

The Secret of the Victorious Life: Our Inner Beings.

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“We are not discouraged. No, even if outwardly we are wearing out, inwardly we are being renewed each and every day” (2 Corinthians 4:16).

[International Standard Version]

In this article, I would like to discuss “The secret of leading a life of victory” based on the epistle to the Romans, chapter 6, verse 6, first epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 2, verse 2, epistle to the Galatians, chapter 2, verse 20 and second epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 4.

Why do so many people fail to make spiritual progress even though they believe in and have accepted the Lord? It is simply because they allow their lives to be controlled by their “self.” Sooner or later, for all those who are given faith, the time comes to realize that the real obstacle to their life of faith is neither in their living circumstances nor other people, but it is hidden in their hearts.

Within us reside two lives that conflict with each other.

Christians who were newly reborn by the Holy Spirit were given an eternal life. However, the natural life we were born with is still in there trying to cover over this newly granted life of God. In the Scripture, this life we were born with is called the “outer being” and the new life of God is referred to as the “inner being.” Let us take a look at chapter 4, of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians:

Therefore, since we have this ministry through the mercy shown to us, we do not get discouraged. Instead, we have renounced secret and shameful ways. We do not use trickery or pervert God’s word. By clear statements of the truth we commend ourselves to everyone’s conscience before God. So if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are dying. In their case, the god of this world has blinded the minds of those who do not believe to keep them from seeing the light of the glorious gospel of the Messiah, who is the image of God.

For we do not preach ourselves, but rather Jesus the Messiah as Lord, and ourselves as merely your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said,

“Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory in the face of Jesus the Messiah.

But we have this treasure in clay jars to show that its extraordinary power comes from God and not from us. In every way we’re troubled but not crushed, frustrated but not in despair, persecuted but not abandoned, struck down but not destroyed. We are always carrying around the death of Jesus in our bodies so that the life of Jesus may be clearly shown in our bodies. While we are alive, we are constantly being handed over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus may be clearly shown in our mortal bodies.

And so death is at work in us, but life is at work in you. Now since we have the same spirit of faith in keeping with this Scripture: “I believed, and so I spoke,” we also believe and therefore speak. We know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will also raise us with Jesus and present us to God together with you. All this is for your sake so that, as his grace spreads, more and more people will give thanks and glorify God.

That’s why we are not discouraged. No, even if outwardly we are wearing out, inwardly we are being renewed each and every day. This light, temporary nature of our suffering is producing for us an everlasting weight of glory, far beyond any comparison, because we do not look for things that can be seen but for things that cannot be seen. For things that can be seen are temporary, but things that cannot be seen are eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:1-18).

For those who believe in the Lord and desire to live in obedience to Him, the day will come when they realize from experience that they cannot lead a life that pleases the Lord with their “outer beings,” which represent their innate life. They repeat the same mistakes and commit the same sins, which make them live in despair of themselves. However, this is the path we all have to go through inevitably if we sincerely desire to make spiritual progress and bear fruit. No matter how fervent our faith is, no matter how hard we pray, until we go through this spiritual bankruptcy, we will never be allowed to serve the Lord. Let us consider this from four perspectives; (1) the “outer beings” and the “inner beings,” (2) bearing fruit by death, (3) broken vessels and (4) to surrender ourselves.

1. Our “Outer Being” and “Inner Being”

Paul wrote in the Epistle to Romans:

“For I delight in the Law of God in my inner being, but I see in my body a different principle...” (Romans 7:22-23).

After he received the salvation of the Lord, Paul now aspired to live the life that accords with the intention of the Lord Jesus. And he wrote to the brothers and sisters in Ephesus:

"I pray that he would give you, according to his glorious riches, strength in your inner being and power through his Spirit" (Ephesians 3:16).

Here, Paul is praying, "Dearest brothers and sisters in Ephesus! You have been saved already, but may your 'inner being' be yet more strengthened." He also sent the words we read at the beginning of this article to the brothers and sisters in Corinth. We need to receive a new strength daily from above so that our "outer beings" are withered away and our "inner beings" are renewed each and every day.

