

Walking in Victory

The VISION Newsletter / February 2013

Pastor E. Keith Hassell

Romans 6:1–14 (NKJV) “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? ² Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? ³ Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness of His resurrection*, ⁶ knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. ⁷ For he who has died has been freed from sin. ⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, ⁹ knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. ¹⁰ For *the death* that He died, He died to sin once for all; but *the life* that He lives, He lives to God. ¹¹ Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. ¹³ And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. ¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”

Many Christians experience the joy of God’s forgiveness at salvation through faith in Jesus Christ but then continue to struggle with sin in their daily lives. Why is this? I believe the problem is a failure to understand the difference between the Blood of Christ and the Cross of Christ. The blood of Jesus deals with our sin. However, the cross of Jesus deals with the sinner.

We are not sinners because we sin. We sin because we are sinners. We are not sinners because of what we have done. We are sinners because of who we are. We sin because it is our nature to sin. Until the *sinner* is dealt with, sin will continue. For instance, we might attempt to stop alcoholism by taking away all of the beer, wine, and whiskey from the store shelves. But as soon as we walk away, distribution trucks full of alcohol will roll in to town and the shelves will be restocked. The only way to stop alcohol from getting to the shelves is to shut down its production at the brewery.

The New Testament reveals that the root of our sin problem is not with our *behavior* but with our *heritage* in ADAM. Romans 5:19-20 (NKJV) “¹⁹ For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous. ²⁰ Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, ²¹ so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The blood of Jesus is necessary to cover our sin but it does not break our heritage in sinful Adam. It takes the cross of Christ to change our heritage from being *in Adam* to being *in Christ*.

Victory over sin is not found in *reforming* the old man of sin but in the *executing* of the old man of sin. God has already taken care of the old man of sin through the death of Christ on the Cross. Paul said, “*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.*” (Galatians 2:20 NKJV) That’s right. Paul said he *was crucified with Christ*—at the same time Jesus was crucified! Paul says again, “*Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized INTO CHRIST JESUS were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*” (Romans 6:3-4 NKJV)

When Jesus died, we died! When Jesus rose we rose! How can this be if we were not even alive when Jesus died on the cross? To illustrate, imagine that your grandparents died when they were only three years old. Would you be alive today? No. Your life would have *died with them*. In the same way, through faith we died *with Christ*.

Another way of seeing this is to take a small piece of paper and put it in your Bible. The paper represents you. The Bible represents Christ. Everywhere the Bible goes, the piece of paper goes also. In the same way God has placed us *in Christ* by faith in Him. Although we were yet to be born, when Christ died, in reality we were crucified with Him. When He was raised from the dead, we were raised with Him. In fact, we are also seated with Him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus!

Why can this be true and yet Christians not experience victory? It is because our mind has not been renewed to this reality. If we still think of ourselves as slaves to sin, we will continue to act like slaves to sin. When we finally realize that Christ has set us free from the slavery to sin, then we can think like a free man and refuse to obey any longer the old slave master of sin.

Paul mentions four things that are keys to walking in victory over sin. The first key is in *knowing*. Romans 6:6 (NKJV) "*KNOWING that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of death may be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.*" We must know that we died with Christ and are no longer a slave to sin. Unless we know this, it will make no difference in our lives.

The second key is *reckoning*. Romans 6:11 (NKJV) declares, "*Likewise you also, RECKON YOURSELVES to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" To reckon means to reconcile. In order to reconcile our bank account, we have to make the information in our checkbook agree with our bank statement. In the same way, we must reconcile our thinking to agree with God's bank statement, the Bible.

The third key is *yielding*. Romans 6:13 (NKJV) declares, "*And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.*" "Yielding" is an issue of our *will*. We must will for Christ to live His life through us. As those who have died with Christ, we are to consider our members as unemployed in regard to sin. As those who have been made alive with Christ, we are to yield our members to God as instruments of righteousness.

The fourth key is *walking in the Spirit*. Galatians 5:16-17 (NKJV) declares, "*I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another; so that you do not do the things you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.*" Walking in the Spirit is yielding ourselves to a *Person*---the Holy Spirit. The issue is not "right vs. wrong," but "flesh vs. Spirit." Walking in the flesh is yielding to the old sinful nature. Walking in the Spirit is yielding to the Holy Spirit. Satan's temptations are an attempt to cause us to act according to our old slavery to sin rather than according to our new freedom in Christ.

In summary, how can we walk in victory? First we must *know* that we have been crucified with Christ and no longer have to obey our fleshly lusts to sin. Second, we must *reckon* ourselves as dead to the power of sin and as alive to God. Third, we must yield the members of our body to God as instruments of righteousness. Finally, we must walk in obedience to the Holy Spirit. Walking in the Spirit is depending upon His grace and power. Walking in victory is not about us being strong for God but about God being strong in us. If you and I will do these things, we can walk in victory every day.

© Edward Keith Hassell
Grace Fellowship
P.O. Box 260
Rusk, Texas
(903) 683-6550
www.gracefellowshiprusk.com