

Discerning the Life of Christ in Me Part 2

a sermon in the series
Saved by His Life: Union with Christ

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Galatians 2:20

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

Last week we tackled this verse primarily trying to understand how Paul could say that he didn't live but Christ lived in him, yet go on to say that he, Paul, did live. How could both Christ and Paul live in Paul's body at the same time? I said that is the same question as how we can be saved by grace and yet works must be performed otherwise the saint can't have hope of eternal life. We gave you several verses to substantiate that.

This is all involved in the discussion of the subject of how to discern the life of Christ that is in every believer. Christ is in you, those of you who truly believe upon Him. When we are first converted it isn't too difficult to recognize the differences and identify the Christ in you. Because the way we thought was different, the way we saw the world. The sky looked bluer, the air smelled purer. There was a completely radical shift. It wasn't difficult to see Jesus.

However, it seems that the longer we are Christians the more difficult it is to discern Christ in us because this new life has become routine. We learn how to live the Christian life and therein is our downfall. We wrongly think we know how to live for Christ. The new life becomes routine, and we tend to blur the distinction between Christ living His life through us, and you and I living our own lives. We don't even think about it anymore. We don't think *that it is Christ in me*. We've become so accustomed to Christ in us that we've lost that holy awe and amazement. Have you lost that? Is it still amazing to you that the Omnipotent Creator is living in you?

By not knowing what it really means for Jesus' life to be in us, we are not only confused, but end up trying to live *for* Jesus, rather than let Him live *through* us. It's almost as confusing as a story I read recently. It is called, The Bagpiper's Tale.

As a bagpiper, I'm often called upon to play at weddings, military events, and funerals. Recently I was asked by a funeral director to play at a grave side service for a homeless man. The man had no family or friends, so the service was set at the county pauper's cemetery in the Kentucky back woods.

I was not familiar with the backwoods and soon found myself lost. Being a typical man I didn't stop to ask for directions. I finally arrived an hour late – the staff from the funeral home was long gone and the hearse was nowhere in sight.

There were only the diggers and crew left and they were eating lunch. I felt badly and apologized to the men for being late. I went to the side of the grave and looked down. The vault lid was already in place. I didn't know what else to do, so I started to play....

The workers put down their lunches and began to gather around. I played out my heart and soul for this man with no family and friends. I played like I've never played before for this homeless man.

And as I played 'Amazing Grace,' the workers began to weep. They wept. I wept. We all wept together.

When I finished I packed up my bagpipes and started for my car. Though my head hung low my heart was full.

As I opened the door to my car, I heard one of the workers say, "I never seen nothin' like that before and I've been putting in septic tanks for twenty years."

We can be easily confused. And the Christian life can appear confusing to us because we've not learned how to recognize the life of Christ in us. Having said that I want to recap last week.

I. Recap of Last Week

This whole message is based on this equation:

The grace of God = the indwelling Christ = law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

That doesn't mean you shouldn't pray for the grace of God. Both Paul and Peter exhort their readers to pray that they would increase in the knowledge and the grace of God. But that grace is not a commodity, a gift, that God gives like a gift you might receive for Christmas or a birthday. The grace of God is the loving kindness of God, and the loving kindness of God is always given to you through the person of Jesus Christ. And, since He is kind and loving all the time, and because He is in you, you always have the grace of God at your disposal.

Thus, when I pray God would be gracious to you, I'm asking that the experience of God's loving kindness that comes to us through Jesus be your experience. Therefore, to grow in the grace of Christ you are learning to submit to that power of Christ in you.

We need that grace because,

A. There Are Two Laws Fighting For Supremacy.

There is a struggle in the Christian life. I reject those who say that the Christian life is absent of struggle and that if you're struggling it means you're not really living the Christian life. I despise that because it is really misleading. I understand what they're trying to say, Jesus said it Himself, "My yoke is easy, My burden is light." Jesus is our Sabbath rest so there ought to be a sense of peace and rest in the life of a believer. But the Bible also says there is a law called the law of sin and death that is operating in you. The only difference for a Christian is that the law no longer dominates you. That power has been broken. You can choose to say no to the law of sin and death, but it's still operating in your fallen human nature.

