

## The Message of the Cross for the Believer

In dealing with men who are coming out of lives lived in futility because of bondage to life dominating sin, the question is frequently asked, "If he is really saved how come he continues to sin?" The Apostle Paul asked the same question in his letter to the believers in Rome. ***"To what conclusion, then, shall we come? Are we to persist in sinning in order that the grace extended to us may be the greater?"*** (Romans 6:1 WNT)

The obvious answer is an emphatic "NO!" We must first lead unbelievers to Christ as we is readily agreed upon, but believers must be lead to the cross in order to truly die to self. Paul continues his exhortation this way; ***"No, indeed; how shall we who have died to sin, live in it any longer? And do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?"*** (Romans 6:2-3 WNT)

The same Holy Spirit that led Christ into the wilderness to be tempted leads us into a deeper and more fruitful walk with God by bringing us to the end of "self." It breaks my heart to hear well-meaning believers tell a newly saved Christian how difficult the Christian life is. Those who have experienced the extreme darkness incurred by being enslaved to the devil through life dominating sin truly understand the meaning of the word "hard!" ***"Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard."*** (Proverbs 13:15 KJV) Listen to what Miles Stanford says about the work of the cross in the life of the believer;

"If we get a wrong idea about the inward working of the Cross we shall lose our own enjoyment of God's love and fail to manifest that love to others. We have no doubt that, for the sinner, the Cross is the outstanding expression of God's love, but **when we realize that it brings us, as believers, into a very personal experience of being crucified together with Christ, we are apt to lose sight of the love of God.**

"We set our teeth, as though making up our minds that from now on everything is going to be grim and harsh. It almost seems that the carnal Christian may be cheerful and happy, but the crucified ones must expect to pass into a gloomier experience. Nothing is farther from the truth. **The Cross will always bring us back to the love of God in ever-increasing fulness.**"

"The challenge of the Cross, the insistence that we have been crucified with Christ, may sometimes appear to be a dark and forbidding message. **The Cross is not the end: It is the way through to His end.** God is working for something beyond the immediate; He is working towards the glory." -H.F.

***"I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end"*** (Jeremiah. 29:11).

Paul goes on to sum it up in his letter to the Romans when he says. ***“Well, then, we by our baptism were buried with Him in death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from among the dead by the Father's glorious power, we also should live an entirely new life. For since we have become one with Him by sharing in His death, we shall also be one with Him by sharing in His resurrection. This we know--that our old self was nailed to the cross with Him, in order that our sinful nature might be deprived of its power, so that we should no longer be the slaves of sin;”*** (Romans 6:4-6 WNT)

And speaking as a seasoned veteran of Satan's darkness, the work of the cross may be difficult, but serving Satan in bondage to life dominating sin is HARD. So as I share the truth of God's word and His pathway to freedom, I am careful to encourage not discourage carnal Christians from accepting the way of the cross. Because as Miles Stanford already alluded to ***“The Cross is not the end: It is the way through to His end.”*** May you find that end to be fulfilling and transforming rather than hard!

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