As we can see from these verses, all saved people have their "outer beings" and "inner beings." In the Bible, the "outer being" refers to the life of the "self." The "inner being" represents the life that was newly given by the Lord God, and it is the Lord Jesus Himself.

John the Baptist said, "He must become more important, but I must become less important" (John 3:30). Here, "he" refers to our "inner beings," that is the life of God and "I" represents the "outer being," that is the life of the "self."

If we truly wish to serve the Lord Jesus and make spiritual progress, we need to allow our "inner beings," that is to say, the indwelling Lord Jesus to fully control ourselves. As long as our "inner beings" are bound by our "outer beings," we can not make a service that bears fruit. Our in-dwelling Jesus is wishing to become the real "Lord" inside us and the true "governor" of our lives. The Lord Jesus is the one who should take these titles.

What is important is that Jesus stays within us as the "governor." However, sometimes our "inner beings" are tied up as if they are jailed criminals. The "inner being" needs to be free. According to how much the in-dwelling Lord Jesus controls us, we will become useful for the work of the Lord Jesus and will be considered more precious in the eyes of the Lord.

Many people strive to satisfy their "outer beings," the life of the "self" with worldly matters. Most of the movies, TV programs and mass magazines are aimed at pleasing our "outer beings." In a world like this, what can we, the ones who received the salvation of the Lord Jesus do in order to let our "inner beings" grow?

"It is written, 'One must not live on bread alone, but on every word coming out of the mouth of God

(Matthew 4:4)," said Jesus. Now, do we truly live on the words coming out of the mouth of the Lord?

When I see Christians who separated themselves from the Lord, I see in them someone who failed to live on the Word of the Lord they once had. Consequently, they dropped out of the battle of faith. Those who read the Bible unthinkingly without a strong desire to understand the Lord better and do not seek the helping hand of the Lord Jesus will not grow in the right direction. If Christians do not learn the Bible the way they are supposed to and do not pray the right prayer through the Holy Spirit, they will remain in the same state no matter how many years go by. We will be blessed if we have the same experience as Paul, who said that, "though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."

2. To Bear Fruits by 'Death.'

Now, let us examine how fruit is borne through "death." These verses are very well-known:

"Truly, I tell all of you emphatically, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it produces a lot of grain. The one who loves his life will destroy it, and the one who hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life" (John 12:24-25).

There is life in a grain of wheat. But, this life is covered tightly with a hard shell. In order for this life to be revealed outwardly, the shell needs to be broken. The important thing for this life is to break the shell and reveal itself. The shell represents our "outer beings" the life of the "self," while the life in the shell symbolizes our "inner man", that is to say, the life of God, which is the Lord Jesus Himself. For the life of the Lord to be liberated, the life of our "self" needs to be decreased.

However, many people still have the "life of the self" alone. They know nothing about the life of the Lord God. Only those who have encountered the Lord Jesus are given eternal life. It is written in this verse:

"The person who has the Son has this life. The person who does not have the Son of God does not have this life" (1 John 5:12).

Most of the people pay attention to the jar alone, that is to say, the "outer being." But, we all should respect the "inner being," the perfume of nard that is in the jar.

There are two kinds of believers of the Lord. Although all Christians have the Lord Jesus dwelling inside and are given eternal life, for some people, their indwelling Lord is confined inside and cannot reveal Himself outwardly. On the other hand, other

kinds of people allow the Lord to dominate inside their minds at will and their inner beings are revealed outwardly. What is important for Christians is not how they receive eternal life, but how that eternal life will “have freedom inside us.” It is not until the “inner beings” of the saved people are revealed outwardly that they can serve as vessels that bring the same salvation to others. In order to bear abundant fruit, we first need to die. In order for a grain of wheat to die, it needs to be sown into the soil and buried deep in the ground. When the shell rotten away and lose its original shape, a fruit of new life is born. When we “completely die out” this way, we will have the same experience as Paul and make this same confession:

“While we are alive, we are constantly being handed over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus may be clearly shown in our mortal bodies” (2 Corinthians 4:11).

