



GOD'S GREAT NEWS: THE SAVING LIFE OF CHRIST

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Romans 5:10

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Several years ago, some friends and I built an extra room and bath in our garage. I got up very early in the morning, pulled out my special work clothes and began to clear all the boxes from the garage. Once the garage was clear and some of the other men had arrived, the real work began: it was time to dig the trench to lay the pipes for the plumbing. I put on my new red and gray work gloves and grabbed a shovel. We dug and dug, discovering more and more pipes, roots and rocks that were in our way, digging and working until darkness fell.

When the work was done after dark, I took off my gloves. The activity of the day now over. The gloves looked lifeless and empty. I pulled off all those work clothes, leaving them in a little pile by the shower in the bathroom. They too looked lifeless and empty, just a little heap that bore silent witness to the life of which they were now only the abandoned shell.

Gloves and clothes are everyday things. They are made for service, made to be useful, and above all, made to be filled. A pile of clothes and a pair of gloves, no matter how elegant or ugly they may be, can do nothing by themselves; they just sit there. But when they are filled, they accomplish that for which they were made: they become an integral part of the life and work of their owner. They might get dirty, they often get torn, but they are there in the trenches, put to good use.

Why am I telling you this? It is because believers are the empty clothes which our God designed for Christ to wear for His work in the trenches of this world. Our humanity clothes His divinity. When He fills us, like a hand filling a glove, we become an integral part of Him. We become the part the world sees, and His work is accomplished through us. This is the glory and honor of the everyday believer. It is the Gospel in a nutshell: we were empty and lifeless without Him, but He fills us with His life and works His love through us, as in Romans 5:10:

For if while 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. (Rom 5:10, NASB)

The Gospel in a Nutshell

In this little verse is the outline of Romans 1-8, the Gospel of God, in a nutshell. Ray Stedman used to say that every Christian should have the basic outline of Romans 1-8 clearly in his mind at all times. So, here's the outline, in three parts, representing the three basic sections of Romans 1-8, as reflected in the three major phrases of Rom 5:10. After a brief introduction in Rom 1:1-17, we discover the absolute depravity of man, in Rom 1:18-3:20. That section describes the universal scourge called sin. Sin is a terrible sickness of self-centeredness and self-absorption. Sin is when we say to God, "I don't need you." Sin fools us into thinking too much about ourselves: we either think about all that we are, or about everything we are not. Paul synthesizes these first three chapters of the letter in Rom. 5:10 in the first phrase: "For if while we were enemies." Sin made us God's enemies.

But then, just as Paul has proven this stark reality of sin to us, the focus shifts away from our sin and onto our God, and what he did to address our sin with the power of his love. This is Paul's main point in Rom 3:21-5:21: He sent Jesus Christ to the world to die on the cross as a public display of God's love for His enemies. Jesus Christ's death on the cross was the atoning sacrifice to end all sacrifices. It was an atonement accepted by a holy God as evidenced by the resurrection, and we are justified by faith when we believe in Jesus Christ who died for us and was raised for us. The cross is the central truth of the

gospel, the hub of the wheel around which everything else revolves. In fact, one of the richest studies you can undertake is to see how God has placed the cross of Christ as the center point of His revelation in the Bible.

The center point of the book of Leviticus is chapters 16-17, which deal with the sacrifices of atonement on Yom Kippur, and Leviticus is the center point of the Torah. Likewise, Paul's longest sentence in the New Testament, Eph 1:3-14, is centered around the cross of Christ. It makes perfect sense that the cross is the center section of the Gospel of God, explained in Romans 1-8. What God did in Christ on the cross is summarized nowhere as beautifully as in the next phrase in Rom 5:10: "[For while we were enemies], we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son." Our God, because of Christ's death, embraces His former enemies at the cross of Christ, and in that embrace is the reality of our reconciliation, the beginning of grace.

