

The church – the alive with Christ

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Louis XV, also known as Louis the Beloved, became King of France at the age of five. He was born in 1710 and died in 1774. It is said that the extravagance, corruption, immorality and inefficiency of his court ruined the treasury and prepared the country for the French Revolution that began in 1789.

One might conclude from the corruption of his court that the king cared little about the consequences of his decadence, but that was not the case. He had a conscience, and the spectre of his own death must have reminded him of his debt to morality.¹ History tells us that Louis XV ordained and ordered that death was never to be spoken of in his presence. Nothing that could in any way remind him of death was to be mentioned or displayed. He sought to avoid every place, sign and monument that in any way suggested death.²

Louis XV was in denial. He was like many others of this world who live in moral and spiritual darkness. Some of these fear death. A few don't, even though in large part they are already spiritually dead. Although it is likely unknown to them it is the latter death that poses the greater risk. Matthew in his gospel comments on the spiritual condition of death when he wrote about the travels of Jesus,

Matthew 4:12 Now when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee; 13 and leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. 14 This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: 15 “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles— 16 “The people who were sitting in darkness saw a great Light, And those who were sitting in the land and shadow of death, Upon them a Light dawned.” 17 From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

- They were sitting “...in the land and shadow of death.”
- See also, Luke 1:67-80

Legally dead.

It happened once to a man named Donald Eugene Miller who was a resident of Hancock County, Ohio, that a court declared him legally dead. This ruling came eight years after he disappeared from his rental home. Miller was 61 years old when a court

¹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. Vol. 1, p. 315). New York: United Bible Societies. φόβος^a, ου m: a state of severe distress, aroused by intense concern for impending pain, danger, evil, etc., or possibly by the illusion of such circumstances—‘fear.’ ἔνοχος^c, ov: pertaining to being subject to the control of someone or of some institution—‘controlled by, under the control of, subject to.’ ὅσοι φόβῳ θανάτου διὰ παντὸς τοῦ ζῆν ἔνοχοι ἦσαν δουλείας ‘as many as were subject to slavery because of the fear of death throughout all their lives’ He 2:15. In this context one may render ἔνοχοι ἦσαν δουλείας as ‘slaves’ and then render the whole expression as ‘as many as were slaves all their lives because of their fear of death’ or ‘... because they were afraid to die.’

² C. E. McCartney, *Death*, p 85.

upheld the earlier court's ruling, but even though alive, as far as the flesh was concerned, he lost his Social Security number and his driver's license. A dead man can have neither. Despite the obvious fact that Miller maintained his bodily existence, it did not matter to the judge who ruled that in the eyes of the law Miller was a dead man.

Former condition

No doubt it would come as a shock to someone to learn that the court had declared them dead. Nevertheless, that is the actual spiritual condition of anyone who is not in Christ. They are dead in sin, and dead to God. And of those who do not realize their condition now all of them will surely find out about it later; that is, when they stand before God for the final reckoning. It will likely come as a surprise, but the Lord regards those who are not His to be dead.

The Apostle Paul wrote about the condition to the Ephesians,

Ephesians 2:1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.³

And Jesus alluded to the condition in a statement he made to His disciple,

Matthew 8:21 Another of the disciples said to Him, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." 22 But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and allow the dead to bury their own dead."

- He admonished him to let the spiritually dead bury the physically dead. Service to Him is more important.

"You were dead in your transgressions" is a Jewish manner of speech; its force is illustrated by a Midrash (Jewish commentary) on Eccl. 9:5 which speaks of 'the wicked who even in their lifetime are called dead'. Those bound in sin are doomed to death, and so already belong to its realm; the very thing they think of as 'life' is but a foretaste of death, because it is without God.

The Greek word *nekrous* in verse 1 of Eph. 2, therefore, means spiritually dead, and what has been said of the power of God in Christ's case is now applied to the case of the Ephesians readers themselves. The power that raised Christ from the dead and exalted Him to Heaven is also the power that took the Ephesians out of the state of spiritual death and gave them a new life and a new dignity with Christ.⁴

³ Verse 1 - *paraptoma* -- points to sin as a fall (trespasses, a deviation from uprightness and truth) "**in your trespasses and sins**" i.e., **in your trespasses (*paraptoma*) and sin (*hamartais*)**; *hamartia* -- is sin as a failure (sins) *No clear distinction in the plural*.

⁴ Ephesians 2:1-6.

