

Life is Fun!

by Christopher Bernard

Every day is just such a wonderful experience in unbroken fellowship and communion with the Father. That's how He meant it to be from the beginning. I know that I am one with Him, and that I am He, Christ manifest in the flesh — man, yet God, even as Christ Jesus. And the thrilling thing is that I can do absolutely nothing to deserve or merit Him.

I used to think that the Christian life was wrapped up in rules and regulations, do's and don'ts, laws and commandments, and daily disciplines. That's religion — man's way of trying to approach unto God. Jesus Christ is God's way for us to be one with Him. I've discovered that on the cross He said, "*It is finished.*" He settled it forever, once and for all! I am complete in Him by virtue of Him being in me and living as me. There is absolutely nothing I can do to add to the righteousness of God in my life. Everything that Christ is, I am ... justified, sanctified, glorified. Oh, what a wonderful mystery. One with the Father!

So many only know the saving knowledge of Christ by His blood for the forgiveness of sins, but so very few know the replaced life, through His resurrection and ascended body, of victory, joy, peace, overcoming, triumph, and complete rest. It is now my everyday continual experience that in fact I am a new creature where old things are passed away and all things are become new.

God intended for His life only to be manifest in us. Satan no longer has any foothold in me and sin has no more power, no more dominion over me. Condemnation is now a thing of the past that no longer plagues me. In reality, our being "born again" puts us in the same standing with God the Father as Jesus being born of a virgin.

As I know who I really am, there is nothing but victory in Christ. When trials and afflictions come, it's only God putting His Christ through such circumstances in life to bring forth life in others. I have been bought with a price, His precious blood, and am no longer my own. I am now for others.

It is written that God has "*created all things for His pleasure.*" At first thought that sounds selfish, until one realizes that His pleasure is that of giving His all. He's not looking for something to get from us to fulfill His desires or to please Himself, but rather His pleasure is to give.

Because I am now an expression of the very nature and character of God in the earth, that has now become my pleasure and purpose in life. I no longer look to God for what I can get out of Him for me. My nature is now His and that is to give. And as I give, it's with the understanding that He first gave to me. He is my Source. "*I love Him because He first loved me.*"

With that in mind, trials and afflictions are a pleasure, because they are for the benefit of others. I used to think trials and afflictions were the "dealings of God!" to perfect *me*, to sanctify *me*, to improve *me*. It was all *me, me, me!* But I've discovered that Jesus completed the work of redemption, sanctification, and perfection. "*He has [past tense] perfected forever them that are sanctified*" (Heb. 10:14). God is no longer interested in dealing with me, but that the world through me might be saved.

Granted, God does challenge us, but still it is for the benefit of others. As long as we think trials and afflictions are for us, we will forever be trying to get our lives in order; we will forever be trying to discipline ourselves to reach that self-set unobtainable "*goal of perfection.*" We become very self-centered, self-examining, self-disciplined. I've given up once and for all that self-examining life, realizing the finished work *He has done* (Rom. 8:3-4).

When Jesus said, "*Be perfect, even as your Father,*" He did not set an impossible standard for us. He accomplished the work of perfection at Calvary, and it is found only in the replaced life. It is actually possible to fulfill all of Matthew 5,6 and 7 without even trying. It is possible to live a life free of sin. "*As He is, so are we in this world.*" How can I say that He *has* perfected me? Because it is no longer I who live, but Christ!

So according to God's Word of already having been perfected, I embrace and welcome trials and afflictions, and seemingly evil circumstances, realizing they are for the benefit of others. Job finally realized this at the end of his ordeal with God and his friends. This is why he was healed when he prayed for his friends.

When we can welcome and embrace circumstances joyfully and with thanksgiving, we can endure all things and become co-saviors with Christ. I am now crucified to the world and the world to me, that the world that I come in daily contact with might be saved. I die daily for the benefit of others, that life might spring forth in them. God has ordained difficulties and seemingly evil circumstances to happen to us for the express purpose of Christ being made manifest to others.

Knowing these things, the life of faith becomes reality. We live by faith, not by sight, nor by feelings or circumstances. We live by that which is eternal and unseen, not by the physical, lying vanities around us. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places (Eph. 1:3). The material dimension is no longer our home. We are simply pilgrims passing through temporarily. The word of faith becomes more real to us than the physical that we see and touch, smell, taste, and hear, with our five senses.

