

Christ Our Life

Through Christ

A number of years ago several polling organizations such as gallop, Pew and Barna Research, took a survey of the effects of religion in the lives of Americans. As of 2016 about 73% of Americans expressed a belief in Christianity. Although a smaller percentage actually attended church on a regular basis.

But now, here is where the survey gets interesting. Most of those claiming to be Christian said they saw no difference between how they lived their lives compared with their no-believing friends and associates. Their Christian faith made no real difference in their day to day lives. When confronted with conflicts and problems, when doing business, working on a relationship, raising a family, when dealing with all the affairs of life, these people had the same attitudes, feelings, anxieties, fears, hopes and priorities as non-believers.

This is tragic. But here is the good news. The study found that Christians who went to church, read their Bibles and prayed, were happier, more joyful, less stressed and gave and served more. They still faced all of the ups and downs and struggles of life. But they lived differently, because their minds and hearts were transformed by the Word of God.¹

Their thoughts and attitudes and actions were shaped by their understanding of Scripture and therefore they were able to rise above the turmoil. They were certain that God and Christ were an active part of their lives. Life simply cannot be lived above the level of mediocrity without spiritual power. As believers we need to learn that life is lived victoriously when it is lived with the resources we receive from God "through" Jesus Christ. Here is what our Lord said,

Then Jesus said to them again,
"Most assuredly, I say to you,
I am the door of the sheep.
⁸All who ever came before Me
are thieves and robbers, but the
sheep did not hear them. ⁹I am
the door. If anyone enters by Me,
he will be saved, and will go in
and out and find pasture. ¹⁰The

¹ Romans 12:1, 2

thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.
(John 10:7-10)

Jesus is telling us that he is the one entrance through which we can enter the rich pasture land and protection of God's goodness. The way to God's blessings, His wisdom, power, love, care and insight into life is **through** Christ. The word translated "by" in verse 9 (if anyone enters by Me) is the Greek preposition dia. And it would be more accurate to translate this word as "through." Christ is the means or agency through which the blessings of God become ours. Just as electricity flows through a wire to bring power to a light bulb, so all the resources of God become ours through Christ.

Now, many people are troubled when they hear this. They ask, "Why can't I go to God on my own? Why do I need an intermediary, like Christ?" Here is the answer: as good as we think we are, we all fall short of the glory of God.² We are not holy and righteous as He is. Even if we have never committed an unseemly, gross sin, none of us have loved God with all our heart or our neighbor as ourselves. And it is sin that separates us from God.

Therefore, God has worked through intermediaries. In the Old Testament it was usually through angels. It was angels that actually gave the law to Moses.³ And it was the angel of the LORD (or Yahweh) that often spoke for God in the first person.⁴ But in the New Testament we have this all-important statement in 1 Timothy, "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus."⁵

Adam had full and free access to God before he sinned. And Jesus had and has full access to God, because he is without sin. Therefore, when we read "through Christ" we need to think access to God, not an obstacle between us and God. Through Christ we are brought close to God and He close to us. In fact 1 Peter 3:18 tells us that "Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." So, let's begin to see this truth from two sections of Scripture. The first is from Romans 5 and the second from Hebrews 10.

Therefore, having been justified

² Romans 3:23

³ Acts 7:35

⁴ Genesis 22:11-15

⁵ 1 Timothy 2:5

by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
(Romans 5:1, 2)

Romans 5 lists several blessings that belong to us through Christ. First and foremost, through our Lord Jesus Christ we have peace with God! To be at peace with God is to live in a harmonious relationship with Him that brings rest and contentment to our hearts. What trouble can the world throw at you that could bring you great anxiety, knowing you have peace with God? In Philippians 4, we read,

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4:6, 7)

We can cast all our cares upon God, because He cares for us, because we are at peace with Him through Christ!

In this peace we are justified, our past is washed clean. It is a peace that will never be disturbed by another sin for we are righteous in Christ. In this peace we are never separated from God's love and kindness. Through our Lord Jesus Christ we have entered into a relationship with God that cannot be shaken for we stand in grace.

Through Christ we have access and are secure in God's unlimited grace. All of His wisdom, goodness, love and care are ours, no strings attached. We can come boldly to a throne of grace to receive whatever help we may need for all of life.⁶ Standing in our Father's grace through Christ we can receive strength to obey His Word, to overcome temptations and to forgive others and to be kind. How sad it is when Christians don't believe or know that their faith can make a huge difference in how they live.