But this is not the end of the great news. Many people believe the gospel ends here, but it doesn't. While the sacrifice of Christ on the cross solved our problem of sin once for all, removing the barrier between us and God, the remaining outworking of our lives remains a problem for us. Having been saved, how should we then live? How shall we then live in the valley between the two twin peaks of our experience, the first peak at the point of conversion, and the second peak when we join Him in heaven? Romans 6-8 addresses this problem, culminating in God's most shocking answer, in Romans 8: He gives us Himself by the indwelling Holy Spirit, that He might live out the life of Christ through us on a daily basis. We are not left alone, wandering a lifelong valley in a confused state of waiting. No. We become the human clothing for our Christ. Our heart becomes Christ's home: He lives in us and works through us in the valley. This is the glory of Rom 6-8, and it is why these chapters are among the most beloved in the Christian's Bible. And nowhere is the truth of these chapters synthesized more brilliantly than in the final phrase of Rom 5:10: "much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

Thus, what we have in Rom 5:10 is the gospel, God's great news in microcosm. Let's study each of these three phrases, that our hearts might be awakened anew to just how great this news really is. Here in the Silicon Valley, the talk is always about the "next big thing." For us, let this be the "forever big thing."

Who We Were: Enemies of God

Paul reviews our status before placing our faith in Jesus Christ, in his first phrase of Rom 5:10: "For if while we were enemies." There can be no mistaking it: without the indwelling presence of Jesus Christ, whom we receive as a free gift by believing in His death and resurrection, we are God's enemies. Paul is addressing Christians, who were enemies, reminding them of the war they formerly fought. For Christians, this war is over: we have peace with God. But for those not yet Christians, there's a war on.

Now I'll wager that right now your heart is rebelling against such a stark truth. "What do you mean, that we were 'enemies of God'? That's too harsh in these days of hypersensitivity. You may offend someone. Isn't it really more like we are lost in the darkness, that we are alone and in need of a friend, that we are all searching for God in our own ways?" That all sounds good, and there are small grains of truth in some of that. But there is a truckload of truth in the stark fact that we were enemies of God before He came and captured us out of the enemy camp. We recoil against this term "enemies of God," because it reveals the ugliness of our sin in an unblinking light. We humans are masters of concealment. We have mastered the cover-up,

whereby we bend over backwards to call our sin anything but what it is: ugly rebellion against God. The fact that our hearts rebel against this bold truth is the evidence of sin at work in us. And we must emphasize how dark the bad news of sin really is, otherwise the great news of the gospel is only pretty good news.

We discover in Rom 5:10 the seminal truth that Paul explains more completely, in Rom 5:12-21: all humanity falls into two camps. In God's view, mankind is separated into two camps: those who are His enemies, and those who are His children by faith in Jesus Christ. These are the goats and the sheep. These are the offspring of Adam and the disciples of Jesus Christ. As a comfortable human construct, we imagine that there are many ways to get to God, and that everyone will eventually get to heaven in their own way and their own time. Nothing could be further from the stark truth of the Bible: if we have not yet been reconciled to our creating God through faith in Jesus Christ, we are enemies of God. There is no way to get around it.

The term "enemy" implies a war, with two opposing camps. If you think about it, wars are fought over one issue: *control*. War has again erupted in Israel. The Israelis invaded Bethlehem and every West Bank city because they were sick of suicide bombers killing Israelis every day. The Palestinians are stirred up, as is the entire Arab world. But what is this war really over? Who has control of Jerusalem! In each person's war with God, the issue is the same: who will control my life. If you don't think there's a war on, just open your daytimer. Now, as a Christian, one of our ongoing struggles is letting God have control over every item in that daytimer. Think how much more an unbeliever would fight against God, if God came and asked for absolute control of his or her daytimer! The unbeliever would hold onto that daytimer and tell God to keep His hands off. A war over control of the daytimer would break out. Think about your own life right now. Is this war raging in your heart? Is there no peace? Make no mistake, this war is very, very real, even right now.

