

The Salvation of Jesus (2), the Value of Jesus' 'Cross' to the 'Old Man'

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In the previous article, we learned three things regarding the sin of humans and the value of the blood of the Lord Jesus. Firstly, by the blood of the Lord Jesus, the wall called sin, that used to separate humans from God was taken down, and this made it possible for humans to have fellowship with God. Secondly, when we deeply understand this fact, our guilty conscience disappears and thirdly, the accusation of the devil loses his influence.

In this article, I would like to continue the discussion and talk about the value of the 'Cross' of Jesus against our "old man."

Once, we found ourselves perishing without knowing God, and with no hope, which made us cry out, "Lord, I am a sinful person who is destined to perish. Please forgive and save me." At that moment, we have realized deep in our heart that the shed blood of the Lord Jesus has the power to cleanse all our sins. And this realization has made us repent and stand in faith, I believe that most of our brothers and sisters have shared the same experience.

In other words, we recognized that not only have we sinned, but we are "the sinners" who inherently have the nature of sin deep inside our beings, didn't we?

There is a certain power within us and when that power works, we sin. We sin though we do not want to. And after we have sinned, we look up to the Cross of Jesus, repent sincerely and receive the forgiveness of that sin.

However, the joy of having that sin forgiven does not last long and soon we commit another one. It is very depressing to see ourselves going in circles in the same place over and over again. It is like a grown man going into a kid's playground with a pious face, riding a carousel and spinning round and round.

We sin, we repent; we repent and we sin again, and we do not seem to make much progress or growth. Isn't it very much like an adult riding a carousel horse to remain as a child without ever growing up in the realm of faith?

As we discussed in the last article, no matter when or what condition we are in, we are surely allowed to come into the presence of God, the Holy One, through the precious blood of the Lord Jesus, which was shed on the Cross. The value of the blood of Lord Jesus is more than enough to cover any horrible sin that we have committed. This blood of Jesus was shed, in order to redeem us back into the hands of God, that is to say, to forgive all the sin's

that we have committed.

However, the Blood cannot wipe away our "nature of sin."

"Old Man," that is to say, our innate nature needs to be dealt with; this problem still remains. And there is no other person than Jesus that can solve this problem of our "old man." No matter the troubles we are suffering from or how difficult these problems are, the answer of God to them is always His Son, Jesus. Jesus had died on our behalf and accomplished the work of eternal redemption. This Jesus, who died for us, not only rose on the third day but is still alive, hoping to set us free and liberate us.

Paul said, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ living in me" (Galatians 2.20). It is not until this becomes a reality inside us too that the Lord Jesus becomes our true liberator.

Who is the ruler of our existence, the ruler of our daily lives? Is it ourselves, or is it Jesus? The answer to this question immediately reveals whether the person's life of faith is moving forward or is it ending in miserable defeat. We do not want to be people who puts on a religious face outwardly, but is actually riding a carousel horse.

Blessed indeed are those who have come to the Lord with the burdens of sins on their shoulders and received their forgiveness. However, it is not supposed to stay in that state. It is very important for us to be free from the "power of sin," to be liberated from our innate nature and to set free from our "old man." For this reason, the cross is inevitably necessary. By the blood that the Lord Jesus shed on the Cross, we have been forgiven of our sins, redeemed and restored to be at peace with God. However, this blood cannot "erase" our innate nature. We still need the Cross.

Therefore, I would like to share a few thoughts with you on the following three points. The first is about the nature of the sin that we inherited from Adam. Secondly, whether we are in Adam, or we are in Christ. The third is God's method of delivering us from sin.

1. The Nature of Sin Inherited from Adam

This is described in detail, mainly in the Epistle to the Romans, chapter 5, verses 12-21; here, let us read just verse 19:

For just as through one man's disobedience many people were made sinners, so also through one man's obedience many people will be made righteous. (Romans 5:19)

In this verse, the Spirit is telling us two things. One is

the kind of beings that we are, which is to say, that we are all sinners. Secondly, He tells us where this sin of ours came from, that this Sin originated from the "First man", Adam (by one man's disobedience).

We are preoccupied with what we have done and what we do in our lives even after we have taken the first step of faith. When we were shown the sin that we have committed by the Holy Spirit, we were so terrified by the dreadfulness of that sin, but even after our sin was forgiven by Jesus, we are still preoccupied with what we have done, what we do now.

For example, sometimes, we might think this way; "I may not be such a great person, but I read the Bible a lot, pray a lot, and participate in a lot of services for the Lord. It should make me an admirable Christian."

