4:16](#) says, we should “come forward with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace for timely help.” Grace comes from the throne of grace. Therefore, in order to have grace, we must contact the throne of grace. If we do this, grace will flow within us, and we shall be filled with grace. Eventually, grace will be active as the Spirit, and the Spirit will live in us as life. Then we shall reign in life over death.

DEATH SUBDUED AND SWALLOWED

The only thing that can subdue death is the uncreated life of God. Our life, the created life, cannot withstand death. However, death cannot hold the divine life signified by the Lord's bones, which were not broken when He was on the cross. The fact that the soldiers did not break the Lord's legs indicates that His uncreated life cannot be broken. Any form of created life, vegetable, animal, or human, can be damaged by death. But the unique uncreated life cannot be damaged by it.

Just as light swallows darkness, so the uncreated life swallows death. Darkness can only be overcome by light. We should not try to cast out darkness, but we should simply turn on the light. As soon as the light comes on, darkness vanishes. In the same principle, whenever the uncreated life comes in, death disappears. Death is afraid of the uncreated life. In order to reign in life, we need the abundance of grace and the living Spirit. As long as we have the divine life, every trace of death will vanish.

We should not try to overcome our temper, our shopping, or our gossiping. Rather, we should simply open our being to God and allow His grace to flow through us and to fill us. This

flowing grace will be active as the Spirit who will be life in us. This life will then subdue death and swallow it up. This is what it means to reign in life over death.

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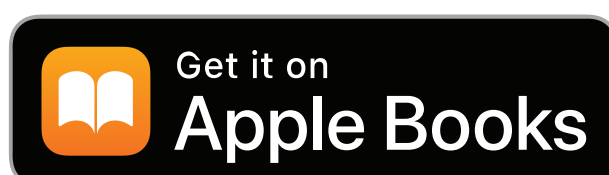
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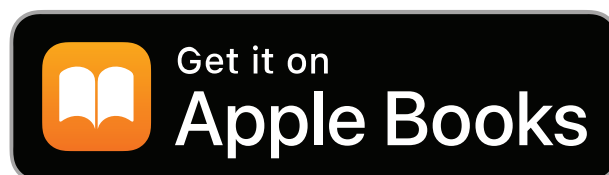
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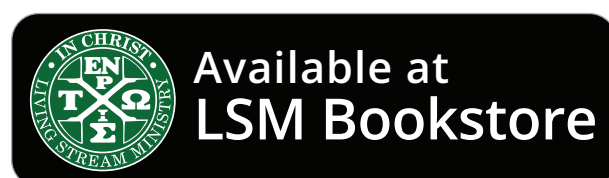
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