3. Broken Jar.

This incident is described in the Bible, where Jesus said that wherever the gospel is proclaimed throughout the world, it will also be told.

“While Jesus was in Bethany sitting at the table in the home of Simon the leper, a woman arrived with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume made from pure nard. She broke open the jar and poured the perfume on his head. Irritated, some who were there asked one another, ‘Why was the perfume wasted like this?’” (Mark 14:3-4).

They only thought that it was wasted meaninglessly.

“Mary took a pound of very expensive perfume made of pure nard and anointed Jesus’ feet. She wiped his feet with her hair, and the house became filled with the fragrance of the perfume” (John 12:3).

“But thanks be to God! He always leads us triumphantly by the Messiah and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of knowing him” (2 Corinthians 2:14).

The jar had to be broken in order for the house to become filled with the high fragrance of the perfume from the nard Mary brought. If the jar was not broken, the high fragrance of the perfume of nard could not have reached anyone in the house!

Many Christians seem to be living their lives of faith holding the jar of perfume in their arms with its lid tightly closed. They have accepted the Lord Jesus and are given eternal life, but this life is not revealed outwardly. “They will hold to an outward form of godliness but deny its power. Stay away from such people.” (2 Timothy 3:5) Let us be careful so as not to belong to such people.

The problem with many brothers and sisters is that they place higher importance on the jar than what is inside. They are proud of themselves for being enthusiastic and do not care whether they are working in the power of their flesh or not. Instead, they value worldly things such as education or social status. They are distracted by jars alone and just pay attention to their “outer beings.”

We are clay jars and our “inner beings” are the Lord Himself. Our innate talent or ability is absolutely useless unless it is placed under the control of the Lord. Therefore, we first need to be broken down. We do not even care about vanishing into nothing. Our concern should be whether our indwelling Lord Jesus is revealed through us.

The Holy Spirit of the Lord is unceasingly encouraging us. The Holy Spirit is guiding us so that we can completely die to ourselves so that we will be totally broken down and become instruments that are used only to glorify the Lord Jesus. Our “outer beings” need to be withered away and the hard shell needs to be broken. It is because we cannot bear any fruit unless we die, and we cannot bring life and blessings to others without going through spiritual bankruptcy. Those who have learned this fact from the Lord Jesus and take it deep into their hearts are blessed.

Every time we face some difficulty in our lives, we are so quick to complain, mumble, and become upset. However, the Lord is constantly working within us with one clear purpose. It is to break our “outer being,” so that our eternal life, our “inner beings” in the jar are set free and are revealed outwardly. The “treasure” hidden in the clay jar needs to be shown outwardly. At this present time, what is urgently required is not a jar, but the life of the Lord God to be flown out of the jar and spread out into the world. And what this world truly needs is the light of the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

“For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory in the face of Jesus the Messiah” (2 Corinthians 4:6).

It is only possible through sufferings that we let our “outer beings” die and live in our “inner beings.” If we sincerely desire to serve the Lord and bring blessings to others, we first need to throw our lives of “self” away.

“The one who doesn’t take up his cross and follow me isn’t worthy of me. The one who finds his life will lose it, and the one who loses his life because of me will find it” (Matthew 10:38-39).

It is a great tragedy that so many of those who have received the salvation of the Lord still remain unaware of what He wants from them. We want to profoundly understand the intention of the Lord for us. At the moment, the eyes of our hearts are opened to the purpose of the Lord, we will realize that all our problems, agonies, and pains have been prepared in order for our indwelling Jesus to be revealed in us and outwardly through us.

There is nothing that has happened in our lives that was meaningless. The Lord Jesus always led us to walk the best path. Even when we were suffering from horrible pain, when we were completely at a loss and left in the dark, the Lord Jesus was doing what was best for us. All these things have been done simply in order for “the Lord Jesus to be glorified and ourselves to be withered away.”

In order for the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ to work inside us freely, our “outer beings” need to be broken. It is toward this very purpose that the Lord Jesus is leading us. He leads each one of us in totally different ways; He works very rapidly for some people and very slowly for others. However, because very often something in our minds resists the control of the Lord, He cannot lead us forward. If we are holding back something, let us give it up and offer it to the Lord today.