But there is another law. It is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

*"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death."
(Romans 8:2)*

There is no better description of these two laws struggle for dominance than in Galatians five.

"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 that you wish." (Galatians 5:16-17)

The lusts of the human nature wars against the Spirit and the Spirit wars against the flesh so you're not able to do what you want to do.

So which one has supremacy?

The one you feed the most.

And which one will you feed the most?

The one you trust.

Your faith is food to whichever law or spirit that is seeking dominance in your life. Let me give you an illustration. If you're in a position where someone is very critical of you and says something hurtful, at that moment you have a temptation and a decision to make. You're tempted to either retaliate and say things you will probably later regret—that's the law of sin and death—or remember that if you're saved there is another law working, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus and that He's just as active as the law of sin and death. He's there to say to you, "Remember Jesus. He too was spoken evil of; He too was mistreated. How did He respond? 'Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.'"

So at that moment you have a decision to make—which law am I going to trust? The one you trust you feed, and the one you feed becomes dominant.

If you trust yourself and say *I've got to deal with this, this is not right, I've got to set this straight*, then you've trusted the law of sin and death, which means you've trusted you, and your flesh will become stronger. But if you say yes to God and the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus and say, *God, I'm going to trust You with this. I know all things work to good. I don't know what You're doing, and just like Job I don't know why You allowed this, but I'm going to trust You*, then the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus becomes strong and your spirit becomes strong in Him. That's what we shared with you last week.

B. The Difference Between My Willpower and the Willpower of the Spirit.

Is there a difference between our willpower exerted to obey God and the willpower of the Holy Spirit? And if so, what is the difference?

1. The Willpower of Self Always Looks to Self.

Don't confuse will with willpower. The will is the part of you that God created to choose to obey and follow Him, but once you've made that decision to submit to the Lord what strength do you call on to follow through with your decision? Do you look to yourself, your wisdom, abilities and sufficiency to carry out your obedience to God? Or do you look to the Holy Spirit? If the focus is on you then it's your willpower and the Bible says that's the law of sin and death working. It's the flesh and it's not pleasing to the Lord.

2. The Willpower of the Spirit Always Looks to Christ.

The Spirit of Christ in you is there to motivate you to turn your eyes off yourself and behold the Lord Jesus Christ and fight the fight of faith.

What is the fight of faith? It is to run to the Gospel and believe it.

Don't confuse not relying on your willpower to mean there's no struggle. It is a fight and the fight is for you to continue to trust Jesus. It's always going to be that way as long as you're in a body this side of heaven. You choose, by an act of your own will, to fight this fight to trust in Jesus.

It is confusing to discern your willpower from the power and strength of the Lord if you believe that God's willpower takes away the temptation or enticement. If that's what you're looking for, you're going to be defeated because seldom does God take away the temptation or enticement. Most often He will not do that because you have to learn to fight the temptation. Remember, "I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ that lives within me; and the life that I now live," is to fight this temptation, but I don't do it in my strength, wisdom or ingenuity. I rely on the indwelling law of the Spirit. The Spirit of Christ who is in me. He will help me to fight

and I will fight according to the Spirit not according to the flesh, and therefore, I will be able to overcome. But that doesn't mean God will remove the temptation. Sometimes He does, most often He doesn't.

For example, how many of you have been on a diet? You do good for a while and then what happens? It goes south. That's because it was based on the willpower of self, which is the flesh. The Spirit of God never wants you to look at yourself as your own resource. He always points you to the Lord Jesus Christ.

