

## THE SECRET OF A VICTORIOUS LIFE

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me, and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Gal. 2:20

Certain it is that no man ever lived a more heroic and victorious life than the Apostle Paul. His life was a model of excellence. It was the life of par excellence. It was honorable, exemplary, and victorious. What a wonderful life he lived! What toil he endured, what difficulties he encountered, what obstacles he overcame! He fainted not, he halted not, but ever pressed steadily onward. Surely it would be of the greatest interest to know the secret of such a life. Concerning this we are not left to speculation for the Apostle gives it to us in the words of our text. Here is the sum of Paul's experience. This verse enunciates three striking paradoxes which are realized in the experience of every Christian who lives victoriously.

### I. The Judicial Paradox

Or the mystery of the believer's legal standing. The believer is a dead man before he becomes a believer. "And you hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins". That is, he is already taken, charged, tried, convicted, sentenced, shut up to the judgement of wrath and only waiting the hour of death to meet its execution. So far as the claims of justice are concerned, he has been crucified with Christ, that is, Christ's crucifixion stands for his and he personally is free. Paul states that, even as Christ Himself was crucified to the law, sin, death, and the devil, so too that they have no further power over him, even so I through faith being crucified with Christ in spirit, am crucified and dead to the law, sin, death, and the devil, so that they have no further power over me, but are now crucified and dead unto me. The idea of substitution is predominant. "I have been crucified", therefore am dead of sin. If in a real sense one is joined to Christ, the power of His death makes him dead to self, sin, and the world. Paul had a genuine fellowship with Christ in His death. He became dead to the law, dead unto sin, and therefore no more the servant of it, and dead to the world and the world to him.

### II. The Spiritual Paradox

Or the mystery of the believer's inner life. The moment a man becomes a believer, he becomes the subject of an inward change and a new principle of holy life is implanted. Christ lives in him. The Christian life is a life in which an indwelling Christ casts out, and therefore quickens self. His dwelling in us does not destroy but heightens our individuality. Text says, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me." Our death with Christ involves our life with him. The Christian dwells in Christ and Christ dwells in the Christian. The world saw Paul but at the same time they saw Christ in the person of His disciples. Every grace that Paul possessed was but a faint reflection of the beauty of Christ. Every virtue which Paul exhibited was only a manifestation in lesser degree of the holiness of his sinless Lord. Paul's life was an ideal Christian life. This was true because of:--

#### 1. The source of it.

Christ was the source of it. It was Christ who brought Paul into connection with the source of life eternal. He was able to do it because he bore life eternal in his own person. He said, "I am the life". The life

which is distinctly Christian is always traceable to Christ himself. Paul called Christ the abiding source of all Christian life.

## 2. The Security of It

Paul rejoiced in the security of his soul and life because when Christ came into his soul and he was saved the responsibility for his soul's safety passed out of his hands into God's keeping. Paul said in describing the security of the saved, "Your life is hid with Christ in God." There it is surely secure until some monster arises from somewhere and drives a dagger of death into the heart of God, and lifts a flag of victory over the grave of Christ.

## 3. The Substance of It

Paul says, "For to me to live is Christ". Paul thought life was but another name for Christ. He lived only to serve Christ. He thought of Christ as the origin, the essence, the model, the aim, the end, and the reward of life. His living was Christ living. It was his duty daily to reproduce the Christ life. So absorbed in Christ and his service that he lived only to incarnate his Lord and manifest him in every word and action.

# III. The Practical Paradox

Or the mystery of the believer's outer walk. While living in the body in the world the believer regulates his conduct and conversation by faith in the Son of God. When Christ liveth in us various outward results are inevitable.

## 1. Moved by a new motive

"The love of Christ constraineth us."

## 2. Gradual expulsion of evil

"Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." The reign of Christ within is the Divine remedy for unruly passions, ungovernable tempers, fruitless testimony, and the spirit-grieving life of selfishness.

## 3. Joy

A joy that the world can neither give nor take away.

## 4. Gradual transformation into the likeness of Christ

There are certain results in the life which is indwelt by Him:---

- a. The life derives its power from Christ
- b. It swayed by the will of Christ
- c. It seeks the ends of Christ
- d. It breathes the spirit of Christ
- e. It is lived in personal communion with Christ

Such a life will be:

- a. A devoted life
- b. An imitative life
- c. An appreciative life
- d. An expectant life

In the Christian life that is genuine there is:

- a. A memory of a break with the world, into light and liberty
- b. A consciousness of a union
  - (a) The heart cleaving to Christ
  - (b) The conscience grasping the pardon
  - (c) The will choosing the service
  - (d) the soul filled with the peace
- c. An acceptance of the conditions of life
  - (a) Willing to wait
  - (b) Determined to testify
  - (c) Prepared to follow
  - (d) Meaning to triumph
  - (e) Bound to love

(Over)