

Death With Christ Romans 6

by John Nelson Darby

The Christian walk is grounded in the death and resurrection of Christ, and the believer must reckon themselves dead to sin and alive to God through the power of Christ's blood.

Scripture: Romans 6:1

Topics: "Grace", "Newness of Life"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes in his sermon 'Death With Christ Romans 6' that the believer's walk is rooted in the reality of being dead and risen with Christ, which empowers them to live in holiness and reject sin. He explains that grace does not permit sin but rather calls believers to a life of righteousness that bears fruit for God. Darby highlights the importance of self-examination and the need to judge oneself to avoid being judged, stressing that true Christian morality is motivated by love for God and others. He concludes that through Christ's death and resurrection, believers are freed from the dominion of sin and are called to live in newness of life, producing fruit unto holiness as they grow in their relationship with God.

Transcript

This chapter is the application of Christ dead and risen to the believer's walk, and is the proof that grace disallows sin. Hence we have here Christian practice, and the ground of that practice. We are called to liberty, and not slavery, even in holiness. There is righteousness, but it is of that sort which bears fruit. There is evidently wonderful depth and value in it, as there must be in all that which comes from God. Nor is it merely the producing fruit down here (that is man's thought), but it is fruit that goes up to God; for whatever comes from Him goes up to Him. The meat-offering might be eaten, but all the frankincense went up to God. When Christ was down here, He offered Himself in His life as a sweet savour; Eph. 5. It comes down, and goes up to God again. This is Christian morality; and where this is wanting, it is all nothing. The value is in the motive.

Thus, there may be two men - the one doing everything for his own pleasure, the other for the sake of those around him: the one acting on a merely selfish principle, the other feeling aright as the father of the family. Therefore we have constantly to judge ourselves, that we be not judged. The Christian, in judging himself, must be grieved when he sees how many other things come in, and mix up with that which he presents to God. Self is apt to enter, and spoil the savour of the ointment - not, perhaps, in others, but to himself before God.

We have seen that chapter 4 of this epistle brings out faith in the God who had intervened in power, and raised Jesus, who was under the power of death, and set Him at His own right hand. We thus believe "on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." He had said of Himself, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," speaking of His body.

In chapter 5 faith is applied to justification, and then the law comes in by the bye - righteous of itself, but convicting of unrighteousness those to whom it was given; for they could not keep it. Man must be innocent or saved. If a man is innocent, he does not want the law. Adam could not have known what it meant if it had been said to him, Thou shalt not lust, and, Thou shalt not steal. Whom was he to steal from? Man was addressed in the law as a sinner, and it was not given till 400 years after the promise. By one man's disobedience many were made sinners, by the Other's obedience many were made righteous.

188 This display of grace seemed to make it no matter how the believer lived, and to meet such a thought as that we have chapter 6. The perverseness of the flesh will turn the law to a purpose quite opposed to that for which God gave it, and grace to a different purpose from that for which it was bestowed. The law, that was meant to convict man of sin, they use for self-righteousness; and grace, that is intended really to make a man holy, they turn into licentiousness.

Although it is true that souls were quickened before Christ came, in virtue of His coming, we learn this truth, that man is lost, a fallen sinner, before he is the head of the fallen family: and so Christ was the Righteous Man before He became the Head of the redeemed family. Man naturally likes unholiness; and how is he to get rid of this? Nay, "how shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" The motive to, yea ground of, a Christian life is that we died with Christ; and we have life through a dead Christ, with whom we died. If we have justification, we are made partakers of His life, and there is the spring of holiness. The blood of atonement was put on the ears, hands, feet; marked by this, they had then to watch. Nothing is to be allowed in thoughts or ways that would sully the purity of that blood. How can a man live in that to which he died? It cannot be. If I once died to sin, I cannot live in sin. God forbid! There is putting your members to death; but you are not told to die, as having died already. The cross of Christ has killed sin. I can now deal with this old thing as not me; I have done with it; and I have got a new life, by which the other is overcome.

What Christ have you a part in? A dead Christ. "Buried with him in baptism," etc., raised up by this new power, "by the glory of the Father"; and I can rest upon that expression, because it can feed the heart, and meet the subtlety of the world, and the subtlety in ourselves. There is nothing connected with the glory of the Father that was not concerned in the resurrection of Christ. There was specially shewn the power of God, and the Father's love. There His own glory is concerned in it, for it is the Father's own Son, who was one with Himself, and the righteousness of God is also concerned. He shall convict the world of righteousness. "Thou wilt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." He was God manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels: angels must be witnesses of this great work of the resurrection of the Son.

189 There would have been a gap in heaven if Christ had not been raised up from the dead. Now we see (I do not say realise) what this newness of life must be. Ought not I to see divine righteousness in it? Ought not I to see divine love in it? Ought not I to see the glory of His Person in it? And the affections have to do with this too, for He has gone down into the depths of the earth; and how came He there? Because I was a sinner. And do I not see that He who was there so low deserved to be raised? Who was it? The Person of the Son of God. When speaking to the woman of Samaria, He Himself said, "If thou knewest

who it is that said unto thee, Give me to drink." He first speaks to her conscience, after He said, "Give me to drink"; then to her understanding, for "I perceive that thou art a prophet." Then the Person of the Lord Jesus fills her heart, for she goes and tells others about Him. And this is where we are brought. The heart follows Christ, as it were, and goes up with Him into the new life. Everything is dead below.

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." I do not say there will be no conflict. And the heart has done with it. How very near it comes to me! "Planted together." And this is no mere intellectual perception, but, as I see that Christ was there for my sins, it is the very way in which my need is all met. "We have been planted together in the likeness of his death," etc. It comes to me here, and for my sins And was divine love the less because down here, and not up above? It is in that I learn it, because it was for my sins. Was divine power the less? It is here I learn it. His heart followed me to be made sin, and now mine must follow Him in resurrection. We have no half Christ. We are planted together in the likeness of His death, and planted together in the likeness of His resurrection.