“Lord Jesus, I offer everything I have to you, for your sake, for the sake of all brothers and sisters, and for the sake of all those who do not know you yet. I present myself to you so that you can work inside me freely and your life will be revealed outwardly through me.” We will be blessed when we completely surrender ourselves to the Lord this way.

Finally, I would like to discuss briefly our perfect surrender and the purification by the Lord.

4. Surrendering Ourselves

Have we ever had a fear of ourselves? Have we ever realized that even though we are saved, we still have the potential to do evil things? Have we ever been faced with our ego, our “self” standing in our way, just like the colossal Goliath, to which we were miserably defeated and cried out saying, “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is infected by death” (Romans 7:24), just like Paul did?

The Lord Jesus said:

“The one who loves his life will destroy it, and the one who hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life” (John 12:25).

Here, “his life” refers to the “outer being” of each person. When we hate our own lives and break away

from them, we begin to live the true life and the life of the Lord Jesus will manifest in us. It is not until our “self-denial” is completed, and we surrender our own rights to the Lord that our lives begin to bear fruit.

“Yet not what I want but what you want” (Mark 14:36).

This was the very mindset that the Lord Jesus continued to have throughout His life. Because of this, grace flowed out from the Lord Jesus and the fountain of life was given away to the people. Likewise, when we put all our thoughts, emotions, and intentions under the control of the Lord, the fountain of life shall begin to flow out from inside us. Our innate thoughts, emotions and intentions are not spiritual at all. It is not until these things are surrendered to the control of the Holy Spirit that they match the will of the Lord. By being offered to the Lord Jesus, they become spiritual and the life of the Lord begins flowing away from inside us. It is our personal decision to offer ourselves to the Lord Jesus. “Lord, I have lost all hope in myself. I realize that I cannot do anything that satisfies your will on my own accord. Please do your will through me.” We all want to pray this way.

In the era of the Old Testament, Abraham offered Ishmael as a sacrifice before he offered Isaac. This is opposite to what many saved people are doing. That is to say, they do not offer Ishmael, but offer Isaac alone first, so that they serve the Lord Jesus on the strength of their flesh.

The purification by the Lord is much more profound and greater than the liberation from sins. It is to surrender all our intentions and rights to the Lord and allow the Lord Jesus Christ to control every aspect of our lives. Abraham forced himself to abandon Ishmael in the wilderness, which took great courage. The blessing that Abraham received from the Lord by this sacrifice was tremendous. In order to lead the life of victory of Abraham, we too are to sacrifice our most beloved one to the Lord.

Sister Hede, who was the mayor of the divinity school in Aidlingen, Germany, was once very troubled over her innate personality. It was because, she was constantly tempted by the Devil, who never ceased whispering to her, “You repeated the same mistakes again and again. You failed in everything.” But, one day, this sister had a dream of her old “self” being crucified. When the Devil came back to attack her in the dream, she pointed at herself nailed to the cross and the Devil fled away.

One brother kept himself away from the assembly for eight years before he finally came back. When he joined us again, he confessed, “I was not crucified.” When we look up to the cross, we will find that along

with the Lord Jesus Christ, our old selves are nailed there too.

“We know that our old natures were crucified with him so that our sin-laden bodies might be rendered powerless and we might no longer be slaves to sin” (Romans 6:6).

When the Devil comes to attack us, we can stand against him with this Word of the Lord. The victory of the Lord Jesus is perfect. The Lord Jesus died for us on the cross along with our old selves. We no longer live, but, now, the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ is living inside us. The Devil has no authority over us at all. We can command him, “Get away, Devil!”

No matter what problems we are struggling with, let us not stop trusting the Lord. Let us remain calm in front of Him until we feel the presence of the Lord Jesus deeply in our minds and once we are convinced of the presence of the Lord, let us open the Bible and listen to His voice. If we continue to do so, our “inner beings” will receive new strength from above every day and it will make it possible for us to live the life of victory.

End