

There is one thing that weighs heavily on my spirit - and I know that God really and truly is disappointed in most saints about this - most Christians do not believe Him, they do not trust Him, they do not believe they are who He says they are. I often say that the issue with most Church-goers is that they need to:

- a) know their identity,
- b) know their authority and
- c) be committed.

Most Christians would be adamant that they already know this - but do they? If they do, why are they dying off in the prime of life, why are they so defeated by the devil, why are they so fearful of the future, why are so many living under stress and why is there so much turmoil in their lives?

The answer to this is - the Church has failed. Most leaders attend Bible Schools, Colleges and Seminaries that teach all the homiletics and hermeneutics and history and man-made doctrine, but on graduation, their students do not know squat about the Holy Spirit and how to hear from God. How can they teach their congregations how to live victoriously? This is not true for all. There are some wonderful Bible Schools out there that allow the Holy Spirit to lead in their sessions and have produced powerful men and women of God.

In general, the Church has allowed itself to be influenced by the spirit of religion - the same spirit that put Jesus to death in the hope that all its problems would have been solved. Instead, their action opened up the avenue for Jesus to fulfill the plan of God. He came to make all things new, that we could have life and that more abundantly. He came in order that salvation would be ours.

The key word is **salvation**. Do you know that most people, when they think of salvation, really think of redemption?

Redemption is simply the buying back of something. Like when you go to the pawnshop and buy back or redeem the watch you pawned. Salvation however, includes redemption and much more. The Biblical meaning of salvation is total restoration in every area. Jesus came to restore all that man had lost in the fall. He restored not only our right standing with God, but also gave us healing, health, prosperity and dominion. ***Galatians 3:13*** "*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us--for it is written, "cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"--*

If Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, why are Christians running around sick, defeated and broke? People have not been taught what they have and who they are in Christ or they have chosen to remain in the cesspool of ignorance perpetuated by deceiving doctrines of devils being taught by most churches and/or denominations. If only they would take up their Bibles, ask the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth and not rely on the preacher! Then they would be able to detect truth from lies!

I believe you are saying this is a bit harsh, but these are the end times, and there is

no time to pander to anyone's feelings. The truth must be told!
I'll give you an example. At a previous major denominational church we attended, we were in a Bible study. We had just been born again, but we were hungry for the Word. We read as much of the Bible as we could. Gradually, the Holy Spirit began dealing with us on certain matters - we were being washed by the water of the Word of God (Ephesians 5:26) and our minds were being renewed (Romans 12:2). Anyway, in one particular session, the leader remarked that he had come to the point where he believed that even the devil would be saved! Then he kept referring to the book of Genesis as a story, likening it to other myths and legends of creation. On top of all that, one of the altar workers remarked that she believed that the first five books of the Bible were myths! Now, if the leadership of any denomination or Church could say those things, it was time to move on and so we said what had to be said (in a civil manner of course) and we never returned. (Of course, we left on good terms and with the blessing of the leader.) However, think of the ones who remained in ignorant bliss believing every word that he taught because they were too bound by the religious spirit to leave the particular church and they were too lazy to discover the truth for themselves!

Remember - no-one can rise above the level of their leadership. If you try to do so you will create strife.

Being like Jesus is not just talk - it is dedication to a cause - the will of God. It usually means leaving friends and even relatives behind who are not travelling the same road you are. It means a total change in nature and focus. We have found that since we started on our walk with God that most of our old friends no longer call and our relatives who are not on the same path think we are extreme! Jesus was extreme! You either go all the way in God or forget it! You cannot serve God and the worldly system. However, I must say that we have never experienced more joy and peace! We have such great security in God! Whatever the world can throw at us, greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world!

All of that was the preliminary. Now let us tackle the question of **redemption and identification**. We touched on this briefly in a previous writing, but we will delve a little deeper now. Redemption is the legal act of God. When we speak of identification we refer to spiritual alignment. We are identified in two aspects - one with Adam (the fallen nature) and the other with Christ.

Our identification with Adam is set out clearly in Romans 5:12 *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned* --(NASB) This passage speaks of a spiritual death, not a physical one, in which the nature of Satan was imparted to man through Adam's allegiance to him when he (Adam) disobeyed God. (Genesis 3) Because of Adam's sin, and man's identification with him as the head of humanity, death came to every member of the human race even though they had not physically participated in the act. Romans 5:14-19 NASB *Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the*

many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.

*The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. So then as through one there resulted justification of life to all men. **For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.***

The Message translation of verses 18 and 19 reads: *Here it is in a nutshell: Just as one person did it wrong and got us in all this trouble with sin and death, another person did it right and got us out of it. But more than just getting us out of trouble, he got us into life! One man said no to God and put many people in the wrong; one man said yes to God and put many in the right.*

So, legally, satan separated us from God and at the same time his nature was imparted into man - what the Bible calls children of wrath. Ephesians 2:2-4) Legally the death, bondage, judgment and everything else that went along with being a child of the devil became ours. God did something about the situation and He made a way for us to be identified with Him again.

