

# Saved by the Life of Christ in Me

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

A sermon delivered Sunday Morning, January 26, 2014  
at Oak Grove Baptist Church, Paducah, Ky.  
by S. Michael Durham  
© 2014 Real Truth Matters

## Romans 5:10

*For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.*

We have been spiritually resurrected with Christ and one day, if we die before the Lord returns, we will be physically resurrected. But the object of our beloved Paul the Apostle in this text is not our physical resurrection but our spiritual. The New Testament repeatedly argues that we have already been raised with Christ. For example,

*“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 6:4)*

*“For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.” (Romans 6:5)*

*“Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:11)*

*“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,<sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).” (Ephesians 2:4-5)*

There are other verses that could be cited. The New Testament makes the moment a sinner becomes a Christian analogous with resurrection because the change salvation brings is that great. In other words, the Bible portrays salvation like being raised from the dead because the change that comes at conversion is just that kind of change—it’s new life.

Last week we saw that Jesus’ resurrection plays an equal role with His death in our justification. We are right with God not just because He died as our substitute, but also because God vindicated Jesus when He was raised from the dead.

In verse 10 Paul shows how the death and resurrected life of Jesus are coequals in our salvation. In the first part of verse 10 Paul refers to our Lord’s death, “For if when we were enemies we

were reconciled to God through the death of His Son.” The message is that Jesus’ death is the bridge that gapped the infinite distance between God and man. His death brought us into relationship with God. We are estranged and separated from our Creator because of our rebellion. But the justice of God that demanded our eternal death was satisfied in the sacrifice and death of His Son. Now the hands of God are outstretched toward us not in holding us away but in welcoming us to Him. Do you see that? The God who is holy, stretched out His hands toward you and me to withstand us but because of the reconciliation that was brought about by His Christ’s death, now His hands are outstretched to welcome us.

But there is more to our salvation than being reconnected to God. The Apostle Paul continues and says there is another aspect of our salvation just as necessary, the last part of verse 10, “much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

There it is again—the “already but not yet” understanding of salvation. Look at verse 10 again, “We were reconciled to God,” past tense, “we shall be saved,” future tense, therefore our salvation has happened and is happening.

I have spent my Christian life trying to understand the “already but not yet.” My comprehension of conversion, the new birth, and justification by faith is settled. That doesn’t mean I can’t learn more about it but what I may learn about it now won’t impact my conversion since I’ve already been converted. But my understanding of how I am being saved and will be saved is not complete and what I am learning does have impact. The greater portion of my life since Jesus saved me has been devoted to learning about this present and future tense of our salvation. I’ve tried to comprehend what your and my role is in this phrase, “we shall be saved.” What is there for us to do in the phrase, “we shall be saved”?

I spent 26 years of my life trying to help God save me until I gave up and understood God was right—I couldn’t help Him. He didn’t need my help, and my attempt to help was not holiness or spirituality, as my sin deceived me to think, but rather it was nothing more than shameful unbelief. I gloried in my shame. I took pride in my religion and my goodness, and all along it was contemptible and morally evil because it was a flagrant display of my absolute distrust in God and His Son. Jesus was not good enough but I thought I was. Therefore, I tried to be a Christian because I wouldn’t believe God could be trusted with my eternity and me. Do you see how sin can warp a man’s thinking? To think your sin, your goodness, your religion is actually something God is happy with when it’s nothing more than despicable unbelief?

But my sin of pride did not end with my conversion. I’m thankful that God brought me to the end of myself and showed me what Christ has completed for me. But my pride didn’t end there. Since then, I’ve spent a good deal of the last 27 years trying to help God save me in this present and future tense of salvation. And it isn’t just me; everyone has had this experience at one time or another.

My problem with pride since my conversion was I believed that since I am a Christian I could help God save me by being what I should be for Him. I can be involved in my salvation by helping others come to Jesus, by praying and fighting my sin, learning and teaching others the Bible, by improving as a parent, husband, and pastor. At times, all I could see is that I am to do these are things if I am to be sanctified, if I am to be saved now, and saved in the future. If final judgment is when God says, "Well done thou good and faithful servant," well then, I better start being faithful in doing and being good.