How does the Spirit point to Christ? He does so by bringing the work of the Gospel to apply to your situation. He always takes you back to the Gospel. This is why I say you cannot ever be too educated in the Gospel. You never graduate beyond the Gospel. Every answer I need and you need is in the Gospel. You say, *What else is there besides Jesus dying and rising from the dead three days later?* But that's just the core of it; there's a whole lot more to the Gospel than that.

For example, we know the Bible says I shouldn't get angry. If somebody does something and I feel anger I have a decision to make. Do I allow that anger to control me or do I look to the Spirit? If I look to the Spirit He will take me back to Jesus and show me exactly how Jesus responds to me when I sin or disobey Him. He willingly suffered on my behalf and carried that sin to the cross. Now friends, do you see what the Spirit is doing? He is causing us to focus on Christ and what He has done for us. In turn, we gain strength from that. Just the Spirit's lead to rehearse the Gospel will strengthen you so you can live the Christian life.

I want to caution us. Those of us who are introspective people must be very careful. This message and last week's is not about you looking deep into your heart with your little moral flashlight trying to find all of the motives of why you do what you do. That's exactly what the law of sin and death wants you to do. Remember, the law of the Spirit of life wants you to look away from yourself and to Jesus. Why do I say that? Because we never can know all the motives of our heart at any given time. Our motives are not always pure; in fact I seldom think they are. Even when I want to obey God out of the purest motives for His glory there is still sin in me. The law of sin and death is still active. Therefore, don't shine the light on your own heart, shine it on Jesus and what He's done and is doing for you.

You won't do this perfectly. Stop right now and take a sigh of relief. You're not going to walk in the Spirit perfectly as long as you're in this world, but He will perfectly lead you if you listen.

Question: When somebody has said something to me that is very negative, I have approached it first by examining if there is any truth in what they're saying. Is that the power of self or the Holy Spirit?

My answer is that it's a sign of maturity to be open to the Lord and say, *Okay, Father, this person may not be saying it in a right spirit, but there may be truth in what they're saying.* That's not looking introspectively, it's really looking to the Lord and saying, *God, open my ears to what You might be*

saying through this person. It's being open to the possibility that self is not perfect. The law of sin and death would not go there. That's the Holy Spirit and it's a great way to respond. It will really diffuse the situation quickly because God may have meant to use that person, and while that person may have gotten in the flesh, it doesn't mean what they said was wrong.

II. The Difference Between My Conscience and the Leading of the Spirit

My conscience works very well because it's been trained very well. After 27 years of being a Christian and reading the Bible, my conscience is well informed and can direct me. You may ask, "Isn't that the Holy Spirit?" and I want to answer clearly, without anybody misunderstanding: No, that isn't the Holy Spirit.

The conscience is not the way the Holy Spirit leads. The conscience is you. It may be right, it may be telling you exactly what you need to hear and reminding you of the commandments of Christ—*You better not do that; you shouldn't do that*—but that doesn't mean that's the Holy Spirit. It simply means you have a conscience that's well trained and knows the difference between right and wrong. But if you listen to the voice of the conscience you'll be listening to the voice of the law of sin and death because that conscience is still corrupt and imperfect.

How do you know if it's the conscience or the Holy Spirit?

A. The Emphasis of the Conscience is Always Self.

It's always on you. The conscience will never, ever tell you to look away at Christ. The conscience never says, *You better call upon God right now because you're in a situation that if you're not careful you'll be overwhelmed.* Never. The conscience always points its finger at you and says, *You better do this or else. You better obey God or else.*

Here's how you know if you're being led by the Spirit of God or your own conscience—if you "fail" and don't do what the conscience wants you to do, the conscience points its finger at you and says, *You low down, rotten scoundrel you. I told you that you ought not to do this and now look at what you've done. You are bad. God doesn't love you.* Condemnation comes in and Satan will use your conscience to condemn you all the more. Again, the emphasis and focus on the conscience is always on the person, never on God.

What if you did what the conscience tells you to do? Well then, it praises you. The focus is always on you. *That-a girl, that-a boy! God is really proud of you now. I just wish more people had seen what you just did.* The conscience always applauds you because *you* are the source at which it directs its command.