However, in reality, it is often very difficult to get ourselves in the state we want us to be in. The problem does not lie in our outwardly expressed prayers or services, but it is in ourselves, in the state of our souls. We want to be pleasing to the Lord with all our hearts. This is undoubtedly our sincere desire. But, when we examine our hearts and look deep into our souls, we find something which is not pleasing to the Lord in there. We want to be humble. But, there is something that prevents us from humbling ourselves. We want to love people and we even force ourselves to do so. But, there is something in us that refuses to allow us do so. When we realize this, we cannot help the situation but confess, "Lord, not only is what I do a sin, but I am a sinner." How on earth did humans become a sinner?

In chapter 5, verse 19 of the Epistle to the Romans that we read above, it stated that sin came into humans through the disobedience of Adam.

For example, my name is Mr. Beck. It is not that when I was born, I did some thorough research through books on names and chose this name 'Beck' for me as a very good name. This name, Beck, was the name that my Grand-father, Great grand-father or ancestor's a long time ago gave to themselves. It is not my doing. No matter how much I dislike this name, I cannot change it. Even if I become a beggar, or even if I become the president of the country, well, I don't believe I will, I will still be Mr. Beck.

Now, why have we become sinners? It is not because of us. It is because of Adam. It is not because we have sinned that we are sinners. We are sinners because, when Adam sinned, we were in Adam.

Adam is the "first man." All mankind is a descendant of Adam. Therefore, the whole human race is a sinner in Adam.

To take one example, my child was born because my wife and I were married. I got engaged in Germany and married in Japan, but if our ship had sunk in a typhoon on our way to Japan and we had died, this child would not have been born. Our child, who was to be born, would have died in the sea with us. Just like this illustration, we all died with Adam, not in the sea, but in our sin.

The Bible states that because we were in Adam when Adam sinned, we too became sinners. We are all descendants of Adam. As his descendants, we all inherited the nature of sin from Adam. Accordingly, the problem is not only what we do, but it is our nature; it is in the kind of beings that we are.

We need to be free from this sinful nature. If we cannot be released, our faith will not grow. Which means that we will keep riding on a carousel with a pious face forever.

Our inborn nature is the nature of sin. When we were born, we all were predestined for the fate of being sinners already.

Let me give you another example. Suppose a Japanese man is born in Germany. He does not speak Japanese language at all. Suppose that he speaks German language and live exactly like German people. However, he is still Japanese and it does not make him non-Japanese. In the same manner, it does not matter at all if the person sins a lot or a little. It does not change the fact that such person was born with a sinful nature. Because humans are born with the nature of sin, we always commit sins.

Now, why is it that even after we believed in and accepted Jesus Christ and were made children of God, we still cannot help but sin? It means that we have not solved the problem of our sinful nature.

Why is a bird a bird? He is a bird because he was born a bird. A bird is not a bird because it can fly. Even if he gets sick and can no longer fly, he is still a bird and nothing else. Now, why are humans sinners? They are sinner because they were born as a sinners.

Let us continue the discussion and consider the second point, "are we in Adam, or are we in Christ?"

2. Are We in Adam, or Are We in Christ?

What on earth does it mean for humans to be in Adam, or to be in Christ?

To be in Adam means despair, while to be in Christ means hope. This verse, which was quoted above, is not only about Adam, it refers to Christ too.

For just as through one man's disobedience many people were made sinners, so also through one man's obedience many people will be made righteous. (Romans 5:19)

Sin entered the world through Adam and death entered the world through sin. Because of Adam, the entire human race has become hopeless sinners.

But, into this darkness, a glimmer of light shone through. It was that "the obedience of one by which shall many be made righteous," in other words, is the obedience of the Lord Jesus that saved humanity.

To be in Adam means to be a sinner and to be of a sinful nature. I am going to read the confessions of David, Peter, Job and Paul from the Bible. David confessed the following.

Indeed, in iniquity I was brought forth; in sin my mother conceived me. (Psalms 51:5)

When Peter followed the words of Jesus and had a great catch of fish, 'he fell down at Jesus' knees and said, "Leave me, Lord! I am a sinful man!" (Luke 5:8) according to the Bible. Peter cried out, "Lord please get away from a man like me." Fortunately, Jesus did not get away from Peter. Jesus forgave all the sins of Peter before He accepted Peter as one of His disciples.

Job confessed, when he realized that Lord is the Almighty, "as a result, I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:6).