I trust me more than I trust God. That is my problem and it is my natural bent and inclination and it's yours too. After we are saved, sooner or later, we eventually run back to self and law because we like having a hand in our final approval. We don't want to relinquish control because to do that means having to trust God completely. So, I'm back to glorying in how good a Christian I am or how I've grown in Christian maturity when the truth is I'm glorying in my shame, the shame that I can't completely trust in Jesus.

The reality is that "we shall be saved by His life" by trusting in Him as we did when "we were reconciled by the death of His Son."

The only way salvation works for any of us is by grace through faith alone. This is a call to Christians to go back to believing Jesus completely for your present and future salvation. This is a call to sinners, people yet to become brothers and sisters in Christ, to quit glorying in your shame and trust Jesus no matter what. He's trustworthy and He will not let you down.

## **I. The Union of Christ and the Believer**

*"For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."*

The word *by* is more accurately translated in the Greek as the preposition *in*. We shall be saved *in* His life. Paul is saying the moment you have been reconciled to God through the death of His Son and you place your complete confidence in that reconciliation, God grafts you into Jesus.

### **A. Grafted into Jesus.**

Jesus taught this grafting principle in a parable we call the Vine and the Branches in John 15. Do you know how they graft branches into other plants? They take the stock, or the trunk, and they'll cut a little 45-degree angle into the main stock of the plant. Then they take the branch they want to implant into the main stock, and they will cut it to a 45-degree angle until they get to the very center marrow of that branch. Then they take the branch and shove it into the 45-degree cut that is in the stock. They wrap it up and do you know what happens with time? The two grow into being one and the life that is in the plant now flow into the branch that has been grafted in. Jesus said abide, remain, dwell in Me and you will produce much fruit. Jesus never taught us to go out and perform like a Christian, He said, "Let Me perform in you. Let My life be in you and you'll be saved by My life." That's what Paul is saying.

## **B. Jesus' Life is in Us.**

The moment you are placed in union with Christ, the life of Jesus is in you. That's awesome. When you get it out of the religious cliché and start to think about the reality that the Creator, the all-powerful One inhabits you, how awesome it is! How sad it is that I have limited Omnipotence. Can that be done? Can you limit the Unlimited One? When you refuse to believe in His omnipotence on your behalf.

Jesus said something that amazed the disciples one night and they didn't have a clue to what He was saying.

*"A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also."*

They had no understanding. They weren't going to die and be put in a tomb and raised three days later. *What does He mean 'you will live also'?* They must have wondered. He wasn't talking about their physical resurrection; what He was saying was because He would come out of the grave three days later they would live also. They were going to live because Jesus said He would dwell in them bodily. The life of Christ in them would be their new power source for daily living.

The same is true for you and me. We can live the Christian life that pleases the Father because. That's now possible. Why? Because Christianity is in you. The sum total of the Christian faith is Jesus Christ and He dwells in you. He goes on to say that in verse 20.

*"At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you." (John 14:19-20)*

There it is. They were going to live. They weren't living yet, they were barely existing, but a few days later they were going to be filled with God Himself. They were going to be alive like never before.

That's what happened to you and me when we were converted. Anyone who has been converted knows this life. They know there is something different about themselves. They don't know how to explain it but they know their life has been changed. Why? It's not because you have necessarily been changed, as we'll see in a few moments, but there has been a new life implanted in you that brings change.

Let's talk about that new life.

## **II. THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS**

Paul doesn't talk about that new life in chapter five, but he does a few chapters over. In Romans 8, Paul calls this "life" of Jesus a law.

*“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 the word *life*. We shall be saved *by* or *in* His life and now Paul gives us more understanding. He calls this life of Jesus in you a law; a law of the Spirit of life.

What Does Paul Mean By Law?

Let's answer that by first coming to a definition of the word *law*.

A definition pertaining to natural law is:

“A statement of fact, deduced from observation, to the effect that a particular natural or scientific phenomenon always occurs if certain conditions are present” (*Oxford Dictionary*.)

An easier way to explain a law is to say something that happens every time, all the time. A law in nature is something that happens again and again and again when the conditions are always the same.