Death is a separation ⁵

When the Roman Emperor Valens⁶ sent messengers to lure Eusebius into heresy by fair words and glowing promises, Eusebius answered them: “Alas, sirs, these speeches are fit to catch children; but we, who are taught and nourished by the Sacred Scriptures, are ready to suffer a thousand deaths, rather than permit one tittle of the Scriptures to be altered.”

Then the emperor threatened to take by force all his goods, to torture him, banish him, and even kill him. Eusebius answered:

“He needs not fear confiscation, who has nothing to lose; nor banishment, to whom heaven is his country; nor torments, when his body can be destroyed at one blow; nor death, which is the only way to set him at liberty from sin and sorrow.” ⁷

The emperor would have banished Eusebius from the Roman Empire, but to Eusebius the Emperor words were not a threat. Eusebius gloried in the separation. But the idea of separation is basic to the meaning of “death” in the scriptures. As in the case of Adam who was banished from the presence of God for his sin. God drove him out of the Garden of Eden and into the land of shadow and of death. True to the law of God which said, “In the day you eat of it you shall surely die,” Adam died by being banished from the garden and separated from God. The first man was then considered dead, dead to God and dead to paradise.⁸

The Ephesians formerly lived a worldly life, a life in death as it were. Paul says that they were dead in their trespasses and sins,

Ephesians 2:2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

⁵ The idea of separation is basic to the meaning of the word “death” (Greek: *thanatos*) Thus Paul could say of Christians that “we died to sin” (6:2), meaning that they have been set free or separated from the power of sin that once dominated their lives as unbelievers. Paul used the word “death” with reference to both physical and spiritual realities when he described “the wages of sin” as death (6:23). Spiritual death is a condition of separation from God: “The mind of sinful man is death” (8:6). It is the present state of non-Christians which if unchanged ends in eternal death, a final separation from God. A life controlled by sin “leads to death” (6:16). Because all people are children of Adam, all begin life under the dominion of death (5:14).⁵

⁶ *Flavius Julius Valens Augustus*, Eastern Roman Emperor from 364 AD to 378 AD.

⁷ Tan, P. L. (1996). *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times* (p. 994). Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc.

⁸ **θάνατος, ἀθάνατος** [*thanatos* /**than**-at-os/] n m. From 2348; TDNT 3:7; TDNTA 312; GK 2505 and together with Strong's 1 as GK 115; 119 occurrences; AV translates as “death” 117 times, and “deadly” twice. **1** the death of the body. 1a that separation (whether natural or violent) of the soul and the body by which the life on earth is ended. 1b with the implied idea of future misery in hell. 1b1 the power of death. 1c since the nether world, the abode of the dead, was conceived as being very dark, it is equivalent to the region of thickest darkness i.e. figuratively, a region enveloped in the darkness of ignorance and sin. **2** metaph., the loss of that life which alone is worthy of the name,. 2a the misery of the soul arising from sin, which begins on earth but lasts and increases after the death of the body in hell. **3** the miserable state of the wicked dead in hell. **4** in the widest sense, death comprising all the miseries arising from sin, as well physical death as the loss of a life consecrated to God and blessed in him on earth, to be followed by wretchedness in hell.

- The “course of this world” is the world-period (an age)—the world as transitory; the spirit of the age.⁹
- The phrase conveys the three ideas of tenor, development, and limited continuance. The course of the world is evil; the world is evil, and to live in accordance with it is to live in trespasses and sins. One of the companions of Paul surrendered to the lure of the spirit of the age in which he lived. The Apostle wrote, “Demas having loved the present world (aeon), has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica.”¹⁰

One has to wonder what was so appealing to Demas that he abandoned his part in the Kingdom of God to enjoy the pleasures of Thessalonica for a season.

If we consider our personal experience when the world around us governed our own course of life it seemed only natural, and inevitable and proper at the time, but that hidden impulse that seemed to be only natural and inevitable and proper was actually Satan, himself—the prince of the power of the air. Satan is the controlling force in the course of this world.

The Apostle then used a phrase telling where the spirit of the age is now working. He called the people affected the, “...sons of disobedience.” This means that their disobedience characterizes them. These people are not merely in a state of unbelief, but are in obstinate opposition to the Divine Will.¹¹

The Jews also were sinners

Ephesians 2:3 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.