B. The Emphasis of the Spirit is Always Christ.

The voice and the leadership of the Holy Spirit always lead you to Jesus. That's His job. Jesus said the Holy Spirit is going to come and He is going to glorify Me, He's going to take what I taught you and will give you insight and understanding. He is here to glorify Christ. And so, the leadership of the Holy Spirit is always Christ-centered. In other words, as God leads you He will often give you some task that seems to be beyond your ability, He will always call for you to look beyond yourself and look to Christ as your strength so that it He who does it in you. The emphasis of the Spirit is always Jesus, never you.

If you hear a command that comes to your mind and there is no casting of yourself upon Christ, then, my friend, that is not the Spirit.

That doesn't mean you ought not to do what that conscience is saying, but you are not to do it in your own strength. You always look to Christ for His strength to do His will.

That's the difference between the conscience and the Spirit. So much of the time Christians simply go through life navigating themselves because they know what's right and wrong. They avoid what's wrong and try to do what's right, and they think God's leading them when God is nowhere around because He's never acknowledged.

Question: What about the unbeliever and his or her conscience? How does it work and how do we address the conscience when we're sharing the faith with them?

Every one of us is born with a conscience. It's a part of the human makeup. So, because we are all descendants of Adam we all have a conscience. But the conscience is flawed, like every other part of us. My body is flawed, my mind is imperfect, my intellect, my emotions are defective. Everything about me is corrupted or depraved, as the theologians call it, and that includes the conscience. But that doesn't mean an unbeliever's conscience is not correct. There are a lot of people who are moral because they listen to their conscience, but they are not Christians. We have to recognize that when we're dealing with someone who is very moral, but yet an unbeliever, they are very conscience-oriented—they listen to their conscience—and they are very self-oriented because of it. Why? Because that is the only strength they have in order to do what is good. So what you end up having is a Pharisee.

This is what the Pharisees were; they were moral people who tithed even on their herb gardens. They were really critical in the area of trying to obey the commandments. But Jesus said, "Unless your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees, you will in no way enter the kingdom of heaven." So we need more than conscience-dictated moral behavior, we need a moral behavior that's generated by the life of Christ in us so it's God doing it and not us and so He's the One glorified and not you.

I would always appeal to the moral unbeliever to make sure they understand that all their morality in the sight of God is wickedness because it doesn't glorify God it glorifies them.

III. A DESCRIPTION OF LIVING BY THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS

How does God lead us? He leads us in numerous ways. He can even lead the conscience, but He will always supersede it and eventually show us that Christ is the only way that can live this life for us. Therefore, I cannot number all the ways God speaks and leads us. He may use one of you, He may use your children, He may use a grandchild, there are hundreds of ways God has at His disposal to direct us. But I want to talk about the three most substantial.

A. The More Mystical.

This is hard to miss and therefore quite easy to discern. It's when God speaks to you in such a profound way that you are aware that you're in the presence of God. You know that God is speaking to you and you just know because you know. You are overwhelmed by His presence. Your heart may begin to race and you are convinced that you're in His presence.

Can you remember, since becoming a Christian, when you've had that experience? You might have been reading your Bible, or in church or on the job, but God spoke to you and you knew that you knew it was God, there was no question about it. You sensed His presence so strongly. That's easy. I wish He did it that way all the time, but that's the less frequent way He leads.

B. The Less Mystical.

In fact, it's not mystical at all. And this is the way He predominantly leads.

The word *mystical* simply means God communicating to you in a very subjective, personal way.

What is this less mystical way? The Word of God.

God speaks to us through the Scriptures, primarily and mostly. And often when He does you don't feel the presence of God, you don't hear voices, you don't have this inner-pressure or sense of an impression that God wants you to do this or that, you're just reading the Scripture and it informs you on what the will of God is for your life.

