



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

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Jump Start # 1809

Galatians 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 gave Himself up for me."

It is interesting that this verse plainly states that Christ indwells within Paul. Folks have no problems with that statement. They love it, quote it and refer to it often. However, quote a passage that states the Holy Spirit dwells within the Christian, and people get all excited. They talk about the Spirit doing this and that for them. They talk about certain feelings they have when the Spirit is in them. Some would take these feelings over plain Bible verses. What's the difference? What's the difference between Christ dwelling in us and the Spirit dwelling in us?

A person does not lose accountability nor free will with Christ or the Spirit in them. If they did, then they would not be responsible for what they chose and they would not sin. We know, from the Scriptures that neither one of those is right. We are always responsible for our choices. And, we can sin.

Having the Spirit in you does not mean that God speaks to you like He did the apostles. That's the common idea in most modern books today. Modern authors claim being led by the Spirit is nothing more than direct divine guidance, like God leading Israel through the wilderness. You might be guided to find a parking space. You might be guided to find a new house. You might be guided to find the love of your life. One would think with all this guidance going on, why do we even need the Bible. The impression we get from many modern writers is that God guided just about everyone in the Bible on a daily, personal basis. You'd think that, but when you actually read your Bible, you'll find a different story. Few had God directly speaking to them. When God did speak, it wasn't about parking spaces, buying homes or what to name their pet. It always involved His will. It involved fulfilling His promises. It involved the fulfillment of prophecy. It involved the spread of the Gospel.

Modern writers make one huge blunder which deceives the readers every time. When we read about the apostle Paul in our Bibles, we must remember that Paul wore three hats. He was a Christian. He was a preacher. He was an apostle. When I read, I must learn from the context, which hat Paul is wearing. We cannot do everything that Paul did. When he is speaking about the revelation he received from God, he is talking about his role as an apostle. We are not apostles. God does not reveal to us like He did to Paul. Lifting Paul verses out of context, without making this distinction, will lead people to believing that they can do anything and everything that Paul did. "He was a Christian, like me," but he was more than a Christian.

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He was also an apostle. So, Paul saw visions. Paul had angels speak to him. Paul received revelations from God. Paul could do miracles. Paul could command churches what to do, because he had the authority of God. What Paul wrote was the Lord's commands. You and I can't do all those things.

It is also important to note, in our Bibles, when God spoke to someone, they always knew it was God. God never used feelings or divine nudges to express His will. People knew when God spoke. God declared Himself when He spoke. People today, misunderstanding the role of the Spirit, believe that God guides them and leads them. When questioned about how they knew it was God, it comes down to a warm feeling inside of them. Something you don't read about in the Bible. When pressed, "How do you know those feelings are from God and not Satan," there isn't any substantial proof or evidence. They just know, they say. It's feeling based. I'm all for praising God. I don't think we do that enough in a day. But to think that God provided a parking space right in front of the store I was going to, is based upon what? My wishes? Maybe, if truth be known, God would rather me park far away and get more exercise. Maybe God wanted me to walk and pray. There is no way to know which one God wanted or even if He wanted either one. Maybe He wanted me to stay home and save my money. Feeling based religion cannot know the answers to these questions. What God wants somehow is exactly what I wanted. Very interesting how that works out in their faith and minds.

Our verse, where Paul states that Christ lives in him, is based upon faith. Our faith is built, supported and founded upon the word of God. This section of Galatians is dealing with sin. Paul is saying that he died to sin. That was his choice. He even states, "If I rebuild what I have once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor." A lot of personal pronouns in that sentence. I destroyed. I prove. I rebuild. Those are all choices. God wasn't preventing Paul from going back. Paul's faith is what kept him going.

Christ dwelling in Paul was a relationship. It indicates that Paul was living and choosing to do things God's way. These were his choices. His faith, built upon the Scriptures, is what kept this relationship going. How is this any different than the Spirit dwelling in us? It's not. It's a relationship. It's built and sustained by faith. The Spirit is not going to violate divine principles or teachings from the word of God. Not only is Christ and the Spirit in the Christian, but the Christian is in them. How can I be in Christ, when I'm down here and He is up there? By faith. By relationship. By choices.

We walk by faith. That faith is encompassed by the word of God. We belong to Christ. In a simplistic example, I am an American. My choices reflect that. When the anthem is played, I put my hand over my heart. When the flag enters a room, I stand. I honor the privileges of this country. I believe in this country. My life reflects that I am an American. I also am a Christian. My faith, my choices reflect that. I treasure the Bible. I love what God loves. I want to be with other Christians. I seek to please God. My life reflects that I am a Christian. I belong to Christ. He is in me and I am in Him. The same is said about the Father and the Spirit.

Ownership, is what our passage is about today. The Corinthians were told, you are not your own. You were bought with a price. That's what it means to be a Christian. It is no longer I who live, but God lives in me.

Don't get excited in the wrong way about the indwelling of the Spirit. Don't be looking for things to happen that cannot happen. Don't expect God to keep you from making wrong choices. If that's your choice, it will happen and you will face any consequences that come with that.

Your life, by your choices, reflects God dwelling within you. The life I live, Paul says, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself up for me. What a wonderful statement!

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