Romans 2 continues telling us that through Christ we also "rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." What does this mean? The glory of God is the full

⁶ Hebrews 4:14-16

expression of all that God is. It is all of His love, holiness, goodness, kindness and power on display. One day the full glory of God will be revealed, and we will rejoice in Him. And this glory will also be revealed in us! The apostle John wrote,

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ²Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.
(1 John 3:1-3)

And Romans 8:18 declares,

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be *compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

One day we will see the great glory of God and rejoice in it and that glory will be seen in us. We can therefore live our lives with joy and peace no matter what we may face, because of our certain hope of glory. Not everyone faces an eternity of glory, however. Some people will face the wrath of God against sin. But through Jesus Christ we have been saved from this coming wrath.

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. ¹⁰For if when

we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. ¹¹ And not only *that*, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.
(Romans 5:6-11)

Five times in these verses from Romans the apostle repeats the preposition “through” in relation to Christ. It is through Christ that we are reconciled to God. It is through Christ that we have peace with God. It is through Christ that we have access to and stand in God's grace. It is through Christ that we are saved from wrath. And it is through Christ that we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

Jesus Christ is the doorway through which we enter into the full and rich pasture land of God's goodness. When you know that you have access to God and all His power, love and grace through Christ, it affects how you think, feel and behave. Let's now turn to the letter to the Hebrews. It is in this letter that we have a comparison between the effectiveness of the Old Testament sacrifices for sin and the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, when He came into the world, He said:

“Sacrifice and offering You did not desire,
But a body You have prepared for Me.
⁶In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin
You had no pleasure.
⁷Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—
In the volume of the book it is written of Me—
To do Your will, O God.’”

⁸Previously saying, “Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and *offerings* for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure *in them*” (which are offered according to the law), (Hebrews 10:8-10)

The point here is that God never desired sacrifices from His people. He wanted them to be holy and to reflect His goodness. But of course, that never happened. So, the Old Testament sacrifices covered the sins people

committed. It was in a sense forgiveness on credit, because God knew the debt would be fully paid by Jesus Christ. Through Christ the debt for sin has been paid once and for all. And through Christ's offering we are sanctified forever. To be sanctified means that we are made holy. We are totally set apart from sin to love and serve God.

Someone explained to me once what our being sanctified means. Let's say that you have two sets of dishes. One is from the discount store and you use them every day. If one breaks, it's no big deal, you go and buy another. But then you have a sanctified set of dishes. They are an heirloom and precious, and you only use them on special occasions.

You are an heir of God and precious to Him. You are created in Christ to do good works. Being sanctified you are now holy and dedicated "wholly" unto God. Yes, we still sin at times and we should ask for forgiveness. But you are God's holy one, forever, through Christ. Remember that the next time life throws a trial at you. Continuing in Hebrews,

And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. ¹⁴ For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. (Hebrews 10:11-14)

In and through Christ we are sanctified and perfected forever in a judicial sense. We will never, ever come into condemnation before God because of our failures and sins. We can ask for forgiveness and be sorry for our sins, but we are being sanctified or set apart from sin for life and glory.

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, ²¹ and *having* a High Priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and

our bodies washed with pure water.
(Hebrews 10:19-22)

By or through the blood of Christ we can draw near to God with boldness and confidence. In the Old Testament, the “Holiest” was the inner, most sacred place in the temple, where the presence of God dwelt. And it could be entered only once a year on the Day of Atonement by the High Priest. If he entered in an unholy manner, without the blood of sacrifice, he would die.

Therefore, he entered cautiously and with fear. But we can approach the very throne room of God with boldness and confidence, in full assurance of faith through our High Priest, Jesus Christ. Knowing this should affect how we live our lives. It should affect how we pray and the things for which we pray. It should bring us joy and confidence.

Through Jesus Christ we have peace with God, we can draw near to Him, we have access to His grace, we rejoice in the hope of His glory, we are saved from wrath, we are sanctified and set apart for everlasting life and glory. In a world that is falling apart, we do not need to be frantic or frenzied. Romans 5:17 says that we who have received “abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.”

In both this age and the age to come we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.⁷ Let me end this chapter with a benediction and may it be fulfilled in all of our lives.

Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,²¹ make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.
(Hebrews 13:20, 21)

⁷ Romans 8:37

