

For many Christians who love their Bibles, the more they read the more they continue to find amazing truths within the Bible itself, glorifying the Lord Jesus and showing us how wonderful a person He was and, of course, is. We are also aware of the limitations of our own flesh and the difficulties that we have living inside a human body. So many of us have identified with the Apostle Paul in his cry "O wretched man that I am" and his further comment, "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwells no good thing".

On the other hand we read that the Lord Jesus Himself was made in the likeness of sinful flesh (Romans 8.2). We also read "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same"; (Hebrews 2.14) and "It behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren". So we understand that the Lord Jesus took upon Himself the form of human flesh and yet at the same time lived a life in that flesh which was not only without sin but also glorifying to God His Father. Therefore the possibilities for Christians, once born again and filled with the Holy Spirit, living in their bodies upon the earth, for honouring God are really great. Paul writing to the Colossians says "Christ in you, the hope of Glory", expressing the potential he realised was in Christians who had received the Lord Jesus into their hearts.

This pamphlet looks at what Jesus Christ accomplished as the Son of Man, in His flesh upon the earth, to give hope and faith to Christians from examining the Lord's wonderful life. Jesus called Himself the Son of Man when he was on the earth, adding weight to the truth that He truly was God in human flesh and was so keen to point out that He had truly identified Himself with human kind. Jesus was no robot but truly a man with a will, a heart, a mind, a body with feelings and so on, and in that humanity lived a wonderful life unto His Father. So seeing what Jesus accomplished should encourage Christians to reach out to God, to work in them the life which was worked in the Lord Jesus.

Jesus own comments were "It is not I, but my Father in me who does the works". Paul the apostle tells the Ephesian church "We are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them." Therefore, for the Christian, there is the possibility of having God so working in our own flesh that we can also glorify God. There is never a suggestion that we can do what Jesus Himself did as the Redeemer of His people, that was His work and His alone. To quote the famous hymn, "There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin, He only could unlock the gates of heaven and let us in". Wonderfully, Jesus finished the work He came to do, so there is no need for another Redeemer, however there is a great need for men and women, who belong to Jesus Christ, to live lives to the Glory of God. This happens when the life of Christ is manifest in their flesh, as they no longer live unto themselves but unto Him, i.e. the Lord Jesus, who died and rose again for them.

In the wonderful opening chapter of John's Gospel we read about the "Word", who is the Lord Jesus, and the Word being in the beginning with God and the Word being God. We also read of the Word being made flesh and dwelling amongst us. John goes on to say that they "Beheld His Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth". So here is the declaration of the great mystery "God was manifest in the flesh"; so let us examine what happens in a life when the Word is made flesh and therefore what our Lord Jesus was able to do and live in His mortal flesh.

When Jesus was being tried in the Garden of Gethsemane He was under such pressure in His body that He sweated “as it were great drops of blood”; at the same time His disciples fell asleep even though under much less pressure. They had been asked to “watch”; one assumes to watch and pray for an hour or so, but they were unable to do so. The Lord Jesus’ comment, “The Spirit is willing but the flesh is weak”. Perhaps this was Jesus’ own testimony, He was in the form of human flesh, and aware of the weakness of human flesh. At the same time Jesus realised the willingness and power of the Spirit of God in Him to bring His flesh into subjection and allow Him to overcome even under such great pressure. God works in people who belong to Him “to will and to do of His good pleasure”; that is how He worked in the Lord Jesus, so when the spirit is willing it allows the power of God to provide the “doing”, or maybe a better word, the enabling. This enabled the Lord Jesus to overcome in the Garden of Gethsemane under such great pressure when in comparison His disciples failed. Not that we want to criticise them, they had not at that time received the Holy Spirit, that would come to pass on the day of Pentecost.

The Lord Jesus was, of course, a spiritual man; He was the first of a new generation of men and was “All the fullness of the Godhead bodily”; in other words all of God in human flesh; here is the secret of what Jesus was able to accomplish in His flesh. That is something that could never have been done by any other human being before Jesus came to the earth.

We read in Colossians that “The Lord Jesus reconciled us to God **in the body of His flesh** through death”. It had to be in flesh, human flesh on the earth, if our flesh also was to know the power of God working in it. Jesus reconciled the whole world to Himself in His death. Reconciliation means to be thoroughly changed; Jesus changed everything. He took away everything in us that was against God. He took it into Himself, into His flesh. He took away everything that meant in our flesh there “is no good thing”. He took us through death, through the judgement of our sin and on to life. What wonderful control the Lord Jesus had of His flesh to do such a thing for us. He did not consider Himself or make Himself the priority, Jesus’ comment was, “I am among you as one who serves”. God the Father had prepared a body; that was all that was required for the Lord Jesus to do this great work. His control was in believing. “The just shall live by faith”, that was how Jesus lived. It enabled the righteousness which was in Him to operate in His flesh and so maintain Him in a right relation with God, even through death, thereby keeping His flesh under authority and not letting it have its own way, but rather doing the will of God.

There had always been enmity, hostility is what it means, between Jew and Gentiles. The Jews were the inheritors of the promises of God; the Gentiles strangers to the covenants of promise. Jesus, we are told in Ephesians chapter 2, has made both Jew and Gentile one; He became our peace, peace with each other but also together with God. Jesus took away the partition between us and abolished **in His flesh** the ordinances, the rules of our separation because of the natural origins of the lives of both Jew and Gentile. No more hostility between anyone, whatever their race or culture, who will come to God by Jesus Christ. That is why there is no male or female, Jew or Greek, bond or free in the Lord Jesus, perfect unity in His church now and forever. Or at least that should be the case, if all will allow the Lord Jesus to work out His life in his or her flesh. Division between brothers and sisters, whatever their racial or cultural origins, comes when they go back to their natural lives in the flesh and discover in that flesh the basis of their division. It is when church members, whether Jew or Gentile, move away from the reconciliation that was worked for them in the flesh of the Lord Jesus. No wonder Jesus says “Abide in me”

The way to God the Father was always closed for both Jew and Gentile. This is signified (read Hebrews chapter 9) by the access to the most Holy place in the tabernacle or temple, only being accessible by the High Priest once a year. Even this access required garments to cover up flesh and incense to remove any slight smell in the most Holy place of flesh and its corruption. Of course the High Priest had to wash before putting on the garments. So we understand that there was no direct access to the most Holy place. A new, permanent, open and living way was required, so that all, both Jew and Gentile, might have the same direct access by the Spirit of God into the presence of God. We read in Hebrews chapter 10 of a new and living way that Jesus has consecrated for us through the veil, **that is, His flesh**. There was a veil in the tabernacle and the temple separating the Most Holy place from the Holy place. The tabernacle and temple were of the same basic design. This veil caused a separation under the terms of the Old Covenant; there was no way through to the very holiest place. Jesus has become a new way, a better way, a living way, a different way to God. It is **through His flesh**, into Him by the Spirit and then on to the Father. It is a spiritual way through Jesus' death into the very life of God, giving us access to God. That is why there is a need to be "born again"; (Jesus says "You must be born again"), to be born of the Spirit of God. For the Christian there is no way for our flesh into the presence of God. To enter the kingdom of God you must be born again.

As a result of Jesus' work we are now encouraged to come boldly and to draw near to