

“A Holy Happiness” or
 “Elementary Principles of the New Life”
 Sermon for 12 September 2021
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 Texts: Galatians 2:19-20

A good friend stopped by for a visit and as Christian brothers we shared about the Lord's doing's in our lives. One of the concerns I touched on is the sad reality that a colleague is counseling a couple whose marriage is in trouble because each partner is fixated on his, or her personal happiness. “They are hell-bent for happiness, so to speak, and neither is open to the work of sanctification which God is seeking to accomplish in their marriage. I remember remarking, “It's too bad that they don't have a vision for a *holy happiness*”—a happiness that pleases God and blesses each of them. Paul had such vision, he puts it this way:

8 Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without anger and dispute.

One can only imagine what change would take place in this troubled marriage if **anger and quarreling** were deleted and **holiness** were inserted! There is both a death to self, and a call to sacrifice in “holy happiness.” Holy happiness that is only possible to those who are rooted and grounded in Him. But this is not something limited to marriage, as in married couples, where mutual submission and sanctification necessarily co-exist—everyone should seek it! God would have everyone holy first, and then, have them be content (satisfied in the resultant happiness). *Holy happiness* is God's blessing and it expresses the good God has for each believer.

“ Six Elementary Principles of the New Life” are discoverable in today's text:

Gal. 2:19 **For through [a]the Law I died to [b]the Law, so that I might live for God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and [c]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.**

They are: 1. death and resurrection; 2. the indwelling Christ; 3. alive with Christ; 4. our synchronistic existence (we live in a material sphere and a spiritual sphere); 5. our transformation from outsiders to insiders; and 6. peace through Jesus. Those who live out these six principles will experience the “holy happiness” that I long for you to have.

I have set myself the task this morning of elucidating those principles of New Life. Let's get started. #1 Death and Resurrection. We start with a paradox: I died to the Law . . . that I might live for God (Theo). How can Paul mean this? Plainly he who **died to the Law** is not so dead that he cannot write! “Christ is **the goal of the law to everyone who believes**, because the ultimate goal of the law is that all nations are to be blessed in Abraham.¹” This is a recasting of the promise to Abraham. (Gen. 12:3) And it is a revelation conveyed through the life and work of

¹<https://www.google.com/search?q=Christ+became+the+Law&aq=chrome..69i57j69i64.4202j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

our Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah. It is a Messianic prophecy fulfilled in Him. This **I died** is meant metaphorically then. And it is accomplished on the cross, on that specific historical occasion, because Paul was metaphorically (but truly) **crucified with Christ**. *And so aren't we all!* We are identified with Christ in this death to the Law so that in identification with Christ, again, we, may like Paul live **for/to God**. ***In an elemental fashion, we are dead to the Law and alive to God.*** We enter into the promise of Abraham, into the covenant of promise *and grace* through this gate. To be clear, “the old me” is the “me in captivity,” that is who I was before I died to me. The history of four hundred years of captivity, for the Hebrew peoples (our spiritual ancestors!), is instructive for us. Charles Wesley wrote:

Long my imprisoned spirit lay/ Fast bound in sin and nature's night.
Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray, I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
 My chains fell off, my heart was free; I rose, went forth and followed Thee.
 v. 4 “And Can it Be That I Should Gain?”

Four hundred years is a measure of duration—it means a long, long time. Time to be acclimated to slavery, captivity, or bondage. A long time to practice and internalize the habits of a slave mentality—freedom is an enormous hill to climb! We know that it is not merely emancipation, the act of liberation, that's in view but the long road to health, to spiritual wholeness. This helps us sympathize with Moses' challenge—he was anointed of God to lead them out of servitude and into the life of freedom, free to worship, to holiness and to happiness. We understand regression and relapse all too well! It takes courage, patience and perseverance to be free in Christ. And, frankly, without God's help we would never cease walking in circles. Getting out of the swamp is step one, getting the swamp out of me takes more time, grace and divine intervention.

#2 The Indwelling Christ. Now here (speaking of divine intervention) comes a second paradox: because I **have been crucified with Christ**, and one cannot get more dead than the crucified Christ, spiritually speaking; because of that death (in Christ): **It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me**. ***Christ in me*** is the new center, and the new principle of life, *added to my material, physical and biological existence!* This is life from heaven, or, from above and this spiritual vitality animates me as it could not when I was bound under the Law, and in bondage to sin. And, note, both of these conditions (the Law and sin) apply to my former, pre-crucified self; they are the hallmarks of my spiritual captivity *from which Christ has delivered me when He was sent, and willingly, lovingly, freely came to redeem me*. ***He is the word of God, the love of God in the flesh, as well as truth, light and life.*** Christ is the energy core, supernaturally implanted in me (Scripture describes this variously as a new heart², a heart of flesh) by faith. He is more than oxygen to us! Oh, that we would live with all His might to the full glory and honor of our God—it's available!

