

## TO LIVE IS CHRIST

### INTRODUCTION

Last week we learned that not only do we have the armour of God, but that He is that armour and we are victorious when we are hidden in Christ in heavenly places with all things under our feet.

It was the Apostle Paul who wrote about the armour of God, he also understood that our whole life as Christians is all about Jesus Christ. As you read through Paul's letters to the churches it becomes clear that he was singularly focused on Jesus, he was a man on a mission and his mission was to live for Christ and help others to do so too. Ephesians 1 is a great example, the words "in Christ, in Him, Him, Himself" and "He" appear 26 times. You can find similar examples exercise in other chapters of his letters. Jesus Christ was the central focus of his message.

Philippians 1:21a he wrote, "For me to live is Christ...". What a powerful statement!

To live is Christ". Do we really comprehend and understand what Paul meant when he said those words?

We can all experience this. Our Heavenly Father wants us to be in a relationship with Him where we ourselves will be able to say of our own lives, "For me, to live is Christ". If we can comprehend the depth of this powerful statement, I believe it will take our Christian walk to a whole new level!

### MESSAGE

Paul didn't start off as a man who loved Jesus Christ. He rejected Jesus and persecuted the early Christians, dragging them out of their homes and consenting to their deaths. He recalls this behavior when he says: **1 Timothy 1:15** (NKJV) This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

But Paul had an encounter with Jesus on the Damascus road that changed him completely. He met Jesus and everything changed, he would not, and he could not ever be the same.

We used to sing the Chorus, "*Oh what a change, oh what a change, Oh what a change in my life, I've got Jesus on the inside, living on the outside, bringing about a change in my life*".

This is what Paul experienced. His life was transformed into the new creation we read about about in **2 Corinthians 5:17**, the old was gone and Paul became a powerful example of the change that Jesus brings in a Believer's life.

**Today I want to ask you, have you had an encounter with Jesus that changed everything? Is it obvious for others to see?**

## **WHAT DO BIBLE SCHOLARS SAY ABOUT PAUL'S STATEMENT, TO LIVE IS CHRIST?**

I researched several Bible commentaries on Philippians 1:17.

### **Coffman's commentaries on the Bible**

*To live is Christ ... Salvation through Christ is, briefly stated, a sinner's denial of himself, renunciation of himself, and complete submission to the will of Christ, being **"baptized into"** Christ, thus being saved, not as himself, but as Christ.*

### **Peter Pett's commentary on the Bible:**

*These words in context have two parallel meanings arising out of the context. Unquestionably they include the thought that for Paul and for all true Christians the whole purpose of life is to be that they will be so filled with Christ that **they are Christ in the world**, both by life and message, letting Christ live through them They are to 'live Christ'. As he says in **Galatians 2:20**, 'I no longer live but Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God Who loved me and gave Himself for me'.*

*That this actually means '**Christ living in me**' is confirmed in John 14:23, where we read, 'if a man love me he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him'.*

*The plural 'we' is against the idea that this simply means that they are to receive the Holy Spirit. They are in fact to **receive all the fullness of the Godhead**, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*

### **C. J. Vaughan, Lectures on Philippians,**

*The business of my life is Christ; my energy, my activity, my occupation, my interest, is all Christ. St. Paul regarded everything that he had to do, and he regarded everything that befell him, only in relation to, in its bearing upon, Christ. **The words describe a condition widely different from that of most of us.** Before St. Paul could say that his outward life was Christ, he must have been able to say it of his inward life. Before Christ can be to any one his object, his business, his work, in life, He must first be his trust and his hope, his known and tried refuge from guilt, from fear, from restlessness, from sin. A man must have Christ for the life of his soul before he can have Christ for the life of his life.*

To summarise, "To live is Christ" means:

