

GROWING IN GOD PODCAST



GIG211 – We Put Sin to Death

Hi, and welcome to this podcast. I really am burdened about this idea of the Cross of Christ and how we relate to it as Christians. I have talked about this, I believe, in the last two podcasts especially. The titles would be *Christ Died For You and Because of You*; the second title would be *Start Your Day at the Cross*. And I would just encourage you, if you have not heard those two podcasts, to go back and listen to them and really let them come alive for you, and help you moving forward in your walk with the Lord. I know we desire to grow in God and to mature in the things of the Lord, but many times maturity begins with the elementary expressions of what we know and what we must do. So, we can never really leave the fundamentals of our walk with God, and the greatest fundamental and the most elementary expression we have is the Cross of Jesus Christ. Yeshua's death upon the Cross is where our relationship begins, especially as Gentile Christians. As Gentiles we had no connection with God; it says we were without God in the world. And so, we need to continually go back, but I feel like there is a way in which we need to really learn how to function in and with the Cross of Christ in our own lives. So hopefully, this podcast will help you with that.

I want to begin it with Luke the ninth chapter. In verse 23, Christ says to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me." So, Christ was giving this expression and this instruction, that if anyone is going to be a follower of His, they must daily have this encounter with the Cross. It is something that is necessary for us on a daily basis, really in our relationship with Him. And it says to take up His Cross. Many times, as I expressed in one of the previous podcasts, people interpret this to say, "Well, I have my personal cross that deals with my life and the needs of my life," and I do not think that is what Yeshua was talking about. I think He was saying that His Cross is the cross that we all bear and we return to on a daily basis.

In Luke 14, verse 27, He says, "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple." So if we want to be disciples of Christ, if we want to grow in the things of God, have a walk with God, and move in the things of the Lord, we must be able to take His Cross as our own and follow on with Him to be a disciple. So we see the necessity even expressed by Yeshua Himself that we must have this encounter. We must know, in a sense, how to relate to the Cross, how to move with the things of the Cross, and it has to be a real functioning part of our relationship with Him. And I believe it must be that on a daily basis.

In First Peter 2, verse 24, we find this: "And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." So we get this notion that on the Cross, He carried our sin that we might die to sin through this experience. Now, all of that is really true, but I think that many times we as Christians feel like the Cross is sort of a one-off thing. In our initial salvation, we come to the Cross and we recognize that Yeshua died on the Cross for our sins; and once we have that encounter with the Cross, and we believe that He died for our sins and we confess that He died for our sins, we are kind of done with the Cross experience. Again, this is dangerous, and I think the verses we read beforehand from Yeshua Himself teach us that that is not true. There must be something of an ongoing reality of the Cross in our lives to the point where it really

is a daily expression. Yes, He bore our sins in His body on the Cross so that we might die to sin. But that death to sin is not necessarily an instantaneous thing that is complete in removing the sin and the sin nature from our lives in a split second, in a moment, in the Cross.

I think this really becomes confusing to people, confusing to Christians as they walk along and all of a sudden they find themselves in a struggle with sin, or with the Adamic nature; the old man, as we might call it, or the old sin nature. And there is a lot of condemnation that can come to play with that, because they feel like, "Well, wait a minute, I believed in the Cross. I confessed that Christ is My Savior. I confessed that He died on the Cross for my sins. I read this in Peter and say, 'He bore our sins in His body on the Cross,' so I should be done with sin. I should be done with any struggle concerning sin." And we know that that is just not true, and it is very necessary for us to get this as a reality.

I want to read out of Romans the sixth chapter, starting with verse 1. "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?" This is interesting, because we have Paul talking to believers in the church in Rome, and these are all Christians that he is addressing. He is not addressing a group of unbelievers, he is addressing the church. And he is all of a sudden beginning, in this address to the church, to deal with this idea of sin that seems to continue as a problem following the initial salvation experience for the believer. "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?" So obviously, there was a problem that was ongoing for these believers in dealing with sin. He goes on in verse 2, "May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?" We are not to live in sin after our experience of salvation. But that does not mean that you are not going to have to deal with sin – you just do not give yourself over to live in it.

Verses 3-4, "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life." We are to walk and live into a newness of life, having been buried with Him in baptism, not just in the initial cross experience – because we know that baptism follows our faith in the Cross, our faith in what Yeshua did in carrying to the Cross our sin and eliminating any condemnation that we have. "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ." And so, we see that He died so that we might be forgiven for our sins, and that we might live through eternity and no longer be facing the threat of hell as a payment for those sins in our life.