Faith establishes the Word of God as fact, as evidence, as substance, as already accomplished. The promises of God are in Him "*Yes,*" and in Him "*Amen*" ... *by us!* All we do is say "*Yes*" and "*Amen*" to what God has already said, and it is so. We no longer judge things by outward appearance, we judge righteously. This is where life becomes fun and exciting and full of victory as we let God be the judge in life, and we live by the unseen, eternal reality!

As life becomes a walk of faith we then see everything with a "single eye." Jesus said our eye is either single or evil. One or the other. To see double is to see evil. Adam and Eve partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They then saw with double vision. They then became the judges in life, rather than leaving that to God. The devil very subtly fooled them by saying, "*You shall become as God, knowing both good and evil,*" when in fact the Father wanted them to function as an expression of Himself— God manifest in human flesh.

We are always trying to become something when we are simply to be the "I AM" within us. We live as "gods" because He is God in and through us, not because we are independent godlets. When we look at everything in life as good or evil, we become the judges (as God)), always classifying everything in one category or another. We become bitter, frustrated, judgmental in life. There is no joy, no peace, no rest.

To see with a single eye is to have a pure heart. That's why Jesus said, "*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*" Paul also speaks of living our lives in "*singleness of heart*" (Col. 3:22). When we have a pure heart, walking in singleness of heart, with a single eye, we see only God in everything. Every circumstance, every problem, trial, affliction, and seemingly evil thing, is the manifestation of God to us. We can flow with and be in harmony with everything that takes place, and be at peace with God and with every man. Proverbs says, "*There shall no evil happen to the just*" (Prov. 12:21). Knowing this, life is exciting. It is fun! When we see God only in life we can truly give thanks in and for *everything*.

There is such an emphasis today on getting and keeping the "presence of God" in one's life. I also once strived and struggled and cried out to God through daily disciplines to get the "manifested presence" of God. I thought the presence of God was dependent upon what I could *do*.

I have since thrown all that out the window forever, realizing now that I in fact am the presence of God, the Holy of Holies, the temple of the Holy Spirit. I no longer have to go running around striving to get His presence in my life. I am God expressed in flesh, God in the earth today, the manifested presence of God, even as Jesus was upon earth in His flesh. I am the will of God in the earth that the world through me might be saved by virtue of the fact that He dwells permanently within me. As Christ is lifted up, He will draw all men unto Himself, by us.

Psalm 22:3 says that God is holy and "*inhabits the praises of Israel.*" I've always thought that the way to get His presence was to praise Him, and then He would come down and inhabit my praise and manifest Himself to me. But that's the God of the old covenant, the God of "influence," or as the world calls it, a philosophy.

Most people look at God as an influence. "*Here am I down here, and there You are God up there, and if I'll do certain things and fulfill certain principles, You'll come down with Your presence and bless me.*" Even the world can live by that philosophy, knowing they'll be blessed by doing and fulfilling certain principles in life. Israel, an unregenerate people, lived by this principle. But because God is self-giving, He doesn't expect anything out of us. I don't have to fulfill anything to get His presence.

My God is not a God of influence, He's a God that has taken up permanent residence. He has taken up permanent abode in me. The veil was rent from top to bottom so that I could enter once and for all into the Holy of Holies whereby I freely partake of His presence, with no strings attached. Because of that, praise is now a natural, free-flowing, continual expression unto Him. Praise becomes as natural as breathing, and is a state of *being* and not merely an act. Our lives can simply *be* praise to Him (Eph. 1:12). The act of audible and demonstrative praise simply flows out of that state of *being* in which I find myself ... that of union with Him, one and the same with Him.

I no longer know a God of coming and going, a life of ups and downs according to whether I praise Him. There is such a higher realm where He lives as you and you as Him. We are *one* with the Father through Christ.

The classical example used to emphasize that we "ought to" praise God is found in Scripture, where Paul and Silas praised God in prison; and because they praised, God freed them. But, Peter was also in prison so fast asleep doing nothing that the angel had to hit him to wake him up to flee. The presence of God is not dependent upon praise, but rather is a state of being in Him. And Paul and Silas were not praising to try to call down the presence of God,

but because He was in them and spontaneously flowed forth in praise. They praised because they *had* the presence.