The Spirit of God will take the Scriptures and will direct you and you may not even know it's Him. But it's Him nonetheless.

Let me demonstrate this for you. When you obey Scripture, looking to Christ for the desire and strength to obey what you're reading, that's the Holy Spirit. If you look within to do it, "Okay, I'm not supposed to lose my temper. I'm not supposed to lust. I'm supposed to read my Bible and pray everyday so I'm going to grab myself and we're going to do this whether we like it or not," that's you, not God. It doesn't glorify Him because it's the law of sin and death.

But when you look to Christ and say, “Oh Lord, I don’t feel like reading my Bible today. You know I don’t, but I really want to. I know I need it, would You give me grace? You are the grace of God, the loving kindness of God manifested in the Son by the Spirit, direct me now. I’m looking to You.”

How do you do that? You go back to the Gospel. The Spirit always directs you to Jesus Christ, who He is, what He’s done and what He’s doing for you as your Mediator and Advocate. You look to the Lord and think—here is Jesus, the Son of God in all of His glory and He becomes one of us in order to redeem me, to save me. He did it as a man full of the Spirit. You begin to contemplate and meditate upon Christ and how He obeyed the Father’s will. This is all the Spirit working. That is His life in you.

By the way, who wrote the Bible? God.

Who created the mind to understand the Bible? God.

So it seems to me that God can take His Word and, renew my mind so that I don’t have to have the inner-pressure and compulsion of the Spirit, that very subjective experience where I know I’m in the presence of God and He tells me what to do and I do it. I don’t need that because I’m simply obeying the Scripture, but not in my strength.

This is the crucial point. I never look to God’s commands and say, “Okay, now I know what to do,” and then go do them. No, I look at the commands of Scripture with utter hopelessness in myself.

For example, the Bible says husbands are to love your wives and wives, are to honor their husbands, submit to them and show them respect. But let’s say your spouse is unlovable one day or all week long, what is the command of God? Sir, you are to love your wife and wife you are to honor your husband. That seems utterly impossible to you because the law of sin and death that still operates in your flesh is saying, “You ought not respect the scoundrel, he’s disrespectful to you, he doesn’t deserve honor, and you need to set him straight.” Husband, you have an equal challenge to love somebody who’s not very lovable today or who hasn’t been very lovable the last several days who shows you no respect. You know what you are to do. Love her anyway.

The truth is you don’t have that within you, except in the person of Jesus Christ. You feel more like saying, “God, I just want to choke her. I don’t want to love her.” “Lord, I want to tell that man he is no good and worthless.” Instead, you must get on your face and say, “Lord, that will not glorify You and I want You to be glorified. I know You said that the Spirit of Christ in me is capable of helping me to love him or her and honor them.” It is at this point you choose to trust God and do it. You find when you do it amazing strength. It’s just that simple.

You may have to go back to God and pray the same thing thirty minutes later or several times a day, every day, but brother, sister, that is the fight of faith to believe the Gospel. The Gospel says, “it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.” This is the life of faith.

Let me give you another illustration. The Bible says I should not be materialistic. I should not put my hope in things. But there are certain days when you think, “Man, I’d like to go out buy something today.” You have wanted something particular but have not purchased it. You think to yourself, “I don’t have it and I’ve wanted it for a while. Having that would really get me out of the dumps.” For you it might be a new blouse or for me it may be a new book. For some of you it may be a new fishing rod or a new car.

I know what the Bible says about that desire to spend money. I don’t need God to come to me and say, “Michael, you ought not to buy that car today. Your car is just fine and running well. You don’t need a new car right now. Besides, the Bible says lay up your treasures in heaven not on earth.”

