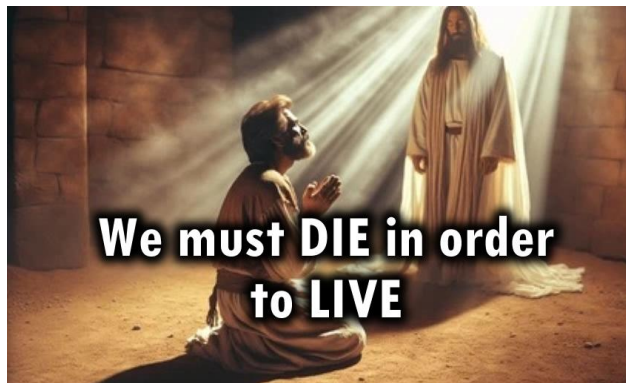


WE CANNOT HAVE THE LIFE OF JESUS, WITHOUT FIRST DYING HIS DEATH

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*Matthew 16:24-25 ...'Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, **let him deny himself, and take up his cross**, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.'*

What death did Jesus die? Your thought maybe goes straight to the cross at Calvary. Your thought maybe focuses on the physical death, the suffering that Christ went through for us. And while that is certainly part of the death Jesus died, it is not the full picture. In Philippians 2:7 we are told that Jesus "*made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.*" The words 'made himself of no reputation' means in the original to literally 'empty himself.' Jesus emptied Himself, died to self, to become one of us, to save us. He literally poured out His own life for us. So what must we do in order to have the life of Jesus? Christ told us Himself in Matthew 16 above. We must **FIRST** deny ourselves and take up our cross. In other words, we must die to self. We must empty self in order to be filled with the life of Christ. Death must happen first in order to live a new life.

Herein lies the problem with so many of God's professed people. We want the life of Jesus and His promise of salvation **without** dying His death. But this cannot be. The gospel message of God's salvation is wrapped up in death and resurrection. The death of Jesus, emptying Himself, pouring Himself out for us and dying for us, and being resurrected to eternal life. And for us, death to self, to sin, to the world and being resurrected to a new life in Christ. But you cannot have one without the other. We **cannot** have the life (salvation) of Jesus without first dying His death - death to self.

*1 Corinthians 15:31 ...'I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, **I die daily.**'*

*Galatians 6:14 ...'But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom **the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.**'*

Did the apostle Paul physically die daily? No. But daily he lived as if he was dead to self and to the world. The world was dead to Paul and Paul was dead to the world. He had taken up his cross, denied himself and died the death of Christ - "*I am crucified with Christ*" he said - daily pouring out his life for Jesus and for the salvation of others. Do you see any record in the Bible of the prophets of old, or the apostles living to be entertained by the world? Any record of them partying and enjoying the pleasures of the world? Any record of them going on holidays? Expendng money on things they simply wanted? Living in comfort and ease? Striving to earn as much money as they can to buy a big house or nice horse and cart? Why is there no record of these things? Because they had first died the death of Jesus and were now living His life. They had denied themselves, were dead to the world and the world dead to them and were true followers of Christ.

*2 Corinthians 6:14-18 ...'what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore **come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.***

Friends, this isn't a mere 'suggestion.' This is a condition upon God the Father receiving us as His children. God is telling us that IF we heed the call to completely separate ourselves from the things and ways of the world, THEN He will receive us. Which means the opposite is also true. If we refuse to heed this call and do not completely separate ourselves from the world, then our Heavenly Father will NOT receive us, and we will NOT be the children of God. So this is a serious instruction to heed. But sadly, many in the churches refuse to heed this call.

Many of God's professed believers today have been so deceived as to what it constitutes to be a Christian. We have been deceived into thinking we can have the life of Jesus without making any real sacrifice. In the Christian life there must be a complete renunciation of all self-will, the complete denial of the flesh of its every desire and pleasure, and complete separation from the world in all its ways of thinking and acting. And this renunciation and surrender must be a **continual, daily experience** - "*I die daily.*"

Galatians 5:24 ...'And they that are Christ's HAVE crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.'

*2 Timothy 2:11 ...'It is a faithful saying: For **IF we be dead with him** we shall also live with him.'*

*Romans 6:3-4 ...'Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were **baptized into his death**? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so **we also should walk in newness of life.***

It is clear then, by the Word of God that we are to die with Christ, in order to receive His life. Not dying physically, but dying to the sinful nature. Dying to the old ways we used to live, for self desire and pleasure. Dying to the world and the things of the world, which are not of God. Then, when we have put off the old man through faith in Jesus Christ, laying aside our

own will to live by the will of God, we can as Paul said in Romans 6 above, "walk in newness of life." But what is that newness of life that we are to walk in?

*1 Peter 2:24 ...'Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should **live unto righteousness**: by whose stripes ye were healed.'*

*Ephesians 4:21-24 ...'If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is **created in righteousness and true holiness**.'*

*Romans 8:3-4 ...'For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: **That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit**.'*

*Ephesians 5:8-11 ...'For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in **all goodness and righteousness and truth**;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have **no fellowship** with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.'*

What is this 'newness of life' we are to walk in after dying with Christ? Righteousness, holiness, purity, love, truth. Now can we continue to be entertained by the world and the things of the world - by sport, movies, novels, parties, games, etc, and still be walking in this newness of life in Christ? Absolutely not! And I will tell you why. **Everything the world has to offer is for SELF gratification**, and therefore, was not given to us by God to draw us closer to Him, but was created by the devil to draw us away from God. Remember, Jesus EMPTIED Himself and gave Himself for us, fully and completely. Therefore to die with Christ, in order to have His life, we are to empty ourselves and our lives of all these worldly distractions. And anyone who is not willing to do that, does not truly love Jesus and cannot have His life. And without the life of Jesus, we only have eternal death to look forward to.

*1 John 2:15-16 ...'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For **ALL** that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.'*

Friends, we must die with Christ. We must empty ourselves and die with Him - die to self and the world, in order to have the life - eternal life of Jesus. We CANNOT have the life of Christ without first dying with Christ. Jesus told us in John 3:3 that we can only see the kingdom of God by being born again. Well, what do we need to do FIRST in order to be born again? We need to die. We need to die to self and the world, to our old ways and to this sinful flesh, so that we can be resurrected into a new spiritual life of righteousness and true holiness in Christ. And remember, this isn't a one time event. This should be a continual experience. "*I die daily*", the apostle Paul said. We must do this in order to live for Christ daily. Will you choose this today? An eternal life of glory awaits!