Our identification with Christ could only come about through Christ first identifying Himself with man. He had to become flesh and blood. (John 1:14 AMP *And the Word (Christ) became flesh (human, incarnate) and tabernacled (fixed His tent of flesh, lived awhile) among us; and we [actually] saw His glory (His honor, His majesty), such glory as an only begotten son receives from his father, full of grace (favor, loving-kindness) and truth*)

Hebrews 2:14 AMP *Since, therefore, [these His] children share in flesh and blood [in the physical nature of human beings], He [Himself] in a similar manner partook of the same [nature], that by [going through] death He might bring to nought and make of no effect him who had the power of death--that is, the devil--). During His earth walk, before the crucifixion Christ was not 100% identified with man, because the sin nature was not in Him. He had the nature of God flowing within Him. He was like the first Adam before he sinned. His full identification with our sin nature came about when He willingly took our fallen nature upon Himself. (Isaiah 53:4-6 Message)*

*The servant grew up before God --a scrawny seedling,
a scrubby plant in a parched field.*

*There was nothing attractive about him,
nothing to cause us to take a second look.*

*He was looked down on and passed over,
a man who suffered, who knew pain firsthand.*

*One look at him and people turned away.
We looked down on him, thought he was scum.
But the fact is, it was our pains he carried --
our disfigurements, all the things wrong with us.
We thought he brought it on himself,
that God was punishing him for his own failures.
But it was our sins that did that to him,
that ripped and tore and crushed him --our sins!
He took the punishment, and that made us whole.
Through his bruises we get healed.
We're all like sheep who've wandered off and gotten lost.
We've all done our own thing, gone our own way.
And God has piled all our sins, everything we've done wrong,
on him, on him.*

II Corinthians 5:21 (NASB) *He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.* When God the Father looked at Christ on the cross, He saw the whole human race; this is why Paul said in Galatians 2:20 (NASB) *"I have been crucified with Christ"*.

Romans 6:6 (NASB) *knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin ;*

Romans 4:25 (AMP) *Who was betrayed and put to death because of our misdeeds and was raised to secure our justification (our acquittal), [making our account balance and absolving us from all guilt before God].* Jesus Christ was our substitute.

Now, having fully taken on man's nature, Christ bore the judgment and the penalty. Just as God cast Adam out of the Garden, He now turned His back on Christ because of our sin. He was separated from God the Father for the first time in His eternal existence.

Christ went into hell and bore all the punishment we should have borne and when all was fully paid. Romans 6:4 (AMP) *We were buried therefore with Him by the baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious [power] of the Father, so we too might [habitually] live and behave in newness of life.*

Colossians 2:12 (NASB) *having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,*

Romans 6:5-9 (NASB) *For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing*

this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.

God raised Him up., Christ rose- a conqueror over satan and his forces and we rose with Him! *Colossians 2:15 (NASB) When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him,*

Ephesians 1:20-23 (NASB) which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

In summary, here are the steps to our identification with Christ:

- Spiritual death was destroyed - Romans 6:6 (AMP) *We know that our old (unrenewed) self was nailed to the cross with Him in order that [our] body [which is the instrument] of sin might be made ineffective and inactive for evil, that we might no longer be the slaves of sin*
- Man was delivered from spiritual death - Romans 6:7(AMP) *for when a man dies, he is freed (loosed, delivered) from [the power of] sin [among men].* - this occurred because Christ was our substitute and having been crucified with Christ, our deliverance came through Him also.
- When Christ arose victorious and justified having been declared righteous we arose also - victorious, justified and declared righteous in the eyes of God. Colossians 2:13 (AMP) *And you who were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh (your sensuality, your sinful carnal nature), [God] brought to life together with [Christ], having [freely] forgiven us all our transgressions;*
Ephesians 2:5 (AMP) *Even when we were dead (slain) by [our own] shortcomings and trespasses, He made us alive together in fellowship and in union with Christ; [He gave us the very life of Christ Himself, the same new life with which He quickened Him, for] it is by grace (His favor and mercy which you did not deserve) that you are saved (delivered from judgment and made partakers of Christ's salvation).)*

When Christ died, paid the penalty, was declared righteous and rose it was as though the first Adam had done so. All of Adam's descendants legally arose from spiritual death. (1 Corinthians 15:22 (NASB) *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.*

None of Christ's work however can come into effect until we accept Him as our Substitute and make Him Lord of our lives. It is as though God has given you a gift certificate. He has paid for everything with the sacrifice of Jesus. That certificate is useless unless you first acknowledge that it is valid and then lay claim to what is available. You take the certificate believing the validity of it and go lay claim to what is yours!