All of that is true, but it does not mean that there was an abolishment of the nature of sin or the issue of sin in the life of the believer. It is not saying all of that. There is absolutely forgiveness for sin. There is the fact that He did die so that we might have life. But there is something in our Christian life, and if you have walked with God for very long, this becomes really evident to us, that there can be even major struggles that Christian believers have with sin. Therefore, we know we must find a way to really come to grips with this idea of the Cross, as Yeshua was saying; we have to take up our cross daily. It is not something we go through one time in a salvation experience, and then we are beyond that and now we are walking in gifts and ministries, and we are looking to progress into the likeness of Christ and to walk in righteousness, as it talks about. But we are to struggle against and deal with and gain the victory of the Cross over sin.

I am going back to verse 4: "Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life." This is growing in God. This is an experience from that Cross that leads us into baptism, in which we find ourselves buried in the likeness of His death, we find ourselves raised out of that water

into the likeness of His resurrection, and we begin a walk with Him that is in a new newness of life. And we want that newness of life to grow until we come into His full image.

Verse 5, "For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection." And that is our goal, to be in the likeness of His resurrection. He is the way, the truth, and the life, and we walk with Him and come into His likeness, and we are transformed into His image. But this is a process of the Christian life that includes a daily visit and encounter with the Cross. We take up that Cross and we put to death those things that would hold us back into an old way of life, rather than an ability to walk in this newness of life that is being spoken of here by Paul.

In verses 6-12, it says,

Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God [so he is talking about how this works within Christ; now he is going to draw this comparison in this likeness of how this really applies to us]. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts.

In other words, Paul is very clear here that the potentiality for the believer to live as a saved Christian but having sin reigning in their mortal body is a possibility. And so, he is very clear that a struggle with sin is not something that would necessarily be considered abnormal for the Christian.

This is important, because so many people battle with the condemnation of a struggle with sin in their lives, or problems in their lives. The feeling is, and the sense we get even from the teaching of the churches, is that once you are saved, you should not have these kinds of problems anymore. We see this very well manifested in church doctrine as well as in church behavior, because people are set out for their sins, especially those who have positions of leadership – if you find yourself in sin, boy, that is disqualification. You are disqualified. But we are supposed to be walking by faith through grace, and there is grace for us; and the reason there is ongoing grace in the life of a believer is because there can be a real struggle with the things of the flesh, with sin itself. But he is telling us very clearly, "do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourself to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God." (Verses 12-13.) In other words, because this struggle of sin is there, it does not mean that we passively give in to it or live in it. We do not let sin reign in our mortal body.

This is what is important to me about this teaching, because I think there has to be an understanding as believers that there is a way we deal with sin. There is a way that we deal with the Adamic nature, the old man, the old life that is there, when it pops up. When it comes against us as a problem, we are to deal with it, and we are to deal with it aggressively. And the only way that we can deal with it is by taking up our cross and following after Christ. The reality is the Cross becomes a real weapon in our lives against sin. It becomes something that we, as the believer, need to know how to immerse ourselves into. We need to be able to go back daily to the reality of the Cross, of Christ on that Cross giving His life for us, winning the victory over sin, winning the victory over satan. We need to be able to go to that

place of victory. We need to go to that place where sin is defeated and it is put to death. Just as Christ put it to death in His body hanging on that Cross, we go back to that Cross and we make sure that sin is put to death in our body at that Cross.

This is something that we need to understand. Even though it seems to be one of the elementary or first beginning concepts of being a believer, of being a Christian, this really takes a maturity in our walk with God to understand how to approach the Cross on a daily basis, and how to have the Cross be real in our lives moment by moment as the victory over the things that we face, especially the things of our own nature and our own flesh. And that, I think, is why I so appreciate what Paul is doing here by bringing this issue to the forefront, where Christians realize that there is a struggle. However, it does not mean just because there is a struggle that we passively present ourselves to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but we present ourselves to God. Where do we find God? Where do Gentile Christians find God? Well, they were separated from God, the Scripture says, until the Cross. Christ came to reconcile us to the Father, to bring us back to God. So you go back to where you first met God, where you were first brought into a relationship to God, and that is the Cross. You present yourself to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. We find God at the Cross; we come into a relationship with Him at the Cross; and when we face these struggles, we need to go back to that place where we can present ourselves once again to the absolute restoration of our relationship with Him.

Verse 14 says, "For sin shall not be master over you." In other words, you may struggle with it, but it is not to win. It is not to be your master. You are to win this war, and this war can only be won by the Cross. There is no defeat of sin and unrighteousness other than through Yeshua in His death on the Cross. If you are going to master sin, you are going to do it at that Cross, and you are going to do it daily.

Verses 14-17,

For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! [there is no excuse for going back to sin]. Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed.

So we now thank God, that though we were at one time slaves to sin, now there is an obedience in our heart. What is the obedience? It is to go to the Cross and to immerse ourselves once again in the blood of Yeshua as the victory over sin and death, and commit ourselves to this way of life that He has opened up for us, which is to be instruments of righteousness.