² In Christianity, the heart symbolizes the center or core of our being, from which prayer and moral actions originate. This even explains the word “core,” which is derived from the Latin word **cor**, meaning, “**heart**.” <https://aleteia.org/2020/06/18/what-is-the-spiritual-meaning-of-the-heart/>

So this **Christ dwelling in me** must be an augmentation of some sort of power. It must be a *something spiritual added to* our material, physical and/or biological reality. Christ living in me? Christ dwelling in me? *This is spiritual*. In fulfillment of John 14:23: **If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.** Again, that is an elemental change, a constitutional change: loving Christ, and by faith in his work—I become what I was not before: an in-dwelt being. Not an unregenerate sinner, not a stranger or alien, or Gentile—but someone who has entered into the covenant promises in person, a saint, co-heir and member of the Father’s household: he had transformed me into a **new creature**. I am **his child**.

#3 Alive with Christ: saved. At this point, we should move to Ephesians 2 where the doctrine here, in its condensed form, is expanded (I wanted to say, fleshed out, but that might appear to be a set up for some clever word play, so we’ll stick with expanded.) We start in Eph. 2:4-8:

Ephesians 2:4-8: **4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead [a]in our wrongdoings, made us alive together [b]with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the [c]boundless riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and [d]this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;**

Footnotes

- a. Ephesians 2:5 Or *by reason of*
- b. Ephesians 2:5 Two early mss *in Christ*
- c. Ephesians 2:7 Lit *surpassing*
- d. Ephesians 2:8 I.e., this salvation

Alive together, raised up with, seated with all describe our salvation! We diminish our salvation when we limit it to forgiveness of sin, cleansing from guilt; it means that and so much more! We are spiritually repositioned when we are redeemed.

Please note, ***the continuance of God’s benevolence towards us***: the hallmarks of Christ’s mission: “*when He was sent, and willingly, lovingly, freely came to redeem me*. He is the love of God in the flesh; as well as truth, light and life.” Here, we read, God **being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us even when we were dead in our wrongdoings** (that is, under the Law which discloses to me the sinfulness of sin!), **made us alive together [b]with Christ (by grace you have been saved)**. The same metaphor, or similitude. Spiritually, we were dead, we have been **made alive with Christ** (which follows the pattern of **crucified with Christ . . . raised with Christ. . . identified with Him in His death** (baptism) and **so with His resurrected life that I might live to God!**).

As Jesus says, **John 14:19: [a]After a little while, the world no longer is going to see Me, but you are going to see Me; because I live, you also will live.**

#4 We Live in Two Spheres. God has **raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus!** This is another extraordinary claim which underscores that we, as human beings, must simultaneously live in two spheres: a material one, and spiritual one. While we reliving, we are in a parallel time frame, **raised up** and **seated with Him**—synchronistically. We are not merely organisms, or animals, but we have already transcended the limits of this tiny, temporal world and even now we are with Him and, in that sense, we are, even now, fully alive. God did this, and grace accomplished this—we contributed nothing. And for the eternity, **(in the ages to come)** we will experience witness, enjoy and survey **the bounds riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.** The infinite and eternal story of Jesus, as God's embodiment of love, will be our blessed preoccupation—our everlasting happiness.

Of all the creatures God made, we are stand alone's in that we have a post-temporal existence. At least three passages of Scripture substantiate this claim:

Philippians 3:20-21: **20 For our [a]citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; 21 who will transform the body of our lowly condition into conformity with [b]His glorious body, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.**

2 Corinthians 5:1-5 **For we know that if our [a]earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made by hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For indeed, in this *tent* we groan, longing to be clothed with our [b]dwelling from heaven, 3 since in fact after putting it on, we will not be found naked. 4 For indeed, we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life. 5 Now He who prepared us for this very *purpose* is God, who gave us the Spirit as a [c]pledge.**

Footnotes

- a. 2 Corinthians 5:1 Lit *earthly house of the tent*
- b. 2 Corinthians 5:2 I.e., the resurrected body
- c. 2 Corinthians 5:5 Or *first installment*

1 Corinthians 15:42-49: **42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown [a]a perishable *body*, it is raised [b]an imperishable *body*; 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual *body*. 45 So also it is written: "The first man, Adam, became a living [c]person." The last**

Adam was a life-giving spirit. 46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. 47 The first man is from the earth, [d]earthy; the second man is from heaven. 48 As is the earthy one, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly one, so also are those who are heavenly. 49 Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, [e]we will also bear the image of the heavenly.