Paul used a Hebrew idiom to describe human nature and does not separate the Jew from the Gentile in his description of the human condition. Further, as indicated by the context of Ephesians 1 and 2, the Apostle spoke of God as putting together both Jew and Gentile in Christ and making a new man. The “we too” of verse 3 (above) refers to the Jews, who believed that salvation would be accorded to them merely because they were lineal descendents of Abraham, but Paul rejects that idea labeling the Jews also “children by nature of wrath” just like the Gentiles (the rest).¹²

⁹ The **kosmou** is the world as the objective system of things, and that as evil. The **aeon** is the world as a world-period (an age)—the world as transitory. In such a connection as the present, comes near what we understand by “the spirit of the age,” but is perhaps better rendered “course” as that word.

¹⁰ 2 Tim. 4:10.

¹¹ *Tois uiiois tes apeitheias*- sons of disobedience. *huiois*- It is often used metaphorically of prominent moral characteristics. “The Lord Jesus used *huiois* in a very significant way, as in Matt. 5:9, ‘Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God,’ and vv. 44, 45, ‘Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be (become) sons of your Father which is in heaven.’ The disciples were to do these things, not in order that they might become children of God, but that, being children (note ‘your Father’ throughout), they might make the fact manifest in their character, might ‘become sons.’ See also 2 Cor. 6:17, 18.

¹² *we were, in our natural condition* (as descendants of Adam), *children of wrath* Eph 2:3 *phusei: nature*. 1. *natural endowment or condition*, inherited fr. one’s ancestors. *orges: anger, indignation, wrath*, of God’s future judgment, Men are *by nature children of wrath*, i.e. subject to divine wrath Eph 2:3.

Because of the Fall, man lost the guidance of God and came under the spiritual domination of Satan. Because Satan has ruled man so long his rule is now unrecognized and is considered “natural,” or, “human nature.” However, even though mighty spiritual forces of wickedness are in control of the natural man, this is not an excuse for bad behavior. Moreover, if it weren’t for the grace of God—His love and restraint—we would perish in the spiritual catastrophe. As Paul wrote to the Romans,

A mind set on the flesh is death

Romans 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, 7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so; 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

- The mind set on the flesh is death.
- The mind set on the spirit is life.
- The mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God.
- The mind set on the flesh does not subject itself to the law of God.
- The mind set on the flesh is **not even able** to subject itself to the law of God.
- Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.
- These are conditions outside the power of man to remedy.

The rebirth—made alive together with Christ.

The rescue of man from the death which is the consequence of his sin is not merely a continuance of his bodily existence. The reclamation is much greater; it is equivalent to a renewal, a rebirth. This idea stands out prominently in the interview Nicodemus had with Jesus.

John 3:1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; 2 this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” 3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” 4 Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?” 5 Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 “Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’

In answer to Nicodemus’s suggestion—that Jesus was working signs that were obviously from God—Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Nicodemus thought he had seen evidence of the kingdom of God in the miracles. But Jesus said, “You have to be born again¹³ to see the kingdom of God.” In another statement to the Pharisees Jesus said,

Luke 17:20 Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; 21 nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or, ‘There it is!’ For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst.”

The phrase “in your midst” may also be read as, “within you,” as in “the kingdom of God is within you.” This makes much more sense when we realize that Jews in Jesus’ day used the phrase “kingdom of God” to refer to **the rule of God**. In this connection Edersheim wrote,

A review of many passages on the subject shows that, in the Jewish mind, the expression ‘Kingdom of Heaven’ referred, not so much to any particular period, as in general to the Rule of God—as acknowledged, manifested, and eventually perfected.¹⁴

And,

According to the Rabbinic views of the time, the terms ‘Kingdom,’ ‘Kingdom of heaven,’ and ‘Kingdom of God’ (in the Targum on Micah 4:7 ‘Kingdom of Jehovah’), were equivalent. In fact, the word ‘heaven’ was very often used instead of ‘God,’ so as to avoid unduly familiarising the ear with the Sacred Name.¹⁵

Similarly, the tradition continues today where some Jewish writers spell the word “God” as “G-d.” In the same spirit the ancient name YHWH was considered too sacred to pronounce; so *’adōnāy* (‘my Lord’) was substituted in reading, and the vowels of this word were combined with the consonants YHWH to give ‘Jehovah’, a form first attested at the start of the 12th century AD.¹⁶

Also, the phrase “born again” had a dual meaning, and may also be read as, “born from above.”¹⁷ However, Nicodemus understood Jesus’ statement as meaning ‘again.’¹⁸

¹⁹ In that day the Jewish people also referred to proselytes as people who were born

¹³ 41.53 γεννάω ἄνωθεν (an idiom, literally ‘to be born again’); παλιγγενεσία, ας f: to experience a complete change in one’s way of life to what it should be, with the implication of return to a former state or relation—‘to be born again, to experience new birth, rebirth.’