Verse 18, "And having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness." We are looking to do that. We are looking to become slaves of righteousness. Paul also kind of talks about this in Philippians 3, and I want to just bring it to our attention here because it would be good to go back and read these verses in Philippians 3, starting even with the beginning of the chapter and going through and seeing this attitude of Paul and what he lived in, how he lived on a daily basis. He walked this life. And if you know how to read the Scriptures and see what he is talking about, you see him doing this constantly, going back and making sure that he is living from the place of the Cross. He said that it was the only thing that he had to be proud of, was that cross experience in his life.

I want to look at Philippians 3, and I will read just a few of the verses here. It says in verses 8-10,

More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ [the point is to gain Christ], and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ [what is the faith? the faith is in the Cross of Christ], the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.

This death was the beginning. It is the nexus point for all of us. But Paul never lost this as the first step that he took, and he lived at step one all the time. He does talk about, in verse 11, "In order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead." In other words, he wants to go on into these things. Verse 12, "Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus." So, again, he is talking about this growing in God concept, where he was growing and maturing in the things of the Lord. But the only way you grow and mature is by being at step one and then going to step two. So every day he got up at step one. He was following the instructions of Yeshua, and he took up his cross daily and then walked as a disciple to become perfected in the ways of the Lord. You can go on and read those verses, they are very, very important to us. But I want to jump to Colossians the third chapter, and I will start reading from verses 1-5.

"Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth." This is where I think our waiting on the Lord and meditation are so important. We have to get our minds out of being consumed by the things of the earth, and we have to move into the heavenly realms. "For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immortality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry."

Now, this verse to me is one of the key things about the Cross, and as much as I love this New American Standard Bible, this is one area where it really gets it wrong in the translation. It is generally very literal and holds to the exactness of the original language, but here it misses it. So what I want to do is jump to another version of the Scriptures, and that is going to be in the Holman Bible. Let me just go ahead and read back from verses 1-6.

So if you have been raised with the Messiah, seek what is above, where the Messiah is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on what is above, not on what is on the earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with the Messiah in God. When the Messiah, who is your life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory [now verse 5, which is the key verse, and we will see the difference here in translation]. Therefore, put to death what belongs to your worldly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, God's wrath comes on the disobedient.

So the New American misses it. It says, "Therefore consider the members..." No, we are not to "consider" the members of our body to be dead, we are to "put to death" what belongs to that old nature, to that human nature, to that old man. We are to put it to death; and the only place and the only way we can put to death the sin nature is by the Cross. It is the only vehicle that God has made available to us for ridding ourselves of sin, for winning the victory over sin, for defeating the human nature that is cast in sin from the Adamic, original sin that existed from the Garden of Eden. We are

locked up in sin, and we must be freed from it, and God has made a way – He gave us Christ. He had Christ go to the Cross as the offering to the Father for our sin and our sin nature. So we are directed here by Paul, in talking about this conflict that we still face, even after our initial salvation experience, even as we are walking day by day as believers in Christ. Though we walk as Christians, we are facing this battle against sin, against the worldly nature, against the Adamic nature, against the old man, the flesh, against satan's wiles which throw at us sin and temptation to try to divert us from the path. How do we deal with it? We deal with it as Yeshua directed: daily we go to the Cross and we end that sin. We die to it. We declare it dead to us, and we then continue to walk as disciples.

Look at the things that he is saying we face; and I will go back to the New American Standard. It says, verses 5-10, "Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead," and as we know, the language is saying, "Kill it. You kill it." That is exactly what the Greek words give here, *nekrōsis, nekroō*. "Kill, put to death." That is what it is saying in the Greek. We are to kill the members of the earthly body "to immorality, to impurity, to passion, to evil desire, to greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them." We lived in these things before our salvation experience. "But now you also, put them all aside." We put them aside. We are not waiting for God to do something, He has done it. He has provided for us the Cross, and Yeshua has given us the instruction, "Go there daily and take up the Cross." Why? Because you have to put aside "anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him." He is talking about all that we really face in our walk with the Lord, and what we have to do about it.

I pray that this podcast is a blessing to some, that it is a revelation to some, and I pray that it strengthens you. You realize where to go, what to do, now that we recognize that the Cross is not something that we just experience on the day of our salvation and becoming a Christian. It is something that we experience, we take it up daily, and we see the defeat of everything of sin, or the old man, or unrighteousness, that might still be battling against us. We put it to death. We bring it to an end. And we have the ability and the tools to do that with. So, there is no condemnation because we find ourselves in these struggles – we simply recognize that we have been provided with the answer. We have to think of it that way. If you were bit by a snake, you would not be condemned over it. You would pick up the antidote sitting next to you and you would inject it into yourself, and you would relieve yourself of the poison that had been injected into you.

That is what we have to see: the Cross is our victory. It is 24/7 the victory of Christ given and provided by God over the things of sin and the flesh. And we, as believers, today, are going to mature and grow into an ability to follow as His disciples, because we understand how to daily take up our cross and follow Him. I believe for this to work in your life. It is powerful, and it will work.

Amen.