For example, the law of gravity proves that if you drop something it will always fall. And as many times as you drop it, it will always fall. The only exception is if this handkerchief I'm dropping could sprout wings like a bird and fly, then it could be an exception to the law of gravity. That's another law called the law of aerodynamics. But unless you've got a plane or have wings like a bird, if you fall off a high place you're going to do exactly that—fall.

The law of gravity happens again and again when the conditions are the same. So what Paul is saying to us is that the Spirit of Christ is the life of Christ in you and that life works like a law, a principle that happens again and again providing the conditions are the same. The life of Christ in you takes on the characteristics of an influence that will work every time all the time if the right conditions are met. We've got to find out what the right conditions are to enact the life of Jesus in you.

## **B. How Does the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Work?**

The law of the Spirit of life in Christ works to override the law of sin and death. Remember Romans 6:11 says, “Likewise, you also, reckon yourselves to be dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” You've died to sin. But notice verse 12. This is a remarkable verse in contrast to verse eleven. “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body.”

What did he say that? If we have died to sin how could sin reign in us. The answer is we have died to sin but sin didn't die to us. That's an important statement and I need to repeat it. The Bible, the New Testament, teaches that the Christian has died to the law of sin and death but the law has not died to the believer. Sin's power over us has been broken. You don't have to do what sin

tells you to do. You're not under a compulsion you cannot break. The sinful compulsion has been broken. You don't have to give in.

But though you have died to sin, sin didn't die. It's still in you. You're not perfect. Your body, mind, soul, they're not perfect yet. Therefore, the remaining sin in you operates covert actions against you. It is from within that sin and Satan attacks you. My dear friend, it's not outside of you, it's within you. That's what Paul is saying. So when you move into the seventh chapter of Romans, Paul begins to talk about this law of sin and death. Even sin and death is a law like the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

So many people get Romans seven confused. You don't need to go into Romans seven wondering if this man is saved or lost because you'll miss the message if that is what you think the chapter is about. Paul is trying to explain the purpose and the function of the law, what it can and cannot do, and what it cannot do is this—save or sanctify you. It cannot reconcile you to God and it cannot save you present or future tense. So Paul uses, as an illustration, himself, but he's speaking primarily about when he wanted to be saved but had not yet been converted.

In verse 14 he says, "I know the law is spiritual, but I'm carnal, sold under sin." So what happens? He tells us in verse 15-17,

*"For what I am doing, I do not understand, for what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me."*

In other words, Paul says when I exert my willpower and I say *I'm going to obey God but I do not do it, well then sin rules me*. He repeats this in verse 20, "Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me."

Paul is not offering an excuse to skirt his responsibility but why he doesn't do what he is responsible to do—obey God. He suggests that the problem is on deeper level than behavior. Within the heart another law is working and it's not the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. It's the law of sin and death. Note verse 21.

*"I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good."*

You must remember that Paul is writing from a Jewish worldview, a religious man who loves the Old Testament, which is the Word of God. He wanted to do what God wanted him to do because he knew blessings came from obedience—in this life and eternal life. A Jewish man would have delighted in the law of God, not in the sense that a Christian does; he would have delighted in God's law because it showed him how to behave in such a way that if obeyed, he would be guaranteed heaven.

For example, if you wanted to lose weight and I gave you a diet plan, you would actually like the plan even though it's not easy because you knew that if you followed through with the plan you would lose weight and get healthy. Now the plan is difficult and you do not enjoy it, but in another sense you delight in it because you know it will help you get healthy. That's what Paul says in verse 22. "I delight in the law of God according to the inward man," meaning the mind. In the mind a religious man like Saul of Tarsus would have loved the Word of God because if he performed it, then he would live eternally. But he discovered that he could not do it as God intended. Why? Verse 23.

*"But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."*

The law of sin and death. There it is, an obstacle keeping him from obeying the commandments of God.

By virtue of being born sinners and separated from the life of God, we operate by what we are. And within us there is a law of sin and a law of death. And because these are laws they happen again and again.

The law of sin is this: live for yourself. That is the thrust of the law of sin. You see it in the temptation of Eve and there is in every sinner this inner compulsion to live for themselves and not God. That's the law of sin and death.

