



# *NOT I - BUT CHRIST*

**by Jason Peebles**

There is a powerful verse that gives us the secret to the Apostle Paul's amazing success. Against all odds, Paul successfully started Churches all over the known world of his day. He overcame shipwrecks, being lost at sea, assassination attempts, riots, beatings, stonings, imprisonment, and more (2 Cor 11:23-33). And what was the secret that enabled Paul to accomplish so much? Paul tells us in Galatians 2:20 -- *"I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."*

## **I Live -- Yet Not I**

Paul said *"Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me."* One translation puts it this way; *"I consider myself as having died and now enjoy a second existence which is simply Christ using my body."* **Dear friend, how different would your life be if you would commit yourself to the same secret that Paul had? "Not I, but Christ!"**

Some may object and say that this is simply not practical for everyday living -- “*Well, that’s fine for apostles and monks, but I live in the ‘real’ world. I’m busy raising a family, working a job, and trying to be a good person.*” When we reason like that, it reveals that we are more focused on our “**fruits**” (results) than our “**roots.**” It’s easy to lose perspective and forget that our focus should be on our root system. Why? Your root system is what will provide the nutrients and sustenance that you need to produce good fruit. If you want to be successful on the “outside” (with your family, job, etc.), then you must first be strong on the “inside.” Colossians 2:7 says, “*Rooted and built up IN HIM.*”

When you put “results” first, your Christian experience eventually deteriorates into one of striving vs. yielding. You will find yourself “trying hard” in your own power to create the results that you desire. You “try hard” to be a good parent; “try hard” to overcome sin; “try hard” to be patient. Before long, you will find yourself worn out. **But like Paul, you must awaken to the reality of CHRIST IN YOU and learn to YIELD to His influence. Stop striving and start yielding! Focus on your root and the fruit will follow.**

Paul had learned the secret of daily dependency on Christ. Yielding to Him was his secret root system. Paul declared that the life he lived was a result of Christ actually living through him – empowering him, inspiring him, guiding him, and enabling him. This is why Paul could write, “*Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me.*” He had learned the secret of yielding his life and plans over to Christ. As far as Paul was concerned, his old life was dead. **Paul was so thoroughly identified with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, that in his mind, he too had been crucified and resurrected.**

## Crucified with Christ

For most Christians, the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is best illustrated in water baptism. It is not the intent of this study to analyze the various methods of baptism (immersion, sprinkling, etc.), but rather to focus on the wonderful truths that it holds for believers. For example, when a believer goes “under” the water (analogous

to being buried) they are acknowledging to themselves and the world that their “**old life**” is dead and buried. And when they come “up” from the water (analogous to resurrection) it is a declaration that, like Christ, they have been raised to a “**new life.**” However, the problem for most of us is that water baptism tends to be a nice Church ritual, yet we do not IDENTIFY with those truths as a lifestyle. And this is where Paul was very different indeed. **For Paul, each day was a “walking out” of his death and resurrection with Christ. He had learned to consciously identify with the cross and resurrection.**



Now, let’s examine a truth that the Bible declares and one that you need to accept by faith. **The New Testament reveals that when Christ was crucified, dead, buried, and raised up – that we were IN HIM.** You see, Christ took the sins of the whole world on the cross, and in a spiritual way that we cannot fully grasp, we were IN HIM during the crucifixion process. Romans 6:6 say, “*Knowing this, that our old man WAS crucified WITH HIM.*” That is amazing! Not only were the sins of the whole world laid on Christ, but the very sin nature of mankind as well (the old man). **The original language is past tense – “was” crucified with Him. What a liberating truth this is! God did what we are powerless to do! The dominance and authority of your old life has been put to death (Rom 6:6-14).** Anger, lying, stealing, evil-speaking, lust, and every other sin

does not have to control you any longer. Every aspect of the fallen nature of man was put to death IN CHRIST when He was crucified. You may not realize it yet. You may not be walking in it yet. But the truth still stands! You were crucified WITH CHRIST. We are called to put off the “old” and put on the “new” (Eph 4:21-25). Furthermore, the secret to Paul’s amazing success does not end with crucifixion. Thank God we are likewise called to identify with Christ’s resurrection power!

It is upon these vital points (crucifixion and resurrection) that the apostle Paul tapped into a power beyond his own. **For Paul, his death and resurrection with Christ was not mere “theory” to be admired from a distance, but a reality that he sought to identify with each day.** He said in Galatians 2:20, *“I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me.”* Additionally, this is what Paul admonished all Christians to walk in. And thank God we are not on our own to do it! God Himself will help you experience victory. Philippians 2:13 says, *“For it is God who works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”*

## Raised with Christ

Your IDENTIFICATION process must not always focus on crucifixion. Yes, you must identify with that truth, but to live there would be to focus on death. The good news is that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead and ever lives! **Thus, where should your focus be? Obviously, your focus must be on the resurrection life that God has called you to.** Look at this wonderful declaration of God’s amazing grace –

*“But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us; even when we were dead in sins, has made us alive together with Christ, (by grace are you saved) and has RAISED us up together, and made us SIT together in heavenly places IN Christ Jesus.”*

*Ephesians 2:4-6*

Wow! What a glorious work God did! He did not ask our permission or wait for our approval. His great love did what we were powerless to do. The Bible clearly tells us that we were IN CHRIST

through the process of crucifixion AND resurrection. Additionally, we were in Him when He ascended into heaven and sat down on the right hand of the Father. Look closely at the passage again – it says that we are seated with Him in heavenly places, which is a place of authority over the enemy (*compare this passage to Ephesians 1:19-23*).

