

Living on the Right Side of the Cross: Understanding True Christian Freedom

Many people try to live in both worlds - enjoying the benefits of faith while still holding onto their old ways. But the cross of Christ represents a place of separation, dividing two completely different worlds. Once we understand this truth, we must decide which side of Calvary we want to live on.

The Problem with Trying to Have Both Worlds

When first coming to faith, it's tempting to think we can maintain our old lifestyle while adding Jesus to the mix. This approach might provide some fulfillment, but it's ultimately frustrating and incomplete. The cross demands a choice - we cannot truly follow Christ while keeping one foot in our former way of living.

A concerning statistic reveals that 47-58% of self-identified evangelicals believe God accepts the worship of all religions. This belief fundamentally disrespects the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. When we claim there are many ways to God, we diminish the significance of Christ's sacrifice.

What Does Redemption Really Mean?

Redemption is the action of saving or being saved from sin, error, or evil. It's about regaining possession of something through payment or clearing a debt. Jesus redeemed us by purchasing us back from sin's bondage and restoring our relationship with God.

We must understand that God has chosen each of us, even when we were dead in our sins. This knowledge of being chosen is essential to our self-esteem and spiritual foundation. However, God has given us free will, and what we do with His choice matters greatly.

What It Means to Belong to Christ

Galatians 5:24 tells us that "those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." If we belong to Christ, we must begin walking in godliness and holiness. As Christians, we are not just followers but property of Jesus Christ - we've been bought with a price.

This transformation is a process. Just like learning any new skill, becoming proficient at following Christ takes time. We must learn the rhythm of walking with God, talking with Him, and following Him to the best of our ability.

The Great Exchange: Jesus' Life for Ours

Jesus set us free to become slaves to God. This represents the great exchange - Jesus gave His perfect life for our imperfect ones. From a human perspective, this wasn't a fair trade. Jesus, who walked in power and perfection, was willingly traded by God for us.

Sin held us hostage, and we were bound up, unable to get free. Jesus came not as a negotiator but as our redeemer. He dealt with the situation once and for all, purchasing us back from Satan's power.

Understanding What Jesus Destroyed

Jesus did not destroy sin itself - sin still exists around us. The snares, traps, and temptations that lead us down wrong paths are still present in this fallen world. However, Jesus destroyed the power of sin over our lives.

We no longer have to bow our knee to sin's power or let it control us. Through the power of Christ's blood, we inherited freedom. We do not have to be slaves to destructive patterns anymore.

The Key to Victory: Consider Yourself Dead to Sin

Romans 6:11 provides a crucial key to living victoriously: "Consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus." The word "consider" or "reckon" represents a mindset - a way of thinking that changes everything.

Instead of constantly trying to overcome sin through willpower, we must adopt the mindset of someone who is already dead to sin. This is the mindset of a winner, an overcomer in Christ. We know Jesus paid the price, and sin is dead to us, even when we might feel its draw occasionally.

The Power of Identification with Christ

Galatians 2:20 reveals a profound truth about our identity in Christ. Paul declares, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." This passage teaches us about spiritual order through several key concepts:

Substitution

Jesus took our place. This isn't just a generic truth about humanity - it must become personal. He took my place specifically.

Identification

Not only did Jesus die for us, but we died with Him. By faith, we identify with His death, and our old ego-driven life loses its power over us.

Separation

We've been called out of the old and into the new. The key isn't about quitting things but about submitting our will to His. When we submit to God, He provides the power, and we don't have to perform in our own strength.

Impartation

Christ lives in us and wants to live through us by the Holy Spirit. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, and separation from worldly things enhances our ability to receive God's impartation and hear His leading.

Developing the Right Heart's Desire

We need to approach our relationship with God with fresh eyes, free from preconceived ideas that might limit our understanding. Sometimes past experiences or misconceptions prevent us from seeing God's truth clearly.

The goal is to train our thinking from "got to" to "want to." We don't serve God out of obligation but because we want to pray, praise, serve, and give. When our heart's desire aligns with God's will, transformation becomes natural rather than forced.

Life Application

The cross of Christ isn't just a symbol to wear around your neck - it's a tool to break the power of sin in your life. This week, identify areas where sin still seems to have influence over you. Instead of trying harder to overcome these areas through willpower, practice "considering yourself dead" to them.

Start each day by declaring your identity in Christ. Remind yourself that you have been crucified with Christ, and it's no longer you who lives, but Christ who lives in you. When temptation comes, respond from this position of victory rather than struggle.

If you don't feel a strong desire to draw closer to God, begin by praying for that desire. Ask God to give you a heart that wants more of Him. This is a prayer He delights to answer.

Questions for Reflection:

- Am I trying to live in both worlds, or have I fully committed to life on the resurrection side of the cross?
- What areas of my life do I need to "consider dead" to sin's power?
- Do I serve God out of obligation or genuine desire?
- What preconceived ideas about God might be limiting my spiritual growth?
- How can I practically use the cross as a tool for freedom rather than just a religious symbol?