I don’t need God to come and say all that to me, I already have the Word of God. The question is what do I do with the truth I know? I get before the Lord and say, “Lord, You know my heart. There is a strong desire to go out and spend this money on myself and not on the kingdom. I’m tempted to not use my money as a good steward. I’m asking You to direct my heart. I’m giving You my heart and I’m going to trust You, Lord, that if You want me to have it You will bring it to pass.” In fact, if God wants you to have something He can give it to you if you will wait patiently on Him. Some of you think that’s crazy, but I’ve seen God do that on Karen’s and my behalf many times because we obeyed the Lord’s Word refusing to lay up treasures on this earth.

We do not need the Holy Spirit to tell us to do the things we know we are supposed to do. What the Spirit wants us to do is look to Jesus to mediate His strength in our lives so we can obey in the power of the Spirit.

There is one more way I want to deal with.

C. In Between the More and the Less.

I want to address an in between point of where you know undoubtedly that God is leading you and reading the Bible and letting God lead you by His written commands. There are times when the Spirit is leading you and because you have not learned how to discern His ways you don’t know that it’s God.

How do I discern if God is leading me and not my own desires?

Here are three things to help you to arrive at an answer to that question. I will not dare take your personal situations and try to analyze them for you because I’m not God. Rather, I’m going to give you three principles from Scripture that will help you analyze your own situation prayerfully.

I. Are you constantly looking unto Jesus?

Have you developed a mindset that is always looking away from self and looking to Jesus? Because if you're not it's probably you at this point. Before you can hear God speak you have to develop a mindset to listen to Him.

2. There has to be absolute surrender.

What do I mean by that? I don't mean to come forward at an altar call where they are playing "I Surrender All". I mean that your spirit is absolutely neutral to God's will. As long as you know what God's will is you will entertain it with joy. Some of us want God to tell us before we commit so we can determine whether we want to do it or not. He doesn't cooperate under such terms. He cooperates with those whose Spirit is already yielded to His leadership. He can direct them, steer them, with just His eye. They have learned to be yielded to God.

3. A confident faith that God can use you in amazing ways.

You need to believe that God can do something through you that is astounding and awesome. Unfortunately, we don't do that and therefore we do not see God. We don't get up in the morning and say, "Lord, You do great things so I'm going to attempt great things for You." When is the last time you started your day like that? We don't think that way, and therefore, according to our faith we shut down God. That's the principle of Scripture: "According to your faith let it be to you." In other words, if you don't believe God for it, it won't happen. God will only work in you to your capacity to believe God. If you don't believe God will direct you like this, then it will not happen and you'll walk away as a naysayer and say, "It doesn't work. God doesn't work that way anymore." It doesn't work for you because you don't believe God. I know people who believe God and it does work. Besides that, I have His Word that He is alive in me. This is the same God that caused dead men to walk again and opened blinded eyes. This same Jesus lives in you! What is the problem that we don't see Christ in us? It's simply a matter that we are not confident that He would do that, but we're quite confident that He won't. And "according to your faith let it be to you."

You may ask, "How do I know when God is leading and directing me?" If you meet these three qualifications you can be assured that God will never, ever mislead you. He will never contradict His Word, and whatever God tells you to do, you can trust Him to do it in you. But if you can do it, then it probably wasn't God.

You might ask the question: What is the difference between doing that and getting up in the morning and praying, "Lord guide my day, I want You to direct my steps," and then going about the routine of my day?

I would say that most of us do live this way. We probably get up in the morning and pray, "Lord, I want You to direct me today. I want to be obedient to You today," and then we go right out the door and do what we do every day.

The first problem with this is that what we do every day is routine, we can do it with a great deal of confidence and with very little thought. We go on autopilot. We live our days on autopilot. You do the same thing every day.

How many of you have factory-type work or know somebody who works on an assembly line? They do the same thing every minute of every day. If you ask one of these workers if their mind ever wanders onto other things while they're working, most of them will tell you it does. Why? Because muscle memory takes over, they know what they're doing and the mind has an amazing ability to multi-task.