One of my heroes is Abraham Lincoln. Everyone knows about the Civil War, but few people know about the war that was raging within Lincoln's own heart at the same time. That war was won on two days when he was deeply touched by the untimely deaths of promising young men. The first day was the darkest day of Lincoln's life, the day when his son Willie, the apple of his eye, died of a fever. In the hour of his grief, Willie's nurse gently shared about her personal faith in Jesus Christ, and commended her Savior to her President. Imagine the boldness of such a testimony! Yet she did not shrink from offering the best hope there is for a hopeless man. Lincoln did not respond for some time, because the war was on. But on November 19, 1863, Lincoln looked out over the new National Soldiers' Cemetery on the battlefield at Gettysburg. Moved to the core of his being at the reality of death and personal sacrifice on the part of the cream of his nation, his mind must have shifted to a better sacrifice by a greater young man on a cross centuries before. He later related to a friend what happened that day at Gettysburg: "When I left Springfield, I asked the people to pray for me; I was not a Christian. When I buried my son—the severest trial of my life—I was not a Christian. But when I went to Gettysburg, and saw the graves of thousands of our soldiers, I then and there consecrated myself to Christ."¹ Remember the transformation that took place in Lincoln's own heart the day he delivered the Gettysburg Address the next time you read those words at the Lincoln Memorial. Thank God that He led Lincoln to victory in the Civil War, and in the war within his own heart.

There's a war on. Anyone who has not stepped forward to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is an enemy of God. But God reaches out to enemies in a compelling way.

What He Did Once: Reconcile Us Through the Death of His Son

In this great war, chronicled across every page of the Bible, from Gen 3 to Rev 20, God produced the ultimate weapon. It was a weapon of love so powerful that it obliterated the enemy's hate at the seeming triumph of that hate. What God revealed in this war was Himself, in the middle of the battlefield, dying in place of the enemy soldiers. His supreme weapon was His supreme sacrifice.

It is no mistake that the first believer in the crucified Christ was an enemy soldier, who was a type of all enemy soldiers like you and me who would come to faith in Christ. Matthew tells us in Matt 27:50-54: "And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His

spirit. And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook; and the rocks were split, and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many." It was not an average Friday afternoon! Matthew goes on: "Now the centurion, and those who were with him, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, 'Truly this was the Son of God!'" Here was the first literal enemy, the leader of the crucifiers who nailed the Lord's hands to the cross. He saw the supreme sacrifice of Jesus Christ, watched how the world wept for Him and was convulsed because of His pain, and he became convinced that Jesus Christ was God's Son. And at that moment the centurion himself ceased being an enemy of God, and became a son of God. He was reconciled to his God by the death of the Son of God on the cross.

This momentous reconciliation is what Paul describes next in Rom. 5:10: "For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son." The verb phrase "we were reconciled to God," is a mouthful. Only a story captures it best.

A Dutch father, along with his two daughters Betsie and Corrie, secretly housed Jews during the German occupation of Holland. They were discovered, and Betsie and Corrie were sent to Ravensbruck concentration camp for women. Betsie died there, but Corrie Ten Boom lived to preach forgiveness and reconciliation around the world. Here is a story she tells about preaching in Munich, Germany, in 1947, from her book, *The Hiding Place*:

It was in a church in Munich that I saw him—a balding, heavyset man in a gray overcoat, a brown felt hat clutched between his hands. People were filing out of the basement room where I had just spoken, moving along the rows of wooden chairs to the door at the rear. It was 1947 and I had come from Holland to defeated Germany with the message that God forgives.

It was the truth they needed most to hear in that bitter, bombed-out land, and I gave them my favorite mental picture. Maybe because the sea is never far from a Hollander's mind, I liked to think that that's where forgiven sins were thrown. 'When we confess our sins,' I said, 'God casts them into the deepest ocean, gone forever. And even though I cannot find a Scripture for it, I believe God then places a sign out there that says, NO FISHING ALLOWED.' The solemn faces stared back at me, not quite daring to believe. There were never questions after a talk in Germany in 1947. People stood up in silence, in silence collected their wraps, in silence left the room.

And that's when I saw him, working his way forward against the others. One moment I saw the overcoat and the brown hat; the next, a blue uniform and a visored cap with its skull and crossbones. It came back with a rush: the huge room with its harsh overhead lights; the pathetic pile of dresses and shoes in the center of the floor; the shame of walking naked past this man. I could see my sister's frail form ahead of me, ribs sharp beneath the parchment skin. Betsie, how thin you were! The place was Ravensbruck and the man who was making his way forward had been a guard—one of the most cruel guards.

Now he was in front of me, hand thrust out: "A fine message, Fraulein! How good it is to know that, as you say, all our sins are at the bottom of the sea!" And I, who had spoken so glibly of forgiveness, fumbled in my pocketbook rather than take that hand. He would not remember me, of course—how could he remember one prisoner among those thousands of women? But I remembered him and the leather crop swinging from his belt. I was face-to-face with one of my captors and my blood seemed to freeze.