- That Jesus becomes EVERYTHING to us.
- He is our motivation for everything we do.
- It means to be so full of Christ that we are Christ in the world by our life and our message.
- To experience the reality of Jesus Christ living physically in us in the fullness of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- It begins first with an inward change, which results in an outward change!
- ***What's the business of our life?***
- ***Does every aspect of our life revolve around Jesus?***
- ***Are we so full of Jesus Christ that it's no longer us who live and rules and reigns in our life, but Jesus?***
- ***Do we make every decision in Christ?***
- ***Are we living as Christ in this world?***
- ***Can we truly say with Paul, I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me?***

When we are crucified with Christ, there is a victory that comes. As we learn to comprehend the marvelous truth that we are dead to sin, and alive in Christ, victory over the fleshly, carnal nature finally becomes a reality in every aspect of our lives.

## **BECOMING A "TO LIVE IS CHRIST" CHRISTIAN IS A JOURNEY**

**It is evidenced by a progressive increase of Christ's character in us:**

John the Baptist said in **John 3:30** (NKJV) He must increase, but I must decrease. The closer we get to Jesus, the more we want to be like Him.

Paul got to the place where he wrote in **1 Corinthians 2:2** (NKJV) For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.... Think about that. Jesus was all that remained important to him.

He also said **1 Corinthians 11:1** Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

- As "to live is Christ" becomes a reality for us, Christ's nature and character will become more and more evident in us.
- It will change what we speak about. Jesus will become our one true desire!
- Eventually, anyone who imitates what we do, will not be copying our character and behaviour, but that of Jesus Christ!

In John 15, Jesus said, **John 15:4a-6** (NKJV) Abide in Me, and I in you.

He continued like this: **John 15:4b-6** (NKJV) As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

- To abide in Christ means that we "LIVE" in Christ!

- Jesus called us to a life of abiding or living in Him.

**Colossians 3:9-10** (NKJV) Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

- When we are living “to live is Christ”, we won’t need to be told to put off the old man and his deeds, it will come naturally as our lives reflect the reality of **Colossians 1:27**, “Christ in me, the hope of glory”.
- We will become the image of Him who created us.

### **DO YOU THINK YOU CAN DO IT?**

**Galatians 3:27** (NKJV) For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ

Here’s the amazing truth, don’t think you can’t do it... Paul told the Galatian church **they had already put on Christ it!**

**Acts 17:28a** (NKJV) for in Him we live and move and have our being... Paul told the Athenians – everything about our being is in Jesus Christ, and finally, in Colossians he says, “Christ is our life”.

**Colossians 3:4** (NKJV) When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

We are already in Christ, we put Him on when we got saved. He is in us, in Him we live and move and have our being and... **He is our Life!**

When a soldier puts on civilian clothes, they look just like a civilian, but when they put their army uniform on, they look like a soldier. We have already put Jesus on and we should look, speak and behave as someone who is living out “to live is Christ”. We simply need to live Jesus out.

- ***Have you realised yet that it is quite possible for us to personally partake in the truth that “to live is Christ”?***
- ***Are you living Jesus? If not, know today that you can, it simply takes a shift in our spiritual understanding.***
- ***We take hold of it by saying, “Jesus, let me live You”.***

### **CONCLUSION**

**W. Arnot said:** The chief reason why Christianity does not yet pervade the world, is that Christ does not pervade the life of Christians.

But He can pervade our lives and we will become world changers.

God has given us a golden opportunity through the consequence of this virus to re-focus our lives on Him and to re-align our understanding of what it means live out the reality of "to live is Christ".

What will we do with it? It was never God's plan for His children to live religious, repetitive, boring, fruitless lives. He wants us to live fully for Him, in Him and for us to be Christ to a lost and dying world. This is quite possible when we allow Jesus Christ to impact our lives in the way that He impacted Saul on the road to Damascus.

Let us relentlessly pursue the "to live is Christ" life. It doesn't happen overnight, it can take a lifetime of growth. Paul admitted this: **Philippians 3:12** (NKJV) Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

But he also said this: **Philippians 1:** "being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ".

**1 John 4:17** Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.

As He is, so are we! Let us live the "to live is Christ" life from today on.

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