

Truths God Expects Us to Know and Practice(1)

The Believer's Identification with Jesus Christ

Introduction

- A. Truth, in the Bible, is never considered to be a neutral entity. Truth is a person. This means that knowing and practicing the truth is always related to living in fellowship with God.
- B. There is also an inseparable relationship between the practice of the truth and the experience of the grace of God. While every believer has all the legal provision of the grace of God -- the experience of that grace with all its joy, power, and fruitfulness -- is known only by those who have learned to practice the truth in the obedience of faith, love and hope.
- C. God expects us to practice the truth He has revealed to us.

I. The Biblical Context Regarding our Identification with Jesus Christ.

A. Summary.

Our sin against God was so great and the effects of sin are so devastating it is impossible for any person to gain acceptance with God through good works. The gospel message is that Jesus Christ came into the world, took upon Himself our nature, and chose to represent us before God. As our Representative He lived, died, arose, ascended, and sent the Holy Spirit. All believers are identified in His representative work. The value of His work is ascribed to every believer.

B. Scripture.

1. Isaiah 53:4-6
2. Ephesians 2:1-10
3. Colossians 2:9-15
4. Colossians 3:1-4

II. The Biblical Exposition Regarding Our Identification with Jesus Christ.

A. The Background -- Justification by Faith.

Jesus Christ met every demand of the nature of God and His law that we have brought upon ourselves through our sin. When we, by divine grace, are bought to the place of faith -- all the value of that redeeming work is imputed to us. The Bible describes the believer as being "justified" i.e. completely righteous before God. Romans 5:1

B. The Occasion -- The Question and Answer. Romans 6:1,2

Paul raises the question many will ask. "If we need not work for salvation, and if grace is a free gift, then why not sin?"

The answer: The question is due to a misunderstanding of the grace of God. In salvation the believer is united to Jesus Christ and transformed through the work of redemption. Such a person cannot practice known sin. Romans 6:1-10; I John 2:3-5; 3:9

C. The Explanation -- The Believer Died and was Resurrected in Christ.

1. All believers died with Jesus Christ in His death.

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? ... Knowing this, that our old man (all we were before salvation) is crucified with him, that the body of sin (how sin manifests itself) might be destroyed (paralyzed), that henceforth we should not serve sin. Romans 6:3,6

Comment: Because we died in Jesus Christ to sin -- we have been set free from its guilt and bondage. When we neglect our spiritual progress or choose to sin -- we are violating what it means to be a Christian -- a very serious sin.

2. All believers were resurrected in Jesus Christ.

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Romans 6:4

Comment: The believer not only has the power of the Crucifixion in his life for cleansing -- he has the power of the Resurrection in his life for enablement to live above sin. We have the ability to do the will of God.

3. All believers are responsible to live in harmony with the Crucifixion and Resurrection.

- a. We must choose by faith to practice our redemption.

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 6:11

- b. We must choose not to allow sin to reign in our life.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Romans 6:12

- c. We must choose to trust God in such a way of life.

Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God ... Romans 6:13