"You mentioned Ravensbruck in your talk," he was saying. "I was a guard there." No, he did not remember me. "But since that time," he went on, "I have become a Christian. I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there, but I would like to hear it from your lips as well. Fraulein,"—again the hand came out—"will you forgive me?"

And I stood there—I whose sins had again and again to be forgiven—and could not forgive. Betsie had died in that place—could he erase her slow terrible death simply for the asking? It could not have been many seconds that he stood there—hand held out—but to me it seemed hours as I wrestled with the most difficult thing I had ever

had to do. For I had to do it—I know that. The message that God forgives has a prior condition: that we forgive those who have injured us. “If you do not forgive men their trespasses,” Jesus says, “neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”

I knew it not only as a commandment of God, but as a daily experience. Since the end of the war I had had a home in Holland for victims of Nazi brutality. Those who were able to forgive their former enemies were able also to return to the outside world and rebuild their lives, no matter what the physical scars. Those who nursed their bitterness remained invalids. It was as simple and as horrible as that.

And still I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart. But forgiveness is not an emotion—I knew that too. Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart. “Jesus, help me!” I prayed silently. “I can lift my hand. I can do that much. You supply the feeling.” And so woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. And as I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes.

“I forgive you, brother!” I cried. “With all my heart.” For a long moment we grasped each other’s hands, the former guard and the former prisoner. I had never known God’s love so intensely as I did then. But even so, I realized it was not my love. I had tried, and did not have the power. It was the power of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Rom. 5:5: “because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.”

Now that is a story of reconciliation: between a cruel sinner and a mightily forgiving God; between a victim and her God who wanted her to forgive; and between the cruel guard and his victim, whose handshake of reconciliation joined the almost electric current of the hands of Christ indwelling two of His “gloves.”

What He Does Now, Every Moment: Saves Us By His Life

But as glorious as is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, and as amazing as is the reconciliation between the enemies of God and the holy God, there is something still far greater described as the crown of the gospel, at the end of Rom 5:10. This last phrase is the emphatic phrase, the great truth to which Paul has been building throughout the verse: “*much more*, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

This is where Paul describes what happens in our lives between the mountain-top of our conversion and the high peak of our homegoing to heaven. Our lives immediately cease in a profound way, and a remarkable new life begins. Paul describes this transference in more extensive terms, in Col 3:3-4: “For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.” Paul also explains this core reality of the Christian life in Gal 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ; and 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 delivered Himself up for me.” Thus, the Christian life is exactly that: the life of Christ lived out in my life. There always has been only one genuinely Christian life, and it is the original article: the life that Christ lives. He lived it in the bodily clothing of a Jewish carpenter from Nazareth 2,000 years ago. He lives it today inside each believer, each one forming His wardrobe in this new millennium.

This is the crowning truth of the gospel. That Jesus Christ died is a magnificent thing. That Jesus Christ stands right now at the right hand of the Father in heaven, making intercession for us as our great High Priest, is beyond our ability to imagine. But that Jesus Christ lives right now inside me by the Holy Spirit brings it all home to me. His indwelling life is *the life*, the only life. The life of Christ is the Christian life: it always was, it now is, it forever will be.

The great tragedy of the world is that almost nobody knows this! To the eternal question, “What is life?” the world around us offers a thousand specious answers. Judging from our sex-saturated culture, and the number of articles in women’s magazines at the check-out stand in grocery stores, many say that having good sex is what life is all about. We have a media-generated picture in our mind of “the good life”: attending a party in perfectly fashionable clothing with perfectly beautiful women and stirringly handsome men surround-

ing us, everyone chatting with wit and charm, everyone smiling or laughing, but just enough to be chic. What a joke! If party life is the good life, I never attended one of those parties. Party life is far more clown-like in my experience: all dressed and dandied up, but only thinly disguising the sadness and anguish within each heart. The world claims to know about life, at least the ad makers do, but the life they think they know is actually a long, slow death.

