

Saved Daily from Sin's Power by Christ's Life

I don't know of any verse that better communicates the essence of the Christian experience than Romans 5:10:

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 by His life. (Romans 5:10)

This passage first states that we, in our lost state, “*were enemies*” to God (although He loved us in our unredeemed state—John 3:16). This truth lines up perfectly with John 8:44, which verifies that we were sons of Satan so long as we walked in rebelliousness:

“You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies. (John 8:44)

Thus, we were “*children of wrath*”:

Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. (Ephesians 2:3)

However, once we repented and believed while depraved “*we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son*” (Romans 5:10), “*reconciled*” meaning to be granted favor with the Father. Christ’s “*death*” serves as the means through which God reconciles those who repent and believe while depraved. This fascinating reality will be studied in depth when we arrive at Romans 6:6, but for now realize that the death and eradication of who we used to be (who we were in our lost state) allowed God to welcome us into His family. In other words, the Father, by placing us in His Son on the cross (1Corinthians 12:13; Romans 6:6; 7:4; Galatians 2:20) subsequent to our repenting and believing while depraved, eradicated the “*person*” previously living in our bodies and made us new (2Corinthians 5:17). Therefore, we did the repenting and believing, but God did the saving—our choice to repent and believe while depraved in no way being a work (Romans 3:27-28; 4:5).

God smiled on us at the point of justification, and for the first time we could call Him “*Father*” (Galatians 4:6). We were finally at peace with our Creator. Is this reconciliation all that we received? Did He restore us to a place of favor so we could flounder around until He calls us home? Based on the remainder of Romans 5:10, absolutely not!

Most believers understand at least something regarding the first half of Romans 5:10, but only a minority of the body of Christ comprehends the awesomeness of the remainder of the verse. In fact, the phrase, “*...we shall be saved by His life,*” holds the key to abundant living.

We understand well by now that at the point of salvation (justification) we, as church saints, were freed from the penalty of sin. But salvation includes more than forgiveness of sins. It includes, among other things, being saved on a day-to-day basis from the temptations we face as believers. This salvation (deliverance) is accomplished by Jesus' life that moved into our spirit the moment we repented and believed while depraved (Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:4)! Read it: "...we shall be saved by *His life*" (Romans 5:10). This continual, moment-by-moment salvation is not addressing the issue of getting out of hell and into heaven. The first part of the verse dealt with that topic—salvation from the penalty of sin. Paul is saying that the life of Christ residing inside us is the only means through which we experience salvation from Satan's ever-present schemes. Therefore, by yielding to Christ's life within, victorious living becomes a reality rather than remaining an obscure idea understood by God alone.

Thus, Paul stated "...neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love" (Galatians 5:6). Did you catch that? Love, not duty, causes us to yearn to live by faith, to live a life characterized by trust in the Creator. Yes, what God did for us at the point of justification not only revolutionizes our perception of who we are, but revolutionizes our perception of Who He is as well. When this revolution occurs, everything about our lives is invigorated, not by our own energy, but by His—as we yield to His indwelling presence.

We, as New Testament believers, have the privilege of living life by the life of Another. Stated differently, we have access to what Adam and Eve were originally offered in the Garden of Eden. "*The tree of life*" (Genesis 2:9) was more than a tree named "*life*." The Father's very life resided in the tree. Consequently, had Adam and Eve obeyed, they would have lived by the Father's life—by the life of Another. Instead, they sinned and were barred from the tree (Genesis 3:24) that possessed the only means through which life can be truly enjoyed. Note: A movement exists within Christendom that views God as having caused Adam and Eve to sin so He can have someone (the lost) on which to display His wrath so the elect might appreciate His grace. This view normally perceives God as the cause of all things, even electing the elect to salvation from eternity past. They, as a result, perceive the depraved as incapable of exercising repentance and faith. In fact, they teach that God must first spiritually regenerate the depraved, follow by giving them repentance and faith, before they can repent, believe, and be saved. Our *God's Heart* series addresses this thinking's inconsistencies.

Was the Father caught off guard by Adam and Eve's disobedience that He, for certain, did not cause? Of course not, for Jesus came to demonstrate what Adam and Eve failed to experience due to sin. In other words, He came to demonstrate what life would look like when lived by the life in the tree—the Father's very life:

"Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. (John 14:10)

Jesus performed no work due to yielding to the Father (the life in the tree) throughout His First Coming. The Father, through the Son, was responsible for Jesus' miracles. Thus, Jesus stated:

“For My yoke is easy, and My load is light.” (Matthew 11:30)

Jesus’ “yoke” was “easy” and His “load...light” due to choosing to live by His Father’s indwelling presence. As a result, He never sinned, fulfilling the Law completely—so you and I as New Testament believers could live “*under grace*” rather than “*law*” (Romans 6:14). Jesus lived “*under the Law*” (Galatians 4:4) to fulfill the Law so we, once we repented and believed while depraved, could be delivered from the Law to live under grace. Amazing!

