

The Mapmaker's Guide to Joyful, Spirit-filled Ministry

Map 21 - The Power of His Life

Spiritual Exercise

⁷ Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it." ⁸ And the LORD, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed." ²³ Then He inaugurated Joshua the son of Nun, and said, "Be strong and of good courage; for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land of which I swore to them, and I will be with you." Deuteronomy 31:7-8, 23

⁶ Be strong and of good courage... ⁷ Only be strong and very courageous... ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:6-7, 9

Prayer

Dear Father, we love You. We love Your Son. We love Your Holy Spirit. We want to love You more. Our heart's desire is to be strong and of good courage, that we would lead well. We long to hear Your voice of encouragement. Speak to us now. We trust You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Introduction

In his classic *The Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "Salvation is free, but discipleship will cost you your life." As you might expect, Bonhoeffer was referring to something more than our mortality. Jesus said it this way:

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 8:35

The power to save a life is a great power indeed. On the surface, we understand that Jesus is encouraging us to give up our old life - the old man - for the life He offers in rebirth. For many, this is a decision, a prayer, an event. This is true, of course, but it is far from the whole Truth. There is more here; more than the death of the old man. There is His life; and there is more to His life than most understand. Consequently, there are few that walk in the fullness of a life that is Christ.

Why is the American church not seeing more of His glory? What can Marketplace Leaders do to begin expressing His glory in the good work that He has prepared for them? These are corporate and personal questions that we must face, with courage and faith, in God's desire and ability to transform us and those within our spheres of influence.

Definition

Grace (*Charis*): grace (that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness: grace of speech); good will, loving-kindness, favor; of the merciful kindness by which God, exerting His holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ, keeps, strengthens, increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection, and kindles them to the exercise of the Christian virtues; what is due to grace (i.e., the spiritual condition of one governed by the power of divine grace, the token or proof of grace, benefit or gift); thanks (for benefits, services, favors), recompense, reward.

Outline of Biblical Usage, BlueLetterBible.org

For too many, God's grace has become an excuse for avoiding the pursuit of holiness: "Don't worry about your condition, God has grace for that." Given our definition, "God has grace for that" means something quite the opposite: He is exerting His holy influence upon our souls; turning us to Christ; keeping, strengthening, and increasing our Christian faith, knowledge, affection; and kindling us to the exercise of the Christian virtues. God's grace is the power to overcome our temptations, pursue holiness and live as instruments of righteousness.

Searching Out the Matter

(All Scripture references, but those noted, are NKJV; Thomas Nelson, Inc.; footnotes and headings excluded)

A Short Review (from The Life That Glorifies Our Father in Heaven)

We have been created in the image of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:26). He has crowned us with glory and honor (Psalms 8:5). There is glory reserved for the kings that will search out a matter; and He has made us kings (Revelation 1:6). The Psalmist's glory is the LORD (Psalm 3:3)!! This is an important clue to the mystery of God's glory.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Without His redemption and restoration, we will not see, nor partake of, His glory. But there is hope; for He has determined to bring many sons to glory (Hebrews 2:10). Glory and heaven are not the same. There is a glory reserved for us on this earth.

Over 2000 years ago, Christ gave us the glory He had received from His Father, for the purpose of making us one in Them (John 17:22). Christ was transfigured, as the glory of God - His life lived in His Son - was revealed (2Peter 1:17-18; Matthew 17:2). The word here - *metamorphoo* - is also used to describe what God is doing in us (2Corinthians 3:18; Romans 12:2).

The glory is passed back to the Father as we let the life of Christ shine before men so that they glorify the Father (Matthew 5:16; John 1:4). The command is not, "Go and do good works". It is to "let your light shine". That shining releases a demonstration of the power of God that the world will see is not us, but Him. It is the "greater than" life that Jesus promised to all that believe in Him.

The "Greater Than" Life

As the Incarnate Son of God, Jesus lived a life that was greater than any man before Him. How did He do it? As a disciple of His Father, Jesus surrendered Himself to the Father's purpose, sacrificed for His plan, and submitted to His power. On more than one occasion He stressed that it was the Father's work and words that people were seeing and hearing. He has promised that we would do the same... and more!

¹² "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. ¹³ And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. John 14:12-14

Jesus is continuing to do the work that glorifies the Father. He has invited us to participate with Him. The great mystery is how this is happening. How is it possible for mortal Mankind to do greater things than the anointed and holy God-man? Simply stated, we must also surrender to the Father's purpose, sacrifice for His plan, and submit to His power - that the anointed and holy God-man would do the work. We must exchange our life for His.

The Exchanged Life

The key to the power of Christ's life is found in our participation with that life - joining ourselves to Him by faith and transformation. Christ prayed that we would be one with each other, and one with Him and the Father. As we have discussed, this becoming one is a process; a process that begins with our participation in His death. Paul speaks of this exchange:

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 want to make a point here about the translation of this verse. Young's Literal Translation recognizes the imperative "the" before "faith". A Greek scholar I know has concurred with this translation, which should then read, "I live by the faith of the Son of God". I believe this is more consistent with the context of this verse and Ephesians 2:8 ("saved through faith, and that not of yourselves"). Our faith is Christ's faith, lived out of His life.