Perhaps the greater tragedy is that very few Christians know that the secret of the Christian life is the life of Jesus Christ inside us. This is what breaks my heart. We know theologically that Christ saved us from our sins by His death on the cross. We also invited Jesus Christ to come and live in our hearts. At the moment of our conversion, those two truths reigned supreme in our mind. The problem comes when we wake up the next morning. All the demands of life are there to greet us. Although there is greater peace because we have been reconciled to God through the forgiveness of our sins, all the problems we had before conversion are still with us afterward. We still find ourselves in relationships that don’t work, we have the same old habits, etc.

So what do we do? All too often we meet these challenges in our own strength, just as we always had before. Only this time we try to Christianize it. We walk the path of self-discipline: we make vows and resolutions to change our behavior, we work out schedules of quiet times, prayer times, Bible study times, and we go to work on our problems. I worked so hard the first six months of my Christian life that I nearly exhausted myself: one-hour quiet times at the beginning and ending of each day, nearly 40 hours per week of Christian commitments, etc. I cranked it up. I was doing my best. I was praying for God’s help, and felt like I received it in small, hard-to-measure doses. I felt like the little child whose letter is the final page in the little book entitled *Children’s Letters to God*. Little Frank wrote simply, “Dear God, I am doing the best I can.” I remember praying that same prayer in utter frustration: “Lord, what else do You want? I’m doing my best.” And I was doing my best, but I was suffocating under the weight of all my good intentions, and under the load of such a heavy Christianized schedule.

I had missed the point. The Christian life is not about “doing my best.” It is not about “do your best, and let Jesus do the rest.” No, no, no. It is about letting Jesus do it all, including putting me to rest. Our prayers must move beyond prayers for God’s help in our problems, as though God were withholding His divine assistance. He is entirely capable and present inside us, having withheld nothing. He withheld not His Son, whom He sent to die on a cross; He withheld not His Spirit, whom He sent to dwell inside us. He has already given all the help we will ever need, come what may. The trick is to begin by faith to thank Him for it, and step into life on the basic assumption that He will live His life through us because He said He would.

Now don’t feel too bad about missing some of this. It is easy over the years to forget this coronal truth of the gospel. In fact, most pastors miss it too. One pastor, Bob Munger, described the day years into the ministry when he discovered the life of Christ within him at Forest Home, a Christian camp in Southern California:

[The] subject that morning was “How to be Filled with the Spirit.” I knew he was speaking to me...The time soon came for us to pray. About a dozen of us knelt in a circle. Would I share my condition? Would I admit my desperation?...Finally it was my time to pray. I told the gathered Christian brothers that I needed to be filled with the Spirit and asked them to pray for me. They did—earnestly, lovingly and with warm faith. Then I prayed, reminding God from Scripture of our covenant relationship and what he had already promised to give me for his glory.

When I finished praying, the brother next to me, a big man whom I did not know but whose loving concern I could feel, put his arm around me and said, “Lord, help Bob’s unbelief!” That was a bit hard to take, but I took it! I had often told inquirers that we receive Christ not by feelings but by faith in his person and promise. Now, suddenly, my own faith came alive. With a holy boldness I told God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit that I was now receiving all of him and all that was meant in John 7:37-39. I thanked God that he was doing what I had asked of him. Now I knew for certain he would glorify Jesus Christ somehow even in me.

On the way out, Armin asked me, "Do you think God heard your prayer?" I said, "I hope so, because I feel confident I've done everything the Lord has been asking me to do. I can think of nothing more. The next step is up to him." "That's good," Armin said. "Keep on thanking him."

Thus Bob Munger came to learn the simple truth of the Christian life: it is about Christ alive in you, living His life through you. Munger went on to write one of the great distillations of this truth in the 20th century, the little booklet *My Heart -- Christ's Home*.

I love Munger's description of his dialogue with Armin. There are two key attitudes here. The first attitude is one of total availability to Him. Munger said, "I've done everything the Lord has been asking me to do. I can think of nothing more. The next step is up to him." That captures the fundamental attitude of total availability, or just showing up! All He asks is our availability, that He might use us when He wants; and just as important, that we might wait on Him when He does not want to use us! We are focused on Him, resting in Him, trusting Him, and totally available for Him to use however, whenever, for whatever. That is the first attitude of this new life. The second attitude is constant thanksgiving. Armin said, "That's good ...keep on thanking him." If all the fullness of the godhead dwells in us bodily through the Holy Spirit, then we have all the help, all the resource, we will ever need for any problem we will ever face. The point now is to face each day, each moment, each problem, not with a helpless sigh of "Oh well," but with a quiet prayer of "Thank you."