Gentlemen, let's be honest, when you're shaving, does your mind actually think about each and every stroke or does it wander and think about other things? I confess I think about other things. When you're in the shower do you really concentrate on how the bar of soap is making sufficient lather? No. Your mind is on something else. I have an iPhone and I'll put it on the docking station and will listen to a sermon. I want to utilize that time so that it isn't wasted. That's just a little example of how much of our everyday lives is spent without really thinking about the task at hand.

For the majority of us the schedule of our day is the also the same. The same thing is going to happen in the same chronological order for the most part. That, my dear friend, is contrary to the Spirit-led life. Living on autopilot is not being spirit-led.

What does Proverbs 3:5-6 say?

*“Trust in the LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART,
And lean not on your own understanding;
6 In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths.”*

Secondly, the Lord may want us to go about our daily routine in a completely different way. He might want you to do the same things but He might want you to do it in a very different way. Maybe He knows a better way to do it. But you'll never know until you open yourself up to His leading. Or He may want to manifest Himself in a way that is different than your routine. He might want to interrupt your routine and do something absolutely different with your life that day.

Our problem is that we don't believe God will speak to us in the routineness of our life. We are not it in a frame of mind to listen, therefore we do not hear God. I believe God is speaking to us but we do not have ears to hear because we do not have a mind that believes that He will speak to us. We need to learn how to renew the mind in order to listen. What will help that tremendously as a frame of mind that believes and feels a dependency upon God. In other words, a desperate dependency, one who feels that they need to be led by the Spirit and that will promote a listening ear. They're open to hear. When you're open to hear from God, guess what happens? You hear from Him.

I am believing God for you, but I cannot believe absolutely for you. You have to walk by faith yourself. I believe God wants to change your life so that you become simply a conduit for the life of Christ in you so that people will see Him do amazing things. How can you know that God wants you to go have lunch with somebody who is an unbeliever and just love on them, just talk to them and find out about your life and show an interest in them if you won't listen to God and hear Him say, "Go take that person out to lunch." You say, *God doesn't talk like that.* Yes, He does! If you'll listen He will direct you. But you have to listen and be absolutely surrendered to His leadership.

I think the answer to our beginning two questions are now answered. How can Paul say that he no longer lives but Christ lived in him? It's the life of Christ within him that Paul was submitting to so his actions were really Christ acting through him. Paul's decision to surrender his life and obey God allowed the power of Christ to live. It was still Paul living but now he was living by a different power source.

That's the same answer to the question: "How we are saved by grace apart from works and yet we are commanded to do good works? You will do good works because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is going to be motivating you to want to do those things. That's Philippians 2:12-13, "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." Who can do that? I can't and you can't either. But God can do it in and through us, "for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13).

God has not saved you so you go to heaven. God has saved you so He can glorify Himself through you, which means your life has to be lived the way Jesus would live your life. That is a powerful statement. God saved you to live life through you which means you have to quit living the Christian life and let God live it through you.

When that happens good works will become natural. If you're forcing good works, if you're forcing morality, if you're forcing the Christian life, I plead with you in Jesus' name, how do you know you're saved? I'm not saying you're not, but that's exactly what the Pharisees did. I'm fearful if that's where you are this morning because it is natural for the believer. And when he's not living according to the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus he or she knows it.

Jesus indwells the believer by the Holy Spirit giving the Christian the desire and ability to obey God. And those who are saved will do good works. In fact, the fruit of the Spirit, which is the character of Jesus, will be more and more evident in the Christian's life.

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Paul begins the Gospel with these words in Romans 1:17,

“For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.””

In other words, the whole Christian life is not about asking Jesus to come into your heart, that's just the beginning. From that moment on you live by faith in Christ who dwells in you so that He will live His life through your life so what was true in Romans 5:10 will be true about you: you “will be saved by His life.” This is glorious good news. Some of you are miserable because you're trying to save yourself now that you are a Christian. Stop. You're saved by His life. He lives within you. Let His life dominate you. If you don't, another law will dominate. It's the law, not of life, but of death. Amen.