¹⁴ Edersheim, A. (1896). *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Vol. 1, p. 267). New York: Longmans, Green, and Co.

¹⁵ Ibid., Edersheim, A., Vol. 1, pp. 266–267.

¹⁶ Manley, G. T., & Bruce, F. F. (1996). *God, Names of*. In D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer, & D. J. Wiseman (Eds.), *New Bible dictionary* (3rd ed., p. 421). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

¹⁷ It is also possible to understand ἄνωθεν in Jn 3:3 as meaning ‘from above’ or ‘from God’ (see 84.13), a literary parallel to the phrase ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν in Jn 1:13. In Jn 3:3,

¹⁸ (see 67.55) and γεννάω as ‘physical birth’ (see 23.52)

¹⁹ Παλιγγενεσία: διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως ‘new birth and new life by washing’ tt 3:5. The metaphor of ‘new birth’ is so important in the NT that it should be retained if at all possible. In some languages ‘new birth’ can be expressed as ‘to cause to be born all over again’ or ‘to have a new life as though one were born a second time.’ see also 13.55. Louw, j. P., & Nida, e. A. (1996).

again. This involved receiving baptism, but the waters of baptism were to the proselyte little more than a bath of regeneration. As Edersheim wrote,

The waters of baptism were to him in very truth, though in a far different from the Christian sense, the ‘bath of regeneration’ (Titus 3:5). As he stepped out of these waters he was considered as ‘born anew’—in the language of the Rabbis, as if he were ‘a little child just born’ (Yeb. 22 *a*; 48 *b*; 97 *b*), as ‘a child of one day’ (Mass. Ger. 100. 2.). But this new birth was not ‘a birth from above’ in the sense of moral or spiritual renovation, but only as implying a new relationship to God, to Israel, and to his own past, present, and future.²⁰

Nicodemus would have had difficulty picturing himself as a “proselyte” of the Kingdom of God. He would have thought that he had already taken upon himself the yoke of the kingdom.

Yet, Jesus told Nicodemus that he would have to undergo a complete change in his inner man or he would not be able to see the kingdom of God. But Nicodemus was a Pharisee, and Pharisees thought they were already qualified to see the kingdom. Nor would he have thought that he needed repentance to enter it. The Pharisees would not receive the baptism of John because they thought it would be a humiliating experience for one such as they—someone who was already righteous. To a Pharisee, the statement of Jesus presented an impossible condition. They thought their manner of life prepared them for the kingdom of God.

It was a superficial view.

In the song “Mansions over the hilltop” there is a line in it that reads:

‘I’m satisfied with just a cottage below, a little silver and a little gold; but in that city where the ransomed will shine; I want a gold one that’s silver lined.’

One’s interpretation of the meaning of this song will depend upon the person’s mindset: if you are thinking in a superficial way, a materialistic way, you will expect a literal mansion of gold and silver; but if you are thinking spiritually you will be thinking of a spiritual body much superior to the fleshly body you have now.

So, in the case of Nicodemus, his mindset [as a Pharisee, a lawyer, a member of the great Sanhedrin,] did not prepare him to perceive the spiritual truth about which Jesus spoke to him. And so it is with everyone who wishes to see the kingdom of God—not just Pharisees; they must be born again. That rebirth is **a coming to life again**, much like a resurrection. In fact, Paul refers to the idea in his treatment of what transpires in Christian baptism.²¹

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? 2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised

*** in the sense of John 3:3 and Luke 17:20, to see the kingdom one must undergo the rebirth, i.e., be born again. DLS.

²⁰ Ibid., Edersheim, A., Vol. 2, p. 746.

²¹ Romans 6:1-11.

from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

That “newness of life,” the birth, or regeneration, comes from above.

Titus 3:5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

The former condition of the Christian was spiritual death.

People seldom consider the greatness of the miracle that God performed in the raising of Christ from the dead. We may glimpse the extent of it when we realize that the entire human race lay in spiritual death, but God, in Christ, raised all of the believers in Christ from the dead.