Let me encourage you to meditate on and reckon Galatians 2:20 as truth for yourself; until God does something in you with it. It is too important to put on the shelf until some later day. It is about His life in us. What could be more important?

Others have written on this subject with much greater eloquence. Two books I recommend are The Normal Christian Life, by Watchman Nee, and The Saving Life of Christ, by Major W. Ian Thomas. For now let me suggest the following:

1. Though you may not understand it, Galatians 2:20 is the truth regarding our life in Christ. If you can hear it, faith will come (Romans 10:17).
2. Say this verse, even out loud, focusing on your crucifixion with Christ. Ask God to give you a vision of your death with Christ. Let faith arise.
3. Meditate on this verse regularly, fostering transformation through the renewal of your mind.
4. Invite Christ to prove His life in you, through word and deed. Your experience of His life will encourage you to continue laying hold of that for which Christ Jesus laid hold of you.
5. Recognize that our death in Christ is only the beginning. He has promised us His life - His resurrected life.

This last point brings us to a critical truth about the life that Christ has made available to those that believe on Him. As with all truth, it has the potential to make you free. I feel the need to warn you, it may also challenge your doctrinal paradigm. Remember, the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus are your teachers. Listen to them and allow the truth to do whatever the Father has for you in it.

The Life that Saves

Did you know that the effectual work of Christ's death on the cross did not save us? Believe me, you are not alone in your objection. Take a survey. Ask your Christian friends, "What did Christ do to save you?" Most will say, "He died on the cross?" Paul had something different to say.

⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 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. Romans 5:8-10

There is no question that Christ's death was required and effectual. His death reconciled us to God. But, "we shall be saved by His life". Salvation is accomplished in His life, not in His death. Furthermore, there is "much more" to the effectualness of His life. Let me say it a different way:

As much as our Savior's death accomplished, His life shall accomplish much more!

One of the greatest deceptions in the American church is that a Christian can live out of Christ's death. We have allowed ourselves to settle for a ticket to heaven, bought by His death. The tragic and sobering truth is that His death will not get us there. Nothing less than His life will save us.

Participating in His Death and His Resurrection

As with crucifixion, it is the spiritual implications of Christ's death and resurrection that make them of first importance to our faith. Like Christ - and with the exception of those blessed to be translated

directly to heaven - every human being will die a physical death and be physically resurrected at the end of this age. But only those that participate in Christ's spiritual death and resurrection enjoy the benefits of His life.

It is also important to note that there are two spiritual deaths: The death of our old man and the eternal death of those that are lost to God. The former is accomplished through participation in Christ's death. The latter awaits those that will not exchange their life for His.

As we can see in Paul's letter to the Romans, death and resurrection are closely related. Read Romans 6:1-14 to get a full context of the passage; then consider the incredible truths that are found there:

How shall we who died to [the] sin live any longer in it? ...as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death... [we] were buried with Him through baptism into [the] death... (vv. 2-4)

There are a few points to make here. First, notice the tense of "died" and "buried". For Paul, and those like him, these are past events.

Second, I have inserted the imperatives where they are found in Young's Literal Translation. As you can see, there is "the sin" and "the death". "The sin" is the original sin - Adam's and Eve's rebellion against God's rule in their hearts. "The death" is that of our old man, the child of Adam that was born into rebellion.

Lastly, there is the principle of "baptized" and "baptism". While many have been taught that Baptism is a symbol of our death and resurrection in Christ (and the first act of Christian obedience), I believe it is much more. In fact, Baptism is less an act of man than it is a work of God. Baptism is a sacrament - a sacred moment - that accomplishes the mystery of putting off the old man and putting on Christ. As a preacher once said, "Something supernatural happens when you go down in that water." Baptism does not accomplish salvation, but it is a step in the salvation process.

For those that disagree with this view, I have no controversy with you. For now, let me suggest that something is accomplished "through baptism" that is very important to Paul's teaching here. It may not mean what I say it means, but it must mean something. Search it out and put meaning to it for yourself. Again, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are our teachers. We can trust them for the truth.

Now, back to Romans 6.

... just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection... (vv. 4-5)

What has happened in the past, should and shall be accomplished in the newness of life we receive in our subsequent participation in His resurrection. Paul's use of "should" and "shall be" indicate that our participation in His resurrection is a process that begins and continues in the life we live before our physical death. The Greek for "newness" - kainotes - means "life of a new quality; the believer, being a new creation". It is not "newness" in time, but "newness" in creation. This is not something that man can do. It must be a work of God.

... 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 [the] sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. (vv. 6-7)

These two small verses identify one of the most significant powers of the exchanged life - the power of our freedom from "the body of sin" ("our old man"), "the sin" (rebellion) and "sin" (in general). This is almost too awesome to consider! But consider it we must. We must ask ourselves, "Do we believe this to be true for those that have been crucified with Him?"

I encourage you - if you believe it - to say so verbally (i.e., out loud). Remember, faith does not come from what we see and experience. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans

10:17). Hear the word of God and faith will rise up in your heart. Then reckon what you believe to be true in your life. The power of this truth will make you free!