The law works in the body but that doesn't mean the body is evil because it isn't. Our physical bodies are corrupt and imperfect, they are fallen, but they are not evil. However, they are the point of contact with temptation. Satan and sin will entice us through the appetites of the mind and the body. Without an opposing law sin dominates us. In fact, you can do what is morally right but your goodness is sin before God because it flows from the law of sin and death.

The law of sin and death will work to keep you from the Savior by convincing you that you can be good enough. You can be good *enough*, and you are all too happy to believe it. This principle of sin motivates behavioral conformity persuading its victim that such is enough. But I remind you of my case, I was doing what was expected, but, and here is the point, *I* was doing them. Out of my own willpower I was performing the good and that is the manifestation of the law of sin and death. It doesn't matter what sin is tempting you with, whether it's the law and obedience or drunkenness and addictions as long as the power to do either one comes from you, it's the law of sin and death.

That's why this is extremely dangerous and we've got a lot of people, some in this room, who are excellent people. You're good. But that's *you* and not Jesus in you.

What the Spirit of life does is He overrides and interrupts the law of sin and death.

If I drop my handkerchief the law of gravity will always send it down. The same is true with the law of sin and death. It always takes you down. Religion will always take you down. Good works will always take you down. Trying harder to please God always takes you down. But if I catch and uphold my handkerchief, then I have interrupted and overridden the law of sin and death. That is exactly what the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus does. God places within you the very life of His Son, Jesus; His essence and His existence comes within you. The law of the Spirit is the life of Christ in us and that law of Jesus' life in us is a constant impulse, influence, and energy creating in us a desire and ability to live as Christ.

When I catch this handkerchief, it's not holding itself up, I am. You don't keep yourself saved—Jesus keeps you saved! He gives you the power, the energy, the influence, the impulse to do what He wants you to do when He wants you to do it because He's inside telling and directing you. That's what this law does and it happens again and again and again. That's what a law is, something that happens repeatedly when the conditions remain the same.

What is the condition? It is *faith working through love* (Galatians 5:6). Another way to say it is this: The condition needed for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus to operate is to listen to the inner life in us and simply trust Him who dwells in us, which produces obedience.

Obedience will happen. If you really trust Him you will say, "I'm Yours. I surrender. I'm yielded. I want Your will because it's Your life anyway, not mine. You bought me. I am Yours. You paid the price so I could be connected to You, so I trust You—what do you want?" Then He tells you and you do it. Why? Because you trust Him. That is the condition that must be present and if it is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus will happen again and again. You cannot trust unless you obey and you cannot obey unless you trust. The more you trust the more the natural impulse of the Spirit directs you and with time your life will look less like you and more like Jesus. That's how Paul could say,

*"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."  
(Galatians 2:20)*

I don't have to be the Apostle Paul. God's not calling me to be the Apostle. I have to be what God is calling me to be. But the problem is the law of sin and death is still active in me and the only way the law of God will interrupt and override that law is if I will simply trust Him. And every time I trust He upholds me again and again and again. That's the only environment that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus works. Trust and obey.

### **III. The Life of Christ in Us By the Spirit is the Deciding Factor**

*"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous*



*requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh.” (Romans 8:2-4)*

To walk according to the flesh means to listen to the law of sin and death and trust it and when you do that you trust yourself. The law of sin keeps your focus on yourself makes your opinion superior to God's will. The Christian faces the same battle since the law of sin is always there wanting control. Remember Paul's command; "do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts." The law of sin will try to convince you to trust your own judgment when it comes to obeying God. That is why we often say, "Lord, this is how I'm going to serve You, this is how I'm going to please you, I'm going to get up tomorrow morning and I'm going to read my Bible and pray because I know that pleases You." If you do this with your own willpower that's the flesh, it's not the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus; it is the law of sin and death.

There is only one way to true godliness and it is spelled out in verse five.

*“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.” (Romans 8:5)*

It doesn't matter if a man or woman is religious or not, it doesn't matter if they're a member of Oak Grove Baptist Church or not—if they are not really genuine Christians, they will always think according to the mind of the flesh. Which means they are always thinking about what makes them happy, pleased, and gratified.

The flesh, which is where the law of sin and death operate, always makes it about us. Not matter what it is; it's about us and what we set our minds on. You may have had a religious experience in the past and been told you were saved, but if your mind is set on gratifying you, then you are not a true believer. If you are set upon serving the Lord by your own opinions, well then, you haven't been converted.

