

KNOWING THE LIFE OF CHRIST IN US IN THE END TIMES

The importance of knowing and experiencing the power of Christ's life in us to overcome the stresses and trials of the end times

During His time on earth, the Lord presented us with a consistent warning about being prepared for God's judgment of the world, and His second coming. It was "WATCH," for the Son of Man is coming in an hour that you do not expect.

"But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be." Matt 24:37-39.

"Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." Matt 24:40-44.

"Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming -- in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning -- lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping [not prepared]. And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!" Mark 13:33-37.

"Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments [maintains his righteousness], lest he walk naked and they see his shame." Rev 16:15.

Jesus warns that the end of all things is to come suddenly, with distress and perplexity facing those who are not prepared.

"And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near." Luke 21:25-28.

The signs in the sun, moon, and stars, the waves roaring, and the powers of the heavens shaken, is a figurative description of the shaking of all things on the earth, as also prophesied by Haggai, and Paul. The consistent warning throughout these readings is to watch for the signs of the Lord's coming; and to be prepared by setting and maintaining our spiritual lives in order.

In such a time of distress in the world, it is important to know that we are children of God, having the added assurance that God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are indwelling us, and are ever ready to come to our aid in times of need. It is in receiving this truth in our hearts that we will stand, and not be greatly moved. In the light of this truth, emphasised in Paul's words, "**in Him we live and move and have our being**," our study will focus on the fullness of the Godhead as our refuge and overcoming life, rather than the horrors facing the world.

IN HIM WE LIVE AND MOVE AND HAVE OUR BEING

Key Bible Reading: Presents that we live, move, and have our being by the miraculous indwelling power of the fullness of God.

“God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him [the fullness of God--Father, Son, and Holy Spirit] we live and move and have our being...” Acts 17:24-28.

In the reading above, Paul was speaking to the men at Athens who worshipped many pagan gods. Paul had noticed that they had even erected an altar dedicated “TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.” Paul used this observation in an endeavour to persuade them that the unknown God they were worshipping was in fact the Lord God Almighty, the eternal Creator, “gives to all life, breath, and all things,” and because of His life giving Spirit in us, “in Him we live and move and have our being.” The fact that Paul was speaking to the Athenians in no way diminishes the basic truth that through God’s Spirit in us, we as Christians are given “life, breath, and all things,” and that “in Him we live and move and have our being.”

In Him

Paul’s truth is qualified by the condition that it is IN HIM we live and move and have our being. This leads us to the question, what does “in Him” mean?

Because Paul was speaking to unbelievers, “in Him” was conveyed in a general sense, meaning everyone and everything is in the compass of God’s power, and since this includes the whole universe, all living things are “in Him,” created and upheld by His Spirit. Paul was saying to the Athenians that they, as part of the whole universe were “in Him,” and upheld by His power.

As Christians, the words “in Him” have a new significance. We have been baptised in, or into, the name [or fullness of the attributes] of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. [**“For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ.”** Gal 3:27]. To be in Him is to be in a harmonious obedient relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit, so that potentially we are able to receive the fullness of their blessings. In short, it is to be obediently in tune with God’s will for us. The truth of God filling and upholding all things is verified in Scriptures like the following.

**“If He should set His heart on it,
If He should gather to Himself His Spirit and His breath,
All flesh would perish together,
And man would return to dust.” Job 34:14-15.**

**“Thus says God the LORD,
Who created the heavens and stretched them out,
Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it,
Who gives breath to the people on it,
And spirit to those who walk on it.”** Isa 42:5.

The following reading from Psalm 139, tells us that our pattern and days were known by God even before we were placed in our mother’s womb.

**“For You formed my inward parts;
You covered me in my mother's womb.
I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
Marvellous are Your works,
And that my soul knows very well.
My frame was not hidden from You,
When I was made in secret,
And skilfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.**

**Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed.
And in Your book they all were written,
The days fashioned for me,
When as yet there were none of them.” Ps 139:13-16.**

In the New Testament, Jesus further emphasised that God is the creator and supporter of the life of all earthly things.

“So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?” Matt 6:28-30. If we trust Him, our provision becomes His responsibility.

“Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.” Matt 10:29-31. The Spirit of God enlivens every living thing.

Paul went on to tell the Athenians that their “unknown god,” Almighty God, was not only the source and supporter of all life, but also all movement - every heartbeat, every breath, and every step is by the power of His Spirit. Furthermore, in Him they had their being, that is, their very existence. The length of their days on earth was in His hands. **“I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”** Deut 30:19-20.