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead (resurrected), dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. (vv. 8-9)

The power of our participation in Christ's death is to live (and keep on living) with Him; and living in Him, to die no more. The power of His resurrection (and our participation in it) is power over spiritual death.

For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to [the] sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (vv. 10-11)

The power of our life in Christ is a life alive, and lived, to God - in the center of His will and work. It is this life that is eternal and abundant, full of godliness and peace. This is the joyful, Spirit-filled life!

By now, you must be asking, "How do we live such an overcoming life? What am I missing?" Paul anticipated such questions from the faithful in Rome. His answer:

Therefore do not let [the] sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 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. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. (vv. 12-14)

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Galatians 5:16

The key to the overcoming exchanged life is our active participation in it. Mature Christians know that our faith walk is a walk... in the Spirit. It is not a standing around. It is also a race and a fight. We must not let "the sin" reign. How? By surrendering to the reign of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We must live like we are alive, with our faculties available as instruments (aka, weapons) for God's use. We must forcefully stand against the temptations that come from the sinful nature of our flesh, the world and Satan's vast army of demons.

It is important to recognize that Satan's power over the believer is a deception. We are overcomers by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony (Revelation 12:11). Our testimony is our participation in the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord and Savior. Satan has been defeated!

Our role in the battle for the kingdom of heaven is enforcement. Our time on this planet is our training ground for the ages to come; when we will co-reign with Christ as His Bride. This will be a physical reality. For now, we participate in the spiritual reality of our life in Christ.

Participating in His Ascension

⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:4-7

We are not only made to be partakers of Christ's death and resurrection, but of His ascension. This is perhaps the most challenging mystery of our participation in Christ's life; and likely the most powerful. As you read this excerpt from F.J. Huegel's *Bone of His Bone*, keep in mind that we are exploring the current spiritual reality of the future physical manifestation of our life with Christ, as His Bride.

As Paul puts it, we were "made to sit together in the Heavenlies with Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6). Jesus states the case in His High Priestly prayer, which had as its supreme object this

very union of which we are speaking, in this wise: "I in them and Thou in Me . . . Father I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am that they may behold My glory." That He had in mind His going to the Father is evident enough, for He had already said: "And now I am no longer in the world. And now I come to Thee." By faith He was already taking His place at the right hand of the Father. He was returning by the way of the Cross, the empty tomb, and ascension to the Throne He had left, and by faith He was taking with Him those who in the foreknowledge of God were to form His mystic body. The Heavenly Bridegroom was placing the Bride at His side on the Throne.

At this point, I come to the end of my abilities to explain what I know to be true: Believers have, in Christ, on this side of heaven, access to the very power of God; seated with Him on the throne, to co-reign with Christ in the spirit realm. It is a truth that Christ and the Holy Spirit must reveal to you. I encourage you to pursue this truth in the books previously mentioned in this lesson.

Conclusion

I am convinced that the life that Jesus lived - filled with the power of God - is possible for every follower of Christ. I am also convinced that it is only in our full participation in His death, burial, resurrection and ascension that we will find the "greater than" life He has promised us. My anticipation is for the exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that works in us (Ephesians 3:20). I hope and pray for the same increase in your anticipation of the work Christ intends to do through you.

Let me remind you not to let go of this, until God does something in you with it. It is too important to put on the shelf until some later day. It is about His life in us. What could be more important? And to that end, I have prayed as Paul did in His prayer to the church at Ephesus:

¹⁷ ...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. ²² And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. Ephesians 1:17-23

Application

By this time, it should be clear that the opportunity for leading in the Marketplace is much more than we might even imagine. It is also more than even the most intelligent and powerful can accomplish. It is kingdom work. The Marketplace Leaders' only hope for kingdom success is through participation in the life of Christ. As someone has said, "Let go and let God."

Reckoning

I have been crucified, buried, resurrected and seated at the Father's right hand, with Christ.

Assignment

1. Pray Paul's prayer to the Ephesians over yourself and those you have been commissioned to disciple. Put your name and theirs in the appropriate places and reckon the truth of your (and their) participation in the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Christ.

Devotion

God Is Not About YOUR Success

TGIF Today God Is First Volume 2 by Os Hillman

"I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life."

John 12:24-26

God is all about your death so that HIS success can be realized through you! This is why the Church is having such little impact - there are too many believers who have not yet died to their old nature so that Christ can live fully through them. When believers come to the end of themselves they will lose their lives to Him and live through the power of the Holy Spirit and begin to see the reality of a living gospel that impacts lives, workplaces, cities and nations.

"Much of modern Christian enterprise is 'Ishmael.' Born not of God, but of an inordinate desire to do God's will in our own way - the one thing our Lord never did," said Oswald Chambers. The psalmist describes what it means to live in our own strength:

"Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain. In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat - for he grants sleep to those he loves" (Ps 127:1-2).

How does one die so that Christ can be our all and all? It usually takes a crisis of significant proportions for most people to relinquish the control of their lives. It means we come to the end of ourselves and our striving to control the events in our lives and we finally come to the place where we can say, "Lord, I surrender. Please take full control of my life."

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