Footnotes

- b. 1 Corinthians 15:42 Lit *in corruption*
- c. 1 Corinthians 15:42 Lit *in incorruption*
- d. 1 Corinthians 15:45 Or *soul*
- e. 1 Corinthians 15:47 Or *made of dust*, and so throughout the ch
- f. 1 Corinthians 15:49 Two early mss *let's also*

1 Corinthians 15:52-53: 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised [a]imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For this [b]perishable must put on [c]the imperishable, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.

Footnotes

- g. 1 Corinthians 15:52 Lit *incorruptible*
- h. 1 Corinthians 15:53 Lit *corruptible*
- i. 1 Corinthians 15:53 Lit *incorruption*

Our citizenship in heaven is the first indication of our *post-temporality* and, as Philippians points out that citizenship is accompanied by a bodily transformation. Our post-temporal condition is inextricably tied both to resurrection life and to the afterlife. Paul designates this as **our earthly tent, a perishable body, a mortal body, a natural body and an earthy body** (after Adam)—and proceeds to contrast that with **a glorious body** (resurrected body like Christ's) in Philippians. This **earthly tent** becomes **a building from God** in which we are **to be clothed as life swallows up what is mortal** (2 Cor. 5:4). v. 5 **Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave us the Spirit as a pledge.** The passage from 2 Cor. 5 reads as something more basic than what Paul taught before in 1 Cor. 15. In 1 Cor. 15 we read **sown perishable, raised imperishable . . . dishonor is succeeded by honor; weakens . . . by power; natural . . . by spiritual . . . first Adam . . . by the second Adam, a life-giving spirit** and, lastly, **earthy is seconded by the heavenly.** This is our destiny as planned and purposed by God! And this distinguishes us from all other organic life forms.

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.

But that is not all. Paul continues in Ephesians 2:11, 13 and 15:

11 Therefore remember that previously you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision” *which is performed in the flesh by human hands*— . . . 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Jesus . . . 15 . . . that he might create in himself one new man.

5 Our Transformation. Now this particular passage refers to us, filling out the phrase “who I was” before **I died to the Law**, we were **Gentiles in the flesh** as are all who are materially, physically and biologically alive and unrelated genetically to the Jewish race. Separated as it were by circumcision **performed in the flesh**— this to keep our contrast up, alive and real, meaning we, formerly, in our material selves, existing as Gentiles **we who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Jesus**. This is the act, or instrumentality by which we were transformed, it is the power in the blood that dissolves our former state and brings our new condition into existence. *We are no longer what we were! **We were in the flesh, but now we are in the flesh and in the spirit by an act of sovereign will.*** Christ has created **in himself one new man** (v.15), a new race in union and unity with Him, in-dwelt and spiritually aligned with Him forever.

#6 Our Peace. This is **the peace** that **He came and preached to you** (Eph. 2:17-22) . . . this aligns with Peter’s proclamation:

For the word that he (God) sent to Israel preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), you yourselves know . . . (Acts 10: 36)

. . . You that were far away and those near, for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father(vv. 17-18) Verse 19: **So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens with the [a]saints, and are of God’s household, 20 having been built** on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit We are *fellow citizens with the [a]saints, and are of God’s household.* Catch the present tense, we are not we will be . . . we are of God’s household . . . *having been built* on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus *being* the cornerstone . . . the whole building, *being fitted* together *is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling to God in the Spirit.*

These passages position us to understand more fully the last sentence in our text:

Gal. 2:20: 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.

What exactly does it mean **to live by faith**? Does it not mean to live out of the vigor, the sap and the power of the indwelling Christ—the power that “brought everything that is into being” has taken up residence within us? He who was before

us and reigns over us and is the completion of all things, he now lives within bringing a culmination of blessing and of glory which existed in the purposes of God from the beginning. *All for the love of the Father.*

He desires that we **be holy even as He is holy**. He proposes that we be joined to Him in bringing glory to the Father, living to please Him, and serve Him and not just live to bless and serve ourselves. So, calling us out of ourselves, and out of our self-centeredness (our self surely being a lesser god, and a less noble pursuit) and choosing holiness as our life goal is good. In the process, with God's help, we obtain that holy happiness that is only possible to those who are rooted and grounded in Him . . . and, as it turned out, that is what makes life heaven-bound and worth the living. How can we not love back the God who so loved us as to be all in for us? Pray for holiness, happiness will follow.

Amen.