

PARTNERS WITH CHRIST

Salvation is entirely apart from works. It is all of grace. Consequently, no one can boast of salvation. But, salvation is unto good works. We are saved to work and every saved man can look for rewards for service. Saved by grace, but saved to serve. Experience is given to be exercised. Faith saves but faith without works is dead.

Saved are made partners with Christ and are promised the profit of partnership. The Christian life is a partnership.

I. The Principle of Partnership.

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature." II Peter 1:4.

There is no partnership with God until one becomes a partaker of the divine nature. The primary thing in partnership with God is to be made a partaker of the divine nature.

The principle of partnership with God is a new nature, the divine nature.

William Lincoln said: "How wonderful that God should pick us up when we were the scum of creation, and beget His own nature in us, fitting us to enter into communion with Himself, to be His companion, to share His thoughts, and to worship Him."

To become a partaker of the divine nature is more than outward connection. It is inward relationship. It is more than accidental association. It is essential identity. God makes us one with Himself. This is the start of Christian partnership.

II. The Price of Partnership.

"Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings." I Peter 4:13.

It costs to be in partnership with Christ. It costs Him and it costs His partners. But it is not a sour partnership. Romans 8:17 says that "we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together" and that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

How close to the sufferings is the glory; you seldom find the one without the other.

Love is in its very nature sacrificial. Because Christ loved He gave Himself. As soon as a man becomes a partaker of the love, which is the divine nature, he is bound to become a partaker of those sufferings which love always involves.

The professing Christian who does not suffer with Christ gives poor testimony of kinship with Christ.

Church member who claims to be saved and never suffers with Christ gives a poor picture of Christ to a needy, dying world.

Professed believer who will not surrender selfish ease for Christ's sake needs to make an examination of the kind of faith he has.

It is not enough to profess partnership with Christ. We must pay the price of partnership.

He is a poor partner in business who does not share the work and losses that come to the business. He is a poor Christian who is at the receiving end only. We must do more than rest in salvation.

III. The Profit of Partnership.

"A witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed." I Peter 5:1.

There is a purpose in our partnership -- purpose of glory. Partners in nature with God, in sufferings with Christ, and of the glory that shall be revealed.

No doleful way is the Christian life. It leads through suffering with Christ but it leads to glory with Christ.

Salvation begins in an experience -- the new birth. It ends in a shared glory -- "glory that shall be revealed." But it also has a sacrificial service for a middle. There is no short cut to heaven's glory. Man who is born from above will have no flowery bed of ease. It is not right to ask for ease in Christian living.

Have you seen partners here pay the price of partnership? Have you seen partners in business take just a living out of their earnings and put most of their earnings back into the business? What were they doing? Building the business for profit ahead.

Shall Christ's partners be less sacrificial? Shall partners with God in Christ not be willing to put something into the business for profit ahead---the profit of glory to be shared in the eternity ahead?

Our scriptures show that our partnership with God is all in Christ. It begins with salvation in Him. It progresses in suffering for Him. It culminates in glory with Him.

Is yours a life of partnership with Christ? Are you serving at cost? Are you suffering with Him? Is there hope of glory ahead? God help us to be good partners with Christ here that we may be glorious partners with Christ there.