Those who live according to the Spirit set their mind on Christ because the Spirit always testifies of Jesus. True believers are not thinking about themselves except when they're thinking about Jesus. Jesus is the preoccupation. Yes, we want to go to heaven when we die, but only because Jesus is there. The mind has been changed; the affections of the heart have been changed because the principle, the law of life, has come in, interrupted and overridden. I hope this makes sense, too many are clueless about this proper understanding of the Christian life.

*“For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” (Romans 8:6)*

Why is a mind that is carnal yet trying to obey God death? Because when you're doing everything in your power to please God, then it's nothing more than despicable, abject unbelief. The first 26 years of my life, I wasn't trusting Jesus completely. My mind may have been occupied on spiritual things from time to time, but it was not set on the spiritual. It was not tuned to the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. To be spiritually minded is life and peace and the life the Apostle Paul

is referring to is the life of Jesus. When your mind is on the life of Jesus peace follows.

*“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” (Romans 8:7-8)*

This can be confusing for some, especially for the religious as I was before I was saved. I thought, “Well, I think about godly things all the time, I’m studying the Bible, reading theology and things about God, so this can’t be me.” My deception was this: I believed that doing those things equaled the Christian life. God says the Christian life is not about what you do, it’s about what you are and what law motivates you. I was never subject to the law of God even in all my preaching, teaching and ministry because I didn’t do any of it for the glory of God.

*“But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.” (Romans 8:9)*

Paul is not telling you what you should go and do, *set your mind on the things of the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, and obey God.* He’s not saying that at all, and if you read it that way you’ll miss what he’s really trying to say. He is telling us who is and who isn’t a Christian. He’s describing those who are genuinely saved.

Paul is writing to a church in Rome. They’ve never seen him and he’s never been there and he’s sharing the Gospel with them. He wants to show how the Gospel works. By chapter 8 he is at the part of the Gospel where he must explain assurance of salvation. That’s why the eighth chapter of Romans is considered the greatest chapter in the entire Bible because it’s dealing with the assurance of our salvation. So to show who is and who isn’t, who could be and should be assured and who shouldn’t, Paul says plainly in verse nine that if you have the Spirit of Christ in you, you are a Christian and if you don’t you’re not.

Think back to when Paul went to Ephesus and found a few disciples. He asks them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”

They responded, “We didn’t even know there was such a Holy Spirit. We’ve never been told.”

“Well, what baptism were you baptized into?” Paul asked. They replied they had been baptized with John the Baptist’s baptism. He explained to them that John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance since John was a forerunner of Jesus, and that they need to be baptized in the name of Jesus. Afterwards, Paul baptized them, laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Now, I dare say that this event seems odd to us. It’s so opposite of how we talk about Christianity. When we ask a man or woman, “Are you a Christian?” we do not ask them if they have received the Holy Spirit. In fact, we usually frame the question this way, “Have you been saved?” Past tense. None of the apostles did that because it’s not a good basis for the assurance of your salvation. They always wanted to know if someone had the Spirit.

This leads us to ask the question, how do I know I have the Spirit? The answer is, you have a new law you never had before operating in you, and this law is the Spirit of life in Christ. When the Spirit comes He places new desires in your heart. The Christian loves God and other people. He delights in Jesus and in relationship with Him. It has nothing to do with escaping hell; it's about knowing Christ. The Christian who is rightly related to God desires to experience the joy and the pleasure that's in Christ. That's how you know you have the Spirit. This is how the law of the Spirit of life in Jesus works over and over and over again. God's Spirit works in you to preach and glorify Jesus Christ and what He has done for us. So now the focus is not on us and what we do for Him; the focus of our hearts and minds is on Christ and His Gospel.

Paul is boldly states that if that hasn't happened to you, you are not a Christian. Is there an impulse, influence, and energy giving you the desire to humble yourself and relinquish control to another? That's the evidence of this divine law. Not what you're doing. Not that you preach, not that you're baptized, not that you teach others or sing in the praise team. It's not that you don't go to parties and get drunk or fool around. No, not at all! Do you have an impulse and energy in you that causes you to look away from yourself and fasten your hope in Christ alone? Are you hoping in Jesus or in you?