**So what does your crucifixion, resurrection, and heavenly position in Christ mean for your life? In short, it means that like Paul, Christ can live His life through you. It means the end to striving and beginning of YIELDING. It means God’s fruit and God’s victory in your life.** It is not possible in this study to explore all the implications of what Christ accomplished for us, but here are several points to get you started in your own study:

1) **Raised to newness of life** – your resurrection in Christ means that you have a NEW life to apprehend (Rom 6:4)! Comprehend, yes – but more importantly, apprehend by faith. Your old life may have consisted of lying, cheating, fornication, partying, outbursts of anger, swearing, drunkenness, and the like. **But what is your RESURRECTION LIFE all about? Well, for starters, a “personality make-over!”** God wants you to be someone who expresses His love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, self-control, and forgiveness in every situation (Gal 5:22). Sound impossible? Well, in truth, it is! That’s why you can only experience these things by allowing Christ to live through you -- what the Bible calls *“walking in the Spirit.”* God also wants you to experience answers to prayer, guidance, provision, and His destiny for your life. All of this is possible when you purpose to say with Paul, *“Not I, but Christ.”*

2) **Your position of authority** - the next thing that your resurrection in Christ means is that you are seated “above” all the enemies of your life. Ephesians 2:6 says that you are *“seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”* That position is further described as, *“Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come” (Eph 1:21).* **Wow! If Christ is “far above” and you are seated with Him in that place – then guess what? So are you!** Here are some areas that you should learn to exercise your

dominion over: 1) Temptation – Romans 6:11 says, “*Likewise, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*” 2) Works of the flesh - Galatians 5:24 says, “*And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*” 3) Mental and emotional attacks – Ephesians 6:17 tells us to “*take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*” 4) Plans and schemes of Satan – “*Finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil*” (Eph 6:11). In all these things, you must remember that you are seated ABOVE the enemy because you are seated in Christ. No, you did not earn it, deserve it, or accomplish it. It is a gift bestowed upon everyone who has faith in Christ. When you identify with Christ, you are identifying with His resurrection power and authority over all the forces of the enemy.

**3) Promise of bodily resurrection** - Perhaps you have not given much thought to this area, but I can assure you it becomes more important as life goes on. And, if you’ve ever stood over the grave of someone you love with all your heart, the promise of bodily resurrection becomes precious indeed. You see, God is not willing that any “part” of his children is stolen away. God has redeemed you spirit, soul, and body. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is our guarantee that we shall also have new bodies like His. 1 Corinthians 15:49 says, “*As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*” How God will resurrect our bodies (which obviously decay away) into a glorious body is a mystery. But with the modern day understanding of DNA and cloning, it is now possible to conceive such a thing. I don’t know how God is going to do it, but he no doubt has some type of “heavenly DNA record” from which he can present us with resurrected bodies without disease or illness. **When you die, your spirit immediately goes to be with Christ (2 Cor 5:6-8). But on the day of resurrection, you will be able to enter your new body.** Think of it! The Bible declares that after his resurrection, Jesus walked through walls, ascended into the air, transported from place to place, appeared and disappeared. It sounds like something out of science fiction, but these are all things that the Bible declares. And we are promised that we shall have

bodies like His (1 Cor 15:35-58)! No wonder Paul wrote: “*O death where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*” ( 1 Cor 15:55-57). Yes, God gives us His victory on every level – spirit, soul, and body.

## Identification by Faith

Throughout this study, I have alluded a number of times to the importance of **IDENTIFICATION**. This principle is what set the apostle Paul apart from the average Christian. For Paul, these wonderful truths of being crucified, raised, and seated with Christ were not “theoretical” religious points. To him, they were realities that all Christians should lay hold of by faith on a daily basis. Identification is the process whereby you learn to personally appropriate them by faith. It is where the declared truth of God is “walked out” in your every day experience. This is why Paul wrote: “*Likewise, reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord*” (Rom 6:11). The word “reckon” could also be translated “count” or “consider.” When we are tempted by sin (as we all are) we must RECKON (count or consider) that our old life is dead. That is, we should willfully and consciously IDENTIFY with Christ’s crucifixion in a way that says, “*I don’t have to obey this sin because my old life is dead! I don’t want to live that way. I want to yield to my Savior.*” When Paul faced stonings, beatings, and shipwrecks I can almost imagine him saying to himself, “*OK Paul, you can do this. Remember, you are dead to the temptation to quit or give up. You can depend on Christ’s resurrection power to intervene on your behalf. You are seated in Christ above this problem.*” Likewise, all believers are called to personally IDENTIFY with the cross and the resurrection in this manner – whether facing temptations, issues of the flesh (anger, impatience, etc.), or external problems. Learn to IDENTIFY each day with the fact that in Christ, your old life has been crucified, and you are now seated in heavenly places with God’s authority. Put your faith in His resurrection ability.

Dear friend, I pray that you will learn to identify with the cross and resurrection of our Lord and walk in His power and His ability in your life.

■ -- Jason Peebles

## Key Memory Verse:

*“I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”*

*Galatians 2:20*

### Prayer: “Not I, but Christ!”

*“Father, thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for my sins. I accept His sacrifice and commit my life to Him. Give me a revelation of what it means to declare, ‘Not I, but Christ!’ I want to identify with the cross and resurrection each day and walk in the new life that I have in Christ. In Jesus Name – Amen.”*

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