Now, at this point, I can imagine that doubt is creeping into your minds. This sounds too good, too simple. Where is it written that it is this simple?

Let me catalogue for you some of the wealth of Biblical teaching on this subject. God uses many examples of simple, everyday things to illustrate this golden truth of Christ in you, living His life through you. It is joyous to me that God uses everyday, seemingly mundane things to illustrate this best of truths.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said in Matt 5:14-16: "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do men light a lamp, and put it under a peck-measure, but on the lamp-stand; and it gives light to the whole house." I own an actual lamp used in Jesus' day. It is an unadorned clay vessel, roughly the size and shape of the cupped palm of your hand. It has toward the "finger-tip" a wick that is lit, and the rest of the lamp contains oil. This is a perfect picture of us: filled with the oil of the Holy Spirit, bearing within ourselves the genuine light of Christ. Jesus knew every time His audience lit a lamp, they would think about His imagery.

Jesus also used two pictures of living water to show how His life was to bubble up and flow through believers. At Jacob's well, speaking with the woman who was standing there, Jesus foreshadowed for her the truth of the coming Spirit, in John 4:13-14: "Jesus answered and said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.'" Thus Jesus used a common well to teach an uncommon truth. In a similar way, Jesus compared us to a river channel, out of whom shall flow rivers of living water. In John 7:37-39, we see perhaps Jesus' clearest teaching on the subject of His life flowing through the believer: "Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, "From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.'" Each believer is to be a channel of blessing, allowing the living water of His Spirit to flow through us to water a thirsty land.

On the night before He died, Jesus left in the minds of His disciples three indelible images of exactly this simple truth. Once again, the images are of everyday things endowed with the weight of heavenly glory. The first image is the vine and the branches. These men

had grown up seeing the vine and its branches as regularly as we see the television. And Jesus gave them the enduring picture of Himself as the true vine, and them the branches, whose life came only from the flowing sap available to them from the vine, the sap representing the Holy Spirit. His words in John 15:4-5 are as tantalizingly simple and profound as anything Jesus ever said: "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing."

Shortly before, Jesus had taken two of the most everyday things in the world and blessed them with glory beyond all imagining. He took bread, the most everyday part of a meal the world over, and compared it to His body broken for us on the cross. Then He took a common cup and filled it with wine, symbolizing simultaneously His spilled blood and the Spirit who would fill us up. It was a cup of blessing. It was the cup of the new covenant of His blood. Then the true magic of communion comes alive for us when we realize Jesus gave us both of these things to ingest, to take within ourselves. He didn't give the bread and the cup to sit on a table so we could stare at it and think kind thoughts about metaphorical theology. No. They were given to be taken inside, to be eaten and to be drunk. As the bread and wine are ingested, digested and life-giving to us physically, so the dying and living of Jesus Christ is consumed into us by faith, digested daily in our experience, and life-giving to us spiritually. Jesus gave us communion for one reason: to remind us of His death that allowed His life to come into us.

Thus, the Bible is replete with pictures of everyday little things imbued with the glory of God: a common house lamp, a well bubbling up, a flowing river, a vine and its branches, a piece of bread, a cup. Like clothes and gloves, they are made to be filled and used by Him for His work. Thank God for these everyday things filled with shining glory, because the body of Christ is entirely comprised of everyday people like you and me indwelt by the glory of God through the Spirit. Far from being a tangential truth of the gospel, this is the crowning truth of the gospel: that "we shall be saved by His life."

Finally, notice that there is no uncertainty in this. It is not "we might be saved by His life if we are good." Nor is it, "we will be saved by His life as long as we do A, B and C." Nor is it, "we will be saved by His life once we get to heaven." It is a simple fact from the moment of conversion forward into the foreseeable future. It is a certainty, not a mere possibility. Paul makes this clear in 1 Thess 5:24: "Faithful is He who calls you, who also will do it." There is no question that Christ will live His life through us. We just trust Him and say simply, "Lord, thank you!" And let's just keep thanking Him. Amen.

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1. *More Than Conquerors: Portraits of Believers From All Walks of Life* (Chicago: Moody), 20-21.