Paul also confessed, when he was shown what was in his heart:

So I find this to be a principle: when I want to do what is good, evil is right there with me. (Romans 7:21)

For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but I cannot carry it out. (Romans 7:18)

"To be in Adam" means to be a sinner and to have a sinful nature. I am certain that you already understood this fact from the confessions above. In contrast, "to be in Christ" means to be a child of God, to have the nature of God. Let us take a look at the Book of Ezekiel:

Your fame spread throughout the nations because of your beauty. You were perfectly beautiful due to my splendor with which I endowed you," declares the Lord God. (Ezekiel 16:14)

It is stated in the Song of the Songs, "Look at you! You are beautiful, my darling. Look at you! You are

so beautiful. Your eyes behind your veil are doves, your hair is like a flock of goats coming down from Mt. Gilead..... My darling, you are altogether beautiful and there is no blemish in you." (The Song of the Songs 4:1, 7)

Furthermore, it is written in the Gospel, according to Matthew, "All at once some people brought him a paralyzed man lying on a stretcher. When Jesus saw their faith, he told the paralyzed man, 'be courageous, son! Your sins are forgiven.'" (Matthew 9:2) Let us look at what was written in the letters Paul sent to the churches:

Because all the essence of deity inhabits him in bodily form. And you have been filled by him, who is the head of every ruler and authority. (Colossians 2:9-10)

That is what some of you were! But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of our Lord Jesus the Messiah and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:11)

As you can see from these passages, to be in Adam is despair, while to be in Christ is hope. We need to be liberated from our innate nature.

Paul once asked his fellow believers, "should we go on sinning so that grace may increase?" (Romans 6:1) He went further to answer the question himself, "Of course not!" How God, who is holy to the extreme, can be satisfied with men as they are still unclean. The Bible states:

Of course not! How can we who died as far as sin is concerned go on living in it? (Romans 6:2)

Then, is the Lord making provision for us to be delivered from the nature we were born into? We are all feeble in personality. However, grace was given on top of that feebleness. The strength of God and faith was raised and added to us.

The weakest point we have can be our strongest point.

Finally, I would like to share with you some thoughts on God's way of freeing us from the power of sin.

3. God's Method for our Liberation

The way that we are released from sins can also be thought of in two ways. One is the death of Jesus, the "last Adam." The second is the resurrection of Jesus, the "second man".

So far, we have learned the fact that mankind became sinners in Adam. Now, how can we, who are in Adam, be liberated from this state?

The blood of our Lord Jesus on the Cross has forgiven our sins, made atonement and has given us peace with God. However, just having this fact as knowledge does not free us from the nature of Adam, that is to say, our sin nature. The blood of the Lord Jesus does not liberate us from within Adam. Then, by what means can we, believers be set free from sin?

Humans are originally born in the nature of Adam. And when they die, they can be free from the nature of Adam. It is only by dying that they can be set free from the nature of sin.

Therefore, the question is, how it is possible for our self that is in Adam to die. We try very hard to die to ourselves again and again, but we always fail. The bottom line is that, instead of struggling to die to ourselves on our own, we need to understand what God has done in order to free us from the power of sin. It is explained in the Epistle to the Romans as follows:

Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? (Romans 6:3)

Here it said, "We were baptized into His death." How will it be possible for us to move into Jesus and die in Him? No matter how hard we struggle on our own, there is nothing we can do to actualize it. So, God has done it on our behalf. We are already in Jesus and we do not need to worry about it anymore. The Lord God, by His compassion, has brought us into Christ and has put us in Jesus. The Bible says:

But of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made to us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (1 Corinthians 1:30)

Here it is written that, "you are in Christ Jesus." We are definitely in Christ and there is no doubt about it. None of us knows how we came into Christ. Still, we can realize fully by the Word of God that we are already in Christ.

We are, fortunately, already in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the work of God. Whether we believe it or not, whether we feel it or not, this is the immovable fact of God. When the Lord Jesus died on the Cross, we too died with Him. It is because we were in Jesus when it occurred. The Word of God says:

We are convinced of this: that one person died for all people; therefore, all people have died. (2 Corinthians 5:14)

When the Lord Jesus was crucified, we too were crucified. For example, let's say that I have a book with a single sheet of paper between it and I want to

send this book to the city of Sendai. Actually, I did not intend to send this paper, but because it was tucked between the pages, this paper also went to Sendai with the book. There is no way that, let's say, the book goes to Sendai while this piece of paper goes to Hiroshima.

"But of Him, are you in Christ Jesus." The Lord God has put us into Jesus Christ. Just like a piece of paper slipped into a book, we are inside Lord Jesus and when He was crucified, we too were crucified and when He died, we died with Him. Therefore, we do not need to beg God to "crucify us" today.

When the Lord Jesus died, we died with Him. Therefore, our death is now over. It is impossible for us to die again. Whatever page you open, the New Testament tells us that we already have died with the Lord Jesus. Let me read some Bible passages that relate to this fact. In this verse from the chapter 6 of the Epistle to the Romans, 'our old man' refers to the old innate nature that we were born with.

Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin. (Romans 6:6)

Please note that in this verse the past tense is used as, it "was crucified with Him."

Now, let us proceed to the letter to the Galatians.

I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live. Yet not I, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

The past perfect is used here as well, "I have been crucified with Christ".

Now those who belong to the Messiah Jesus have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires. (Galatians 5:24)

Here, the past perfect is also used as "have crucified."

But may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world! (Galatians 6:14)

The past perfect tense is used here again. Through these passages, we clearly realize that we are already dead with the Lord Jesus.

No one in this world can crucify themselves and take their own life. We cannot drive nails into our hands and feet by ourselves. Even if you try very hard, the

best thing you can do is to hit one hand. In exactly the same way, none of us can take away the nature of sin from our own. Because God placed us in Jesus, when the Lord Jesus took up the Cross, we were crucified with Him. That we too were crucified with the Lord Jesus is not a teaching, nor is it a theory. It is the truth of God that will never change.

Furthermore, the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus was done on our behalf. It was to atone for our horrible sins and to satisfy the holiness and righteousness of God that the Lord Jesus chose to die on the Cross, gave up His innocent and spotless body for us and shed His precious blood.

This work of salvation, and this work of redemption could not have been accomplished by anyone but Lord Jesus. No human being could take any part in this work at all. You can read every inch of the Bible and you can't find any implication that our blood, even for a single drop, was shed with the blood of the Lord Jesus on the Cross. The Lord Jesus accomplished this work of redemption in the presence of God all by Himself.

But, it was not just to shed His blood that the Lord Jesus died. He shed His blood to death so that we too might die with Him. The Lord Jesus died in place of us. You and I are involved in the death of the Lord Jesus. For God put us into the Lord and we died on the Cross with the Lord Jesus. In the death of the Lord Jesus, you, I and all humans are involved. All mankind has died with the Lord Jesus.

And it is not only the death of the Lord Jesus, but also His resurrection of the Lord Jesus, that involves you and me. All mankind has been raised with the Lord.

It is explained in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 15:

This, indeed, is what is written: "The first man, Adam, became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.... The first man came from the dust of the earth; the second man came from heaven. (1 Corinthians 15:45, 47)

In these verses, Jesus is called "the last Adam." He is not called the "second Adam." He is also called "the second man" instead of the "last man." How can this be?

In Jesus as the "last Adam," the whole human race is included. And as the "last Adam," Jesus was subjected to judgment and death, along with all mankind, who were corrupted by sin and were in captivity.

Then, as the "second man," the Lord Jesus became the head of the new humanity. Furthermore, as the

"second man," the Lord Jesus was resurrected with completely new humans. The Bible tells us that we were all included in this resurrection.

For if we have become united with Him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. (Romans 6:5)

My dear brothers and sisters, we died with the Lord, who was the "last Adam" and we rose with the Lord as the "second man." This proves that the power that moved us from Adam into Christ was in the 'Cross.'

So far, we have discussed our innate nature, the old man. We have seen that our natural old man, our innate nature has already been removed by the Cross of the Lord. What governs us inside, who have received the Lord Jesus, not the old nature of Adam, but it is the Life of the Lord Jesus. And Jesus is willing to manifest His glory within us. This exactly is the deliverance from the power of sin.

Why is the Cross necessary for us? It is necessary in order for Jesus to let His own Life dwell within you and I. Let us look at the First Epistle to the Corinthians again:

It is because of God that you are in union with the Messiah Jesus, who for us has become wisdom from God, as well as our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. (1 Corinthians 1:30)

What is "wisdom" that is referred to here? That is the Lord Jesus.

What is "righteousness," "sanctification" and "redemption?" That is the Lord Jesus Himself. The holiness to which we should reach is the Lord Jesus Himself.

You might be aware of your arrogance and you want to be humble now. However, you cannot get your humility no matter how hard you struggle for it. All you need to seek is the Lord Jesus.

God cannot give your patience, love, humility and meekness separately. But, the Lord God has already given us Jesus. If we only rely on the Lord Jesus and welcome Him abundantly into our hearts, Jesus Himself will be our humility, our patience and our love.

The Lord God is not like a merchant who sells out patience, love or humility. God has simply given us Lord Jesus to be in our life. We do not need to force ourselves to live a model Christian life. All we need to do is to surrender ourselves to the Lord and allow Lord Jesus to dwell in us. Paul wrote:

I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live. Yet

not I, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I
now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son
of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.
(Galatians 2:20)

Like Paul, I want each and every one of us to stand
firm in this faith, which made him say, "It is no longer
I that live, but Christ living in me."