

THE GOSPEL CALL: A LIVING SACRIFICE

THE GOSPEL KERNEL



Unless a grain of wheat dies, it abides alone..

Christ illustrates His death and resurrection in this manner: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a kernel of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone: but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit...” (John 12:24)

Christ is the kernel of wheat which died. He dies to give His life for the world, that through Him, the world, believing in Him, might be saved. Christ is sown into the ground, being made conformable to our death, “numbered with the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12), for it is written of Him that “one died for all” (Cor. 5:14). And what happens to that kernel of wheat after it is buried into the ground? Through the waters it is raised up, bearing on it’s body “much fruit”- that is, many more kernels of wheat. Likewise, “as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection” (Romans 6:4-5) Christ planted us into His death; that we might be joined to Him in newness of life, for it is written, “your dead men shall live; together with My dead body shall they

arise" (Isaiah 26:19). The waters of life, "the glory of the Father", is what rose up that kernel of wheat, which is Christ, and we are told that these waters upon that Gospel Kernel was the "Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead..." (Romans 8:11). From here, we are then given the promise, by Christ, that "He (the Father) that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you." (Romans 8:11)

This wonderful truth is summarized by the Scripture: "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:" (Eph. 2:5-6) He hath raised us up in heavenly places. We are now "born of the Spirit" if we will allow sin to be finally crucified in us by fullness of belief in that great burial, and allow the risen life of that kernel to be made manifest in us, we are now children of heaven: "For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20) Christ's death and resurrection qualify this reality for us if it will be realized in our own lives by a believing heart, for "whosoever shall believe in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). If we are thus "raised up" we are also kernels of wheat, having the life that is in Christ abiding in us.

And what are kernels of wheat for? Christ said "I am that Bread of Life..." (John 6:48) Wheat is for the purpose of bread. He further states, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world...except you eat the flesh...you have no life in you... Whosoever eats My flesh...has eternal life." (John 6:51-54) This is what it means when Christ says to "abide in Him" and for Him to "abide in you".

A LIVING SACRIFICE: BEARING MUCH FRUIT

Now, we are kernels as Christ, the Son of man, was. The kernel may be appropriately defined as man who has divinity in him. This is so with Christ, and whosoever is joined to Him is a "partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lus



Only in dying, can the seed
bring forth much fruit.

t" for "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." As Christ's divine life is in us, we are the kernels of wheat that came from the stock of Christ, the Gospel Kernel that sprouted forth to bear "much fruit." Likewise, we are also called to die as kernels of wheat, that much fruit would be born to God's glory. "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing...Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." (John 15:5-8) To bear "much fruit" Christ says the kernel of wheat must die. As Christ had life "by the glory of the Father", even so, we may glorify the Father if we will have sacrificial service to bear much fruit, that many souls may be saved by the revelation of Christ in us. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Romans 12:1)

A living sacrifice. That is what the life of a Christian, raised up in heaven with Christ, is to be. Christ was that

sacrifice, not only illustrated by the kernel of wheat, but also as that sacrificial "Lamb of God" (John 1:29). The lambs and sheep were always to be without spot or blemish, and they were to prophecy in their sacrifice of Christ. Christ is also the true Shepherd who speaks and His sheep follow Him. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." (John 10:27-28) Yet the shepherds of Israel had sheep in which to offer sacrifices, as well as to make garments from their wool, and supply meat. Christ, the true Shepherd. The shepherds would supply the sacrifice, and the priests were to execute the sacrifice of the slain victim. Christ as the Shepherd, supplies us, the sheep, as a living sacrifice, and He is also "a great High Priest" which executes the sacrificial service of revealing His death in us to the saving of souls. Therefore it is Christ who brings us to places where His character will be revealed; whether it is through trial and tribulation, persecution or death, all is for Christ to God's glory. The apostle Paul, understanding this experience well, said "[We are] always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." (2 Cor. 4:10-11)



This is the purpose of a living sacrifice. The High Priest works closely with His sacrifices to bring forth much fruit. We should not think that He doesn't work closely with us: while He works in us, He also directs the knife of circumstances and providences to slay His sacrifice to reveal the gospel through His sheep, who are a revelation of Himself. "And we know that all things work

together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:28-31)

The affliction of the flesh, whether light or heavy, was to the eternal life of many others; and it is Christ who permits these trials to abound toward His servants that His glory may be revealed. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" (2 Cor. 4:16-17) He concluded, "So then death worketh in us, but life in you. We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." (2 Cor. 4:12-14) To be a living sacrifice is even to communicate the truths of the gospel, despite the affliction it may bring; whether of persecution, excommunication, disfellowship, or death; these are for the purpose of the saving of many souls, and bearing much fruit.

THE DEATH OF THE KERNEL: GOD'S PLEASURE

Yet it is a joy and a revelation of His glory to have this sacrifice, for which cause the apostle cause "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (Hebrews 13:15-16) God takes joy to see the kernel of wheat die, for by it, many sons are brought to glory.

That living sacrifice, that kernel of wheat, that Christ in you, is to see that "God is well pleased." To the Gospel Kernel, Christ, the Father declared, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And if that Son is in you by the life of the Spirit, then the sacrifice of Christ is in you to bear much fruit, which Christ our High Priest, executes when He so permits the purposes of affliction, or else great light with accountability to proclaim that light, to others: then in you is the Father "with such sacrifices...well pleased", "for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me." (Philippians 2:13-18)