

Yet Not I, But

by H.J. Vine

The sermon emphasizes the transformation from self-reliance to living by grace through Christ, highlighting the struggle with sin and the authority of God's word.

Scripture: Romans 7:20, 1 Corinthians 7:12, 1 Corinthians 15:10, Galatians 2:20

Topics: "Spiritual Transformation", "Christian Liberty"

Description

H.J. Vine preaches on the transformative power of Christ in the lives of believers, as seen through the experiences of Paul in Romans 7:20, 1 Corinthians 7:12, 1 Corinthians 15:10, and Galatians 2:20. Paul learned to distinguish his new desires from the sin within him, recognizing it was no longer him but sin. He emphasized the importance of heeding the words of the Lord over human authority, giving all glory to God for his abundant labors. Through faith in Christ, Paul found liberty, life, and stability, living by the grace of God and declaring 'Not I, but Christ lives in me.'

Transcript

Romans 7:20

What a harrowing but necessary experience is that which is described in Romans 7! Harrowing because it teaches those who in any measure pass through it the corruption of their own nature, and their helplessness to overcome it; for it surely is an appalling discovery. "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing." Necessary it is if we are to reach light and liberty. In it Paul learned to distinguish himself, as connected with the new desires, from sin which still dwelt in him, but which he hated. The new desires belonged to the new nature which he had received as being born again, the sin belonged to the old nature that he had by natural birth. But he could say, "It is NO MORE I . . . BUT SIN" (v. 20). So he learnt to distinguish himself as a man born again from the incubus and insistence of sin within him, and this seems to be the first ray of light in this experience that leads at last to deliverance and thanksgiving (v. 25).

1 Corinthians 7:12

Paul was an inspired apostle, he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write the whole of 1 Corinthians, yet in the 7th chapter he distinguishes that which was from himself as an apostle of Christ and that which was given to him directly by the Lord in the words, "To the rest speak I, not the Lord" (v. 12); but in verse 10, "I command, YET NOT I, BUT THE LORD." We may benefit greatly by noticing the apostle's "not I, but the Lord." The apostles spoke with an authority that the Lord had given them, and those who were loyal to the

truth and to God heard them (1 John 4:6), but when the Lord Himself speaks all who hear must heed His word and obey, for He is supreme over all. A "Thus says the Lord" is sufficient for those who are redeemed by His precious blood. Neither questions nor hesitation should have any place in any matter upon which the Lord has spoken.

We need to set an increasing value on the Holy Scriptures in these apostate days when they are being flouted and scorned and treated as legendary or the mere words of uninstructed men. Often have we heard the edge of Scripture turned aside by the remark, "O, it was Paul that said that," but Paul answers, "Not I, but the Lord." He may have used Paul, John and Peter, but it is the Lord who speaks. What stability this gives to our faith, and what a straight path for our feet! How privileged are we to have the word of the Lord, but how great is also our responsibility!

1 Corinthians 15:10

There was no apostle like Paul, he abounded in the work of the Lord above all the rest. He said, "I laboured more abundantly than they all; YET NOT I, BUT THE GRACE OF GOD which was with me." It might appear as though he were boasting in the multitude of his own activities here and elsewhere, but no, he took no praise to himself, "not I," in that he refused any glory, the "but the grace of God" in that he gave all the glory to God. He boasted in grace and not in himself. This explains why he could speak of his experiences and service with ease and liberty for the glory of the grace of which he was the happy subject, and not for self-exaltation. He glories in it, saying, "By the grace of God I am what I am."

Galatians 2:20

The law proved to be condemnation and death to Paul, but he found Christ to be liberty and life to him, and Christ was the Son of God who loved him. Through the law which condemned the sinner, he had died to the law that he might live to God. Christ had taken the sinner's condemnation, therefore Paul could say, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, YET NOT I, BUT CHRIST lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). NOT PAUL now (who once had such a zeal for the law in his former life), but Christ was the source and the spring and object of his new and living activities. And faith in the risen and ascended Son of God who had loved him and given Himself for him gave character to his life in the flesh. Not the law, but a living Person governed his life! He lived by the faith of Him!

For deliverance, for stability in walk, for energy in service, we need not simply the negative, "No longer I," or "yet not I." We need also the "but" of contrast along with the positive to which the other gives place. So if for the first, freedom is found in Christ Jesus, for stability we have, "Thus says the Lord," and in regard to abounding in His work, there is true liberty when we can happily say, "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." Abundant labours flow from this. Finally, that which crowns all is found in the word, "I live, yet not I," or, "No longer I, BUT CHRIST." All is enshrined here! Leaving that which characterizes self behind, we have Christ Himself! Having died to sin He lives to God, and we have Him for our freedom! He, too, is our Stay, for His words are spirit and life upon which we feed! "Strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus," we can abound in the work of the Lord. And as we do so in living activities, we can say, "I live, yet not I, but CHRIST LIVES IN ME!"

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