This is extremely important. If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ they are not His. If this law of sin and death, which puts the focus on you, is not interrupted or overridden consistently, then you do not have the Spirit of God in you and therefore you are not saved.

*"And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." (Romans 8:10)*

In other words, my body is not physically dead but considered dead in that sin remains it. The law of sin is still working and begging me to fulfill my desires and serve God my way through the appetites of the mind and body.

But, the Apostle offers much hope to child of God, that this "body of death" need not be a death trap.

*"But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you." (Romans 8:11)*

Paul is not talking about our physical resurrection to come, he's talking about how this law of the Spirit of life is in you that your body, although infected and corrupted by its fallen nature, can still obey God. You can exercise control over your mind, your tongue, and your members because the Spirit of God is can give power to your body. This body becomes the conduit, the outlet, the expression of Him in this world.

*"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 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, you will live." (Romans 8:12-13)*

If you answer the call of the law of the Spirit of life that is in you and submit to Him by faith, then you're going to live because you've been saved.

So, in summary the word of God establishes these facts:

*Every True Christian Has the Spirit.*

*The Test of Faith is Not Experiences, Gifts, or Goodness.*

*The Test of Faith is Holiness of Character According to the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus.*

This is how Christ is saving us and will do so in the future. We are "saved by His life." It's a dynamic in me that sets me at liberty now to obey God. I can obey Him. Not because I have to try but because I can. I'm not saying you don't have to exert your will and choose to obey because we do. There is a choice. Will I trust God or will I trust me? Will I trust God completely or trust Him three quarters of the way and me a quarter of the way? My question is do you trust God completely? Those are the only two choices a Christian ever has. Will I trust me or will I completely trust God?

If you completely trust Christ, then you don't have to try to be a Christian because you have the Spirit and His life is at work. Christ's life is lived out in you. You can't stop that from happening unless you stop trusting the Spirit. It is a law of life. The moment you exert willpower to try to live the Christian life, oh friend, you go back to the law of sin and death.

Let me show you how this works with a simple illustration of natural law, blinking your eyes. Everyone does it, but how many times do you think about it? Not very often. The moment you stop and think about blinking your eyes you've interrupted the natural flow of blinking. When you try not to blink something very unnatural happens. Your eyes begin to water and dust can get in them. But when you don't even think about it your eyelids automatically, naturally, move up and down in a sufficient way.

If you will trust the Holy Spirit who dwells within, then the Christian life becomes natural. However, when you think about and exert your willpower to do your best for God, well then, you have interrupted the natural rhythm of Christianity. Human willpower is the energy of the law of sin and death. It is nothing more than the flesh, and "who are in the flesh cannot please God." Brothers and sisters, keep your eyes on Jesus and trust Him absolutely, which means absolute obedience. Don't complicate this. When you absolutely trust Him, you don't have to make yourself read the Bible anymore, or pray, or witness, or love your neighbor as yourself, it happens. And if you can't do that it means you don't have the Spirit of Christ in you.

Is the natural impulse, energy, and direction of your life bent toward loving God more than yourselves and loving neighbors as yourselves. Is that really you? Or is your Christian testimony one of trying and struggling to obey because you don't rest in Christ? This is not complicated.

We don't do it perfectly. I fail do this perfectly. I do well at trusting Jesus for a while and then, I begin to listen to another law, my will and me. My willpower comes back out and I'm right back to the law trying to perform, trying harder and live up to some expectation that I've invented for myself. As a result, Jesus seems like He's a million miles away and nowhere to be found. Prayer isn't enjoyable, the Bible is closed to me, and I can't hear the voice of God anymore. I can only stand that for so long. Then I have to come back and say, "Lord, I did it again. I want to yield to You again. Here's my life, I surrender again." I don't know how many times I've surrendered, thousands of times, and I'll have to do it thousands of times more. But there's something in me that wants to do that. That's how I know I have the Spirit of God in me.

Do you know that? Are you assured of that? May God help you to know if you have the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus in you or not. This is the only salvation for today and tomorrow that we can be saved by, "saved by His life." Amen.