He not only died but is personally accepted. It was "that the body of sin might be destroyed, that we henceforth should not serve sin." You were slaves (speaking after the manner of the country) - under the title of dominion by another - not knowing at night what they should do in the morning - naturally slaves to sin or slaves to the law. Not that the law was sin: see John 8:33, where the Jews are addressed as under the law. "The servant abideth not in the house for ever, . . . but the Son abideth ever. If, therefore, the Son hath made you free, ye are free indeed." It is perfect liberty. He that has done with sin must be dead to it. You cannot charge a thing upon a man that is dead. Why did you do so-and-so? "He that is dead is freed from sin." All is gone to which it attached. Do you ask, How can that be said, when I find I am not dead? Because it is with Christ you died. Christ was put in your place; He has taken it on Him, and done with it. The very things that distress me now are the things that put Christ to death. He has done with sin; therefore mortify it. "Reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin, and alive unto God." I should not need such a word as that "reckon," if there was no need of mortifying. It is holy liberty from sin we have, and not to sin.

190 "Walk in newness of life." "Have your fruit unto holiness." But the great doctrine of grace is - saved by a mediator. "Enter not into judgment." If judgment takes its course on me, it is all over with me. Wash yourself ever so clean, the instant you see the eye of God upon you, you see yourself as one out of a filthy ditch. Job wanted a "daysman, who might lay his hands upon both." The more delicate the conscience is as to the sense of the least defilement, the more the need of the mediator is felt. You say, I find that which ought to be dead is still alive. Did Christ die for the sins you have not, or for those you have? The very things you are finding out are the very things He died for. The more jealousy of conscience, the better, only be sure to see the grace too.

We have a new thing in Him; He is raised from the dead. Judgment cannot touch it - death cannot touch it. There is not a single thing He has not taken upon Himself. And now we are planted in a new state of existence altogether; in that we live, we live in Him, just as much as we died with Him. He died, not for Himself, but He was made sin, etc., and in everything He was put to the test. He learned obedience by the things that He suffered. He went through everything - the scorn of the world, the power of Satan - even to the wrath of God. He was tempted in all points like as we, yet without sin. Satan never could find anything in Him. It was His meat to do His Father's will. But it is never said He could take delight in the suffering for sin; therefore He says, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

191 Now He lives beyond it all in resurrection. He had the Spirit of holiness. All His life through, this was true of Him; but He was put to the test in everything. But now we see Him in new life. He is no half Christ then. He died to sin, but lives to God; therefore we are to reckon ourselves dead to sin, and alive to God.

This is a very practical question. Not that you are to say, If you have not the realization of this, you cannot have the value of the blood. No; but you must know the value of the blood, and so have it in Christ, that you may live. The groundwork of living to Him is to have died to sin with Him. That is the position - "Reckon yourselves," not experience yourselves, etc. "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal bodies," etc. It does not say, Be alive to God, and therefore reckon yourselves, etc. In the power of this I can be living before the world as belonging to God, as I can live before God in the sense of acceptance, because justified by Christ's blood. Live to God. How can I do otherwise than hate myself to be doing even a right thing, and not doing it to God? The worst thing possible is to be bringing corruption into the best things.

"Yield yourselves to God." Did Christ ever do anything for Himself? His was a life of love. He had not time even to eat - always living for others. He not only did things that were commanded, but because they were commanded. What a blessed thought - to have done with self! It is the best thing in the world. "Sin shall not have dominion over you," etc. Oh! but you say, It has dominion over me, and I am afraid God will not have me. What are you doing with grace? How can you come to God for anything, if you are not standing in grace? To whom can you go, if you are not in grace? Romans 5 comes before chapter 6, and if you try to reverse them, you get into chapter 7. If, because I do not love Christ as I ought (which is a higher thing than the law), I doubt whether I am His, I put myself under law - only it is making Christ the law instead of the ten commandments. It is not realising grace, for grace is favour to those who do not deserve it. It is the subtlety of the heart again to abuse grace, where we do not ignore it as we have seen.

"Ye became servants of righteousness." A person is not to be licentious because free from the law, but he has to produce "fruit unto holiness." What is holiness? Separation from what is evil. Adam unfallen was not, but innocent. God is holy, Christ is holy; so are we holy, for we hate sin, and love righteousness, though we cannot do it as God does. Holiness must have God for its object. Christ never needed an object of faith, though He walked in obedience and dependence, as the Holy One of God. We must have an object, Paul had. He saw the Lord in glory, and bore "fruit unto holiness." What fruit does sin bear? None; it brings in death and judgment. But what is meant by "fruit unto holiness?" We must like what God likes; and what is the consequence of this? We become separate from unholiness, and increasing by the knowledge of God. Not only actual fruits (that is true - a tree must be known by its fruits), but this practical bringing forth fruit is connected with the righteousness of God. "The secret of Jehovah is with them that fear him." There is constant reference to God's will. "If the eye be single, the whole body will be full of light." We have to learn God, not just slipping and getting on, but with consecration of the heart, growing up in the knowledge of God - not only servants to righteousness but "to God."

192 God's own character needs to be wrought in us. Christ thought it worth while to leave heaven, that we should be free to go up there, and made to bring forth fruit unto holiness down here.

There is a positive joy in pleasing God. "The gift of God is eternal life." It is all grace; and I would rather have eternal life as the gift of God, than ten lives of my own ever so long, because it is the proof of His love to me.

May we grow up to do His will, remembering it is founded on reckoning ourselves dead unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord! Thus may we live out of the world, as to separation from its evil,

as He is!

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