The Life of Christians is Further Enhanced by the Spirit

In speaking to the Athenians, Paul used the Greek word ‘zoa’ for ‘life.’ It means to have life as opposed to being dead. He pointed out that the life that was in their bodies and enabled them to move, and carry out their activities and normal bodily functions, was from the Spirit of God. For most people, this requires an adjustment in our thinking, for we are conditioned to believe that our life comes from our own bodies, and when they wear out or come to grief, our life comes to an end.

We in particular as Christians should embrace Paul’s words, **“He gives to all life, breath, and all things,”** and **“for in Him we live and move and have our being,”** for we are new creations with a new kind of life that is enhanced by the Spirit. Compare ‘zoa,’ the life spoken about to the Athenians, with ‘zoe,’ the life that Jesus promised to us when He said, **“The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life [zoe], and that they might have it more abundantly [more than is necessary needed to sustain it].”** John 10:10.

“Zoe” is the absolute fullness of life belonging to God, empowering us and providing an additional miraculous capacity to meet our needs. Paul gives us a glimpse of the ‘zoe’ life in this promise to the Roman Christians. **“For if when we were enemies [unsaved] we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life [zoe].”** Rom 5:10-11. “Thayer’s Greek Lexicon,” translates ‘saved’ as - **“*universally, [save] one [from injury or peril]; to save a suffering one [from perishing], e. g. one suffering from disease, to make well, heal, restore to health...*”**

We were eternally saved when we accepted Jesus as our Saviour and Lord. Now, having been saved, His saving grace is ongoing, and we are continually saved [restored, made well, healed, empowered to work] by His indwelling life. Of God’s continual grace and the quality of Christ’s ‘zoe’ life working in us, Paul writes, **“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever.”** Eph 3:20-21.

We are able to reign over all of our circumstances when we ‘feed’ on the power of Christ’s indwelling life. **“For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.”** Rom 5:17. When Paul wrote, **“To this end I also labour, striving according to His working which works in me mightily,”** Col 1:29, he knew and had constantly experienced the reality of Christ’s miraculous indwelling life enabling him to live and work above his natural potential. The degree that we as Christians receive the indwelling power of God’s Spirit is qualified by the degree that we are “in Him,” or in a right relationship with Him.

God has Appointed Jesus Christ to be the Life

In the working of the Godhead, God the Father is the source and initiator of all things, and Jesus Christ using the vehicle of the Holy Spirit, distributes them. The zoe life of God in Jesus Christ is released by Him in us through the power of the Spirit.

“For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.” John 5:26-27.

“Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life [zoe]: no man comes unto the Father, but by me.” John 14:6.

“I am the light of the world: he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light [the light of truth] of life.” John 8:12.

“And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread [a symbol of that which sustains] of life: he that comes to me shall never hunger [fall short]; and he that believes on me shall never thirst [want more].” John 6:35.

Christ’s analogy of the vine and its branches is a perfect illustration of how we should continually draw life from Him. **“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser... Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides [a continual dependent union] in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 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 [no spiritual work].”** John 15:1, & 4-6. This is a very clear example of the relationship we should have with the Lord, abiding, or continually living in a dependent union with Him, by faith drawing on the fullness of His life in us to meet our needs.

Many Christians are unaware of the super abundance of the life of Christ indwelling them and available to them, and they live out their lives restricted to their own natural capacities. But the word says, He **“is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.”** When we accept in our hearts the analogy of the true vine and its branches, we are enabled to draw on the life of Jesus to receive additional strength, love, faith, truth, wisdom, patience, endurance, humility, understanding, and so on, to meet our needs as we encounter them.

For instance, if we have a difficult relationship with another person and are required to converse with them, we may present the situation into the Lord’s hands, and ask Him to release His wisdom, discretion, love, humility, and understanding into our hearts, allowing Him to manifest what we should be in the relationship. The only way that we can walk through this life living in victory above our circumstances is to walk in the light of the super abundance of Christ’s life at work in us, knowing that it His desire that we continually ‘feed’ on Him.

Two Types of Empowering

1. At our conversion we receive the impartation of the Holy Spirit into our spirits, so that they are regenerated and enlightened to perceive spiritual truths. He becomes our comforter, our teacher and guide, and the revealer of Christ and His blessings to us. Of particular importance is the knowledge that Jesus dwells in us, and is a source of overcoming life that is available to us to meet our needs in all of our circumstances. Jesus described this type of empowering in this figurative description.