Colossians 2:13 When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,

- God made the Colossians (and all believers) alive with Christ.
- Being made alive accompanies forgiveness of sins.
- “Dead” is used figuratively here of the condition of the person (the sinner) before they became a Christian.

The return to life may be seen in the story of the Prodigal Son. After he is forced to see the error of his reckless and profligate life the prodigal decides to return to his father and plead for mercy,

Luke 15:20 “So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. 21 “And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ 22 “But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; 23 and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.’ And they began to celebrate.

His father said of him when he returned that “...this son of mine was dead (*nekros*) and has come to life again, he was lost and has been found. **Luke 15:24**. As it was with the Prodigal Son so it is with worldly people who live in sin. The Father considers them dead, but He is willing to welcome them back to life.

The alive in Christ

The resurrection of Christ was the act of God’s power whereby He raised not only Christ but the church as well. Paul wrote,

Ephesians 2:5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

- God “...raised us up with Him...”

It is frequently true of soldiers who go into battle that they count themselves as already dead—in order to bear up under the strain of combat. A strange corollary to that method of thought stands in the Viet Nam Veteran’s Memorial in Washington, D. C.

The memorial is striking for its simplicity. Etched in the black granite wall are the names of 58,156 Americans who died in that war. Since its opening in 1982, the monument has stirred deep emotions. Some visitors walk its length, slowly, reverently and without pause. Others stop before certain names, remembering a son, a brother or a fellow soldier. Some wipe away tears as they trace the name with a finger. But there are three veterans—Robert Bedker, Willard Craig, and Darrall Lausch—for whom a visit to the memorial is especially poignant. They can walk up to the ebony wall and find their own names carved in stone. They were mistakenly listed as killed in action. These three are listed as dead, but are alive. Alive from among the dead.

This in some ways is a description of the Christian. He was once considered dead, but now is alive.

Ephesians 2:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

The dark picture that Paul painted of the condition of both Jew and Gentile—under the dominion of Satan—is now used as the background against which God’s riches and mercy are shown.

The “you” and the “we” give way to “But God...”

Under the conditions that now prevail upon man it is only the intervention of God that can turn aside the evil course of man’s life from inevitable disaster. The sole motivation of God was His love—and He was rich in mercy. He was not motivated by something man did or does, but only by His great love.²²

The new life is in Christ Jesus.

That renewal to life is in Christ, and is offered freely to those who would abandon the life of the world.

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? 2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; 7 for he who has died is freed from sin. 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death

²² See John 3:16. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...”

no longer is master over Him. 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. 11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

- God extends His grace to all sinners, telling them to abandon sin and return to Him where they may live.
- Christ has already died to pay the penalty for their sin and to release them from bondage to Satan.
- In Christ they would be dead to sin, but alive to God.

God gives life through His Spirit.

Romans 8:9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. 10 If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. 12 So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

- God gives life through His eternal Spirit.
- If you live according to the flesh you must die.
- If you live by the Spirit...you will truly live.

From being dead to being alive in Christ

On the Friday before the Passover that occurred during the governorship of Pontius Pilate a Roman Centurion reported to the governor that Jesus of Nazareth had died on the cross at Golgotha. Pilate then granted the body of Jesus to Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Great Sanhedrin. Joseph, accompanied by Nicodemus, another ruler of the Jews, removed the dead body of Jesus from the cross, bound it in linen wrappings, along with spices which Nicodemus had brought, and then took the body to the tomb for burial. Having buried Jesus they rolled a great stone before the entrance to the tomb and went away. Thus they consigned the body of Jesus to a new and otherwise empty tomb where he reclined in death.

But on the third day following God raised Jesus from the dead. Paul wrote what God did in that death,

Colossians 2:11 and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; 12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. 13 When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions...

- God makes the Christian “alive” with Christ.

- The circumcision of the Jews was a sign of the covenant they had with God.
- It implied that they were keepers of the Law of God.
- In Christ the circumcision is total.
- Baptism signifies the death of the old self (through faith in Christ) and then the rising in the new life in Christ.

This happened through the power of God—”He made you alive with Him” when “you,” the Gentile, were still dead in transgressions and the moral condition in which your corrupt desires still operated.

Ephesians 2:6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

The experiences of Christ are to be the experiences of the Christian—rising from the dead.

The Christian is a member of that chosen assembly, the church, and has been brought back from among the dead to enjoy a new life in Christ.