Paul’s understanding of this truth affected every aspect of the ministry to which he was called. He stated, therefore, that the source of His strength was God’s grace:

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me. (1Corinthians 15:10)

He also wrote:

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13)

Paul recognized that yielding to Christ’s life is always, in every case, the key to victorious living—never applying self-effort to a series of rules or regulations. His words from Romans 6:13 demonstrate that Jesus is “*God*” (Hebrews 1:8):

and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. (Romans 6:13)

Paul understood that all good things performed through his life resulted from yielding to the Son, Who is yielded to the Father. Through this means Paul lived by the life in the tree—the life originally made accessible to Adam and Eve in the Garden. We can live by this same life. Can you imagine anything more exciting? Only through living by Jesus’ life can the New Testament believer enter into “*Sabbath rest*,” resulting in obedience motivated by love—never duty:

There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. (Hebrews 4:9-10)

This “*Sabbath rest*” is the ultimate reality for the believer, for its possessors know God’s heart, and in turn, live by the life in the tree (a subject addressed in greater depth in the Hebrews course distributed by this ministry). Three levels of “rest” are available to the redeemed (Redemption rest, Canaan rest, and Sabbath rest), each of which are portrayed in 1John 2:12-14:

I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name’s sake. I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who

has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father. I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one. (1John 2:12-14)

Here we find that “*little children*” (those new in the faith) know their “*sins are forgiven*” (v.12) and “*know the Father*” as their God (v.13). They have entered Redemption rest. The “*young men*,” those more mature in the Lord, “*have overcome the evil one*” (vv.13-14)—through applying the truth they know—and entered Canaan rest (rest from the enemy). The “*fathers*” on the other hand, the seasoned believers, “*know*” the heart of “*Him who has been from the beginning*” (vv.13-14). They “*know*” the heart of Christ (have intimacy with Christ) and have entered Sabbath rest. Our ultimate goal is not to realize that our “*sins are forgiven*” (Redemption rest), nor to “*overcome the evil one*” through applying God’s truth (Canaan rest), but to “*know*” (intimately) the heart of God’s Son (Sabbath rest). Intimacy with the Father is attained only through establishing intimacy with His Son (John 14:7 and 9). Those who experience this intimacy walk in Sabbath rest, and in turn, live by the life in the tree—through yielding to Christ, Who is yielded to the Father. What incredible news!

Just as three levels of “rest” are available to the New Testament believer, three types of salvation are available as well: (1) Salvation from the penalty of sin (Acts 16:31)—once we exercise repentance and faith while depraved (2) Salvation from the power of sin (Romans 5:10)—on a daily basis once we repent and believe (3) Salvation from the presence of sin (Romans 13:11)—when we eject out of our earthly bodies and enter heaven. As indicated above, the salvation that Paul addresses in Romans 5:10 (“*saved by His life*”) is the second type—salvation from the power of sin in our daily experience. Paul mentions this same salvation in 1Corinthians 1:18:

For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (1Corinthians 1:18)

The use of the present tense (“*being saved*”) points to a daily deliverance from sin’s power as we yield to Christ’s indwelling presence. The voice is passive in the Greek because the subject is being acted upon by an outside Source once the subject chooses to yield—the Source being Jesus.

As has already been verified, no believer will be judged at the “*great white throne*” (Revelation 20:11-15), a judgment of wrath. A New Testament believer faces “*the judgment seat of Christ*,” a judgment that results in rewards. Each of our works will be tested “*with fire*” (1Corinthians 3:10-15), and we will be rewarded for the deeds done in faith. We will be rewarded for each time we have trusted Christ to perform a particular deed through us, regardless of the outcome. The deeds performed in our own strength will burn, even should good result from our efforts. This judgment serves as additional motivation to enter into “*sabbath rest*” (Hebrews 4:9-10), for those who have ceased working for God (and have learned to live by Christ’s life) are rewarded most.

You may say, “I know (in my head) that I have been saved from the penalty of sin, and that daily temptation is overcome through yielding to Jesus’ indwelling presence, but how does this reality work in a practical sense?” Great question, for we can talk about being saved (on a daily basis from the power of sin) by Christ’s life without knowing much about the subject matter. Considerable time will be invested in Romans 6, 7, and 8 discussing this vital truth. For starters, however, allow me to describe how this powerful reality has begun to work in my own experience. Note my emphasis on “begun.”

First, temptation is never overcome by concentrating on the temptation. Should I have a problem with stealing (for instance), I will never gain victory in that area by saying, “I cannot steal.” With that mind-set, the responsibility of overcoming my problem depends upon me. However, if I see myself as holy and perfect, as God sees me (due to His having made me holy and perfect subsequent to my exercising repentance and faith while depraved), I will realize the unnaturalness of yielding to the temptation. Consequently, while being tempted, I must remember that Jesus lives in me, yield to His life, and walk away in His strength. Through this means I am “*saved by His life*” (Romans 5:10). Sounds simple, doesn’t it? But you know as well as I do that intense spiritual warfare can make living from this vantage point extremely challenging. Therefore, we will invest significant time in Romans 6:1-8:17 learning how this reality can become more than a hit or miss exercise of futility. In fact, it must become a consistent lifestyle if we desire to live victoriously.

I once asked a friend, who has been used of God to encourage countless believers, the following question: “What is the supreme truth you have gleaned from God’s Word?” He responded by saying that the truth of Romans 5:10 affected him most, where Paul speaks of being saved on a daily basis by Christ’s “*life*.” He went on to say that the greatest need within the church today is that she learn to live by the life of Another, the life of Christ, and to practice this reality on an ever-increasing basis. I agree! Yet, I have discovered that most believers lack the passion to pursue the deeper things of God until facing difficulties of epic proportions. A great man (source unknown) once said: “Everything is learned through pain. Everything else is just information.” Thus, were it not for extreme pain, this ministry would not exist. Neither would this commentary exist! Thank God, therefore, for the pain (2Corinthians 4:17-18).

In Romans 5:11, Paul states that “...we...exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ”:

And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. (Romans 5:11)

From Romans 5:2, we know that “*exult*” means to “rejoice.” Rejoice we can, because through Christ we have been reconciled and granted a place of favor with the Godhead! Thus, Paul described the “*gospel*” as “...the glorious gospel of the blessed God...” (1Timothy 1:11). It truly is “*glorious*”! We will continue to observe the “*glorious*” nature of the “*gospel*” as we walk through the remainder of this study. Isn’t this exciting! Romans 5:12-21 is some of the most thought-provoking input in the entire course, so remain alert.