Our churches today are by and large a modern-day Mosaic tabernacle, trying to fulfill certain principles, rules and regulations, do's and don'ts, laws and commandments, and daily disciplines in order to get the presence and approval of God. That's fine as long as one does all of that flawlessly; but the Bible says that no one can keep the law. It also says that whoever wants to do the law must live it totally. You're blessed if you can do it, but cursed if you can't! (I tried for 13 years, but never could). Besides that, even if one could keep all the principles, laws and disciplines, there is room for pride saying, "I have done it." But God will share His glory with no man. There is absolutely nothing we can do to merit the presence or approval of God; neither does God expect us to do anything to obtain it, because of His self-giving nature.

It is the tangible, visible, felt, manifested presence of God that the church is looking for today. They'll never find it though, and only become frustrated in the process, because Jesus said, "*The kingdom comes not with observation, but behold the kingdom of God is within you.*" It is a wicked and adulterous generation that *seeks* for a sign, a manifestation of God. Once again, the signs and manifestations will automatically and *naturally* follow those who believe. It will be a spontaneous outflow of who we *are*, not something we *do*.

For years I have been asking God for a greater hunger and thirst for Him. I felt that the more hunger and thirst I had, the more God would come to me. I now realize I've been wasting my time and energy. But as I now understand who He is within me, I am satisfied, I am full, my thirst is quenched, my hunger is gone. Even as the Scriptures say, out of my innermost being flow rivers of living water.

Jesus said, "*He that drinks of the water that I give him shall never thirst.*" He said, "*Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be filled.*" He also said, "*He that comes to Me shall never hunger; and he that believes on Me shall never thirst.*" *There is an end!* That end is Christ. I no longer hunger or thirst. I now know only a permanently satisfied, fulfilled life in Christ, full and overflowing for the benefit of others.

I've given up trying to improve my life. All I have to do is be who I really am, which is Christ in me. If I may be so bold, I live as a "god," created in His very image with the indwelling Christ as my all. I live, yet it's no longer I that live: it is Christ. No wonder Paul calls it a mystery! Jesus was the firstborn among many brethren. He came as a Son to be an intercessor to bring many sons into glory. I suppose all this sounds quite blasphemous, but Paul did say that we are to be co-heirs and co-bodied with Christ — that we are to be brothers, sons of God as He is the Son, which means that we function as "gods" as He is God, for our life is His life. With that, I don't have to try and become like someone else. I can just be uniquely me with the indwelling Christ living as me.

After years of struggling and striving, frustration and failure (a necessary step!), I have finally ceased from my own works and entered into His rest. Oh what fellowship divine, what communion, what rest! I know Him, even as I am known of Him. I used to work so hard at being a Christian and, as a result God was at rest in my life. Now I'm at rest, and He's at work!

In this rest, prayer becomes a state of being. It's no longer an act or formality. It's continual communion and fellowship with the Father. Then and only then is it possible to fulfill the scripture, "*Pray without ceasing.*"

I have come to the realization that it was not I who committed myself to Him, but He who committed Himself to me. My spiritual life is dependent upon His total commitment to me. As long as I think that my walk with God depends upon my decision, my dedication, my commitment to Him, then life becomes a never-ending parade of rededication and reconsecration to Him. In reality, however, the Christian life is dependent upon *replacement*. He has *become* my life, and I rest in Him as He flows forth as rivers of water through me as His vessel.

Hallelujah, life is wonderful in Him! The best Bible college there is, is Life Himself. "*For me to live is Christ.*" Our mission on the earth is to live and to be the Christ to an unregenerate world around us.

I have concluded that it is absolutely impossible to live the Christian life, and that our God never intended us to do so. He intended for the Christ within us to live it. Then and only then is it possible to fulfill the law and "*be perfect.*" To try and fulfill the Christian life will only bring frustration and failure. But that frustration and failure is good if it brings us to the end of ourselves, where we realize the replaced life. It is only the replaced life in which the victory, the overcoming, the continual triumph is found. And it only comes as a revelation from the Father.

Jesus asked Peter, "*Whom do you say that I am?*" Peter said, "*You are the Christ.*" Jesus told him, "*Flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you, but my Father who is in heaven.*" Paul said that "*the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*" Jesus also told Peter, "*Upon this rock [upon this foundation of the revelation of Christ] will I build my church.*" It is only upon the revelation of the Christ that God will build His church.

Many try to build the church upon principles, upon teachings, upon evangelism, upon positive confession, upon this or that, and everything imaginable except the Christ. But except the Lord build the house, they that build labor in vain. It's upon this revelation of the *Christ* that life is fun, exciting, fulfilling and wonderful. Upon this revelation life becomes only victory in Him.

Oh, what fellowship, what communion, what victory. Hallelujah to Him forever!