“Whoever drinks of this water [from the well] will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him [the Holy Spirit released in our spirits by Christ] will never thirst [want]. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” John 4:13-14.

Even though with maturity we should experience and enjoy more and more of the life of Jesus, drawing on His life to meet our needs is the right and privilege of every Christian, no matter whatever the state of their spiritual growth.

2. The second type of empowering is commonly referred to the baptism of the Spirit, and was first experienced at Pentecost. This is a filling of the Spirit that may be accompanied by spiritual gifts that empower us to minister to the needs of others. In this case Christ describes the Spirit as a river of living water flowing out of our hearts to encompass others in need.

“If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” John 7:37-39.

Being baptised in the Spirit was the normal procedure for all new Christians, and so is still available to all Christians. To be true to the pattern of the early Church, baptism of water should be followed by a baptism of the Spirit as an empowerment to minister to the needs of others. This initial baptism of the Spirit may be followed by further infillings of the Spirit during a Christian’s lifetime. The early disciples experienced another empowering to enhance their ministry in their dire need. Experiencing much tribulation, they prayed, **“Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.”** And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.” Acts 4:29-31.

The Two Types of Empowering Illustrated in the Ministry of Philip

The two types of empowering - the regeneration of our spirits, and empowering for service, are illustrated by the experience of Philip the evangelist when he went down to Samaria to preach the gospel of salvation to the unsaved.

They believed Philip, confessed Jesus as Saviour and Lord, and were baptised in water. **“But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptised.”** Acts 8:12. At this point they received the Holy Spirit regenerating their spirits so that they could understand and receive the things of God. They received the indwelling presence of the Lord, and had the capacity to draw on His life. This is the first type of empowering of the Spirit mentioned above.

In the early church the baptism in water was automatically followed by a baptism in the Spirit, usually through the laying on of hands. Notice what happened to the Samaritans who had believed Philip and were baptised in water.

“Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that [the people of] Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.” Acts 8:14-17.

Our New Life has its Foundation in the Cross of Jesus Christ

This passage from Ephesians describes our state before salvation, under the power of Satan, with a power of death working in our whole being.

“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the

air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, **made us alive together with Christ** (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus [our spiritual state of blessing in Christ], that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” Eph 2:1-7.

By the cross of Jesus all Christians have passed from death to life. Before salvation we were in Satan’s kingdom and held captive by the law of sin and death. Having been saved, the law of sin and death has been superseded by a higher law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. **“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.”** Rom 8:1-3.

Now we are vessels of life, continually upheld by Christ’s indwelling Spirit. However, we must never forget that this blessing has its foundation in what Jesus achieved for us through His sacrificial death on the altar of the cross, and this must be the ground on which we claim it by faith and receive it. That is why Jesus said, **“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man** [partake of the blessing of our sins and their punishment borne in Christ’s body on the cross], **and drink his blood** [receive and walk in the righteousness and sanctification He procured for us by His shed blood], **you have no life in you.”** John 6:53.

Righteousness and Eternal Salvation by the Blood of the Cross

Through the cross, the effectiveness of the purifying power of Christ’s blood has made us spiritually righteous eternally. We are delivered from the kingdom of Satan and transferred into the kingdom of God. We are eternally saved. We are now able to plead the blood of Jesus over every sin and receive God’s forgiveness. Every accusation of Satan against us is negated, for we are reconciled to God, being holy and blameless in His sight. These are spiritual realities to be claimed by faith.

Spiritual Healing has its Basis in the Cross

Of particular importance to our healing and health is this remarkable statement by Peter. [Jesus] **“Himself bore our sins** [with their punishment of sickness disease and death] **in His own body on the tree** [cross], **that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness -- by whose stripes you were healed.**” 1 Peter 2:24.

Through the cross, our bodies were spiritually set free, or spiritually healed and released from the law of sin and death, and every legal claim of Satan against our bodies was nullified. They were made sanctified vessels for the indwelling Holy Spirits. **“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit.”** 1 Cor 6:19-20.

By Christ bearing the punishment for our sins in His own body on the cross, He has prepared the way for us to receive God’s healing of our mortal bodies. As we testify and claim our spiritual healing by Jesus Christ, the way is paved for God to miraculously release His Spirit of life in our mortal bodies. This does not necessarily mean that we are automatically healed instantly. That may be the will of God, but the more usual occurrence is that the natural healing power inherent in our bodies is enhanced, and our healing is by a steady process.

We are Sanctified and Grow in Sanctification Through the Cross

By Christ taking on Himself the mantle of mankind on the cross, our old man is incorporated in His sacrificial death. We can now declare our carnal natures included in Christ’s death on the cross. If we desire in our hearts that this becomes a reality, the Holy Spirit comes to our aid by putting to death the deeds of the flesh, or gradually nullifying our carnal natures. **“For if you live according to**

the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, [your carnal nature] you will live.” Rom 8:13-14.

All of these benefits are spiritual in nature, and it is only as they are personally claimed and received by faith that they become a physical reality. Every spiritual blessing we receive from God has its foundation in the righteousness and sanctification Christ procured for us on the cross.

There is a current trend to bypass the cross, and call down the power of the Spirit to fall on us and empower us. The Holy Spirit never acts or speaks on His own authority, as His office is to represent and glorify the name of the Lord, in particular bearing witness to the blessings of His cross. **“He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears [from the Lord] He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.”** John 16:13-15. Those who call down the Spirit without reference to Jesus and His finished work on the cross may receive a manifestation from a spirit that is a counterfeit spirit - the spirit of antichrist.

Life Comes Out of Death

It is a spiritual law that new spiritual life comes out of the death of our carnal nature. In introducing this truth, Jesus starts by saying **“most assuredly,”** or most emphatically. **“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honour.”** John 12:24-26.

Paul describes how the death of our self-life is the catalyst that produces the life of Jesus in His Spirit that is implanted in us, so that it may flow out to others.

“Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus [in our carnal nature], that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body [to those in need].” 2 Cor 4:10.

“For we which live are always delivered unto death [of our self-nature] for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death works in us, but life in you [the life of Jesus flows out to you].” 2 Cor 4:11-12.

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man [our carnal nature] is perishing, yet the inward man [Christ in us] is being renewed day by day.” 2 Cor 4:16-17.

This is the nature of our spiritual walk - continually placing our self-life on the cross daily to be put to death by the Spirit, and receiving Jesus as our life. Jesus pointed out that those who were not prepared to embark on this path of holiness were not worthy of Him.

“And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.” Matt 10:38-39.

“Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.” Mark 8:34-36.

Our New Life Grows in Power as Christ's Kingdom is Formed in Us

Since God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit are ONE, the terms the kingdom of God, the kingdom of Christ, and the kingdom of heaven are interchangeable. When we read, **“For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you,”** Lk 17:21, we can equally say that the kingdom of Christ is within you.

The word kingdom applies to a place where a king rules, and since Christ does not rule in every part of our being, His kingdom or rule in us should be continually growing as we relinquish parts of our nature into His hands. The new life that flows out of our hearts to help others grows as the kingdom of Christ is formed in us. As we submit one area of our lives to His control, it becomes part of His kingdom in us. That is why Jesus presented the parables of the leaven and mustard seed.

“And again He said, “To what shall I liken the kingdom of God [or Christ]? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened [as in using yeast to make bread].” Luke 13:20-21.

“Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.” Matt 13:31-32. As the kingdom of Christ is formed in us by replacing our carnal flesh, we become a source of nurture to others, as His life flows out to minister to those in need **“so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.”**

Open Our Hearts to God’s Miraculous Power in Action Through Us

We are in a crucial stage in the history of mankind for the end of the age is near. It will be the day of God’s judgment on all those who have turned their backs on His grace, and have gone their own way in wickedness and rebellion. This is a time for us to be emptied of our carnal natures and receive a further infilling of the Spirit, so that we will be sustained in the fury of God’s judgment on the world, and so that we may become prepared vessels He can use. God is asking us to open our hearts to the miraculous power of the Lord’s Spirit of life in us, so that it may flow out and encompass those in need.

On the other hand, it is a time to humbly acknowledge who we are. Paul called us earthenware vessels, containing the treasure of the miraculous power of the Lord. **“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.”** 2 Cor 4:7. The earthenware vessel cannot produce a miracle in itself. That is why the Lord said, **“without Me you can do nothing.”** Our position is to be still, waiting on the Lord, not initiating anything of ourselves, or speaking on our own authority, but allowing Him to minister through us unhindered by our flesh. This is the only way we can have a pure ministry in the Lord.