

When Living Means Christ (Identifiers of the Christian Life - Part 2)

For Paul, living means Christ. Christ is not part of His life, not even the most important part of His life - Christ **IS** his life! (Acts 17:28) It is very personal - from a Person through a person to other persons. It is very participatory - not anticipatory.

Last month we saw that by God's grace and peace we are given a new identity. We are what God says, what He has made us to be. We are holy - "saints" (1:2) and we are hopeful - "confident" (1:6). This month, we will carry on with two more identifiers (by God's "say so").

The Christian life is also a LOVING LIFE (1:8-10). Living in Christ means living in love (I Jo 4:7-11). We are not loved for any reason of our own (see Deut 7:7-8). God's love needs no "because"! He is eternal love - infinite and limitless, undying and unending. His love is at the core of who we are, why we are, and all we do as Christians. It is at the core of knowledge and discernment (Phil 1:9-10), at the core of revelation (Jo 14:21), at the core of maturity (I Cor 13), at the core of unity in the Body (Eph 4:2-3), at the core of evangelism (Jo 13:34-35) - to name only a few. God's holy passion for oneness compelled Him to move in our direction of need to do for us what we could not do for ourselves. We call that grace! God's perfect love is always for us, always with us, ever ready to flow through us. In such a being-loved position, we have peace - peace with God, the peace of God, and all we need to seek peace with others. We are now beings for others (I Jo 4:7-8). We will never again be at peace living for ourselves - it's not who we are.

The Christian life is also a FRUITFUL LIFE (1:11). Living in Christ means fruitfulness. In union with the Vine of Life (Jo 15:5), we bear, we give expression to the fruit of His Life. In the New Testament, fruit are divine doings in human beings. We do not generate or produce the fruit, we give it visible expression as we trust and abide in Christ. How did we get all this fruitfulness? By grace! ("...which comes through Jesus Christ..." [1:11]) We are not fruitful because we try hard to be fruitful, but because we trust Him to provide what we cannot produce - "I am willing for you to be Yourself, to show Your character in and through me." One of the results is peace! As we cooperate with His operation, join our wills to His, we discover that we were made for this, made for righteousness, for His righteousness. We realize and rest in the reality that only the "righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ." results in the glory and praise of God" (1:11). And when living means Christ, isn't that what it's all about - glorifying and praising our God?



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BITS AND PIECES

A few years back I was telling a group of our students at CCF that I was headed to Binghamton, NY for a conference. I mentioned, counting the spring and fall meetings in this area, it would be about my 42nd or 43rd time of being with them. To which one of them said, "And they still haven't got it?"

I guess if they hadn't gotten it by then, I wouldn't be asked to come back! Some of us meet together because we do "get it." The story of "Christ in you, the hope of glory" is as much fun to tell and to celebrate the 45th or 50th time as the first.

Some of our gatherings in New York or Texas or Kentucky are like family reunions - we swap pictures, celebrate milestones, and weep with one another's heartaches. Some of them, like most recently in Bar Harbor, ME are with a lot of "first timers" - first time to meet, first time to hear the proclamation of Christ our Life.

Whether the first or the fiftieth, we are delighted to have the opportunity to share life with you in your churches, your retreats, your homes and in your hearts. Thanks for being on the journey with us and for making the journey possible with others.

One In Christ, Inc.
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

CALENDAR


SEPTEMBER


1,8,22	CCF
10	Alachua Study
13-20	Almont, CO
24	Ocala Study
26-29	Binghamton, NY (607-625-4612)


NOVEMBER


1-2	Sebring, FL (863-382-6265)
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 *Long time and brand new friends*

 *The story that never grows old*

 *To live out of our true identities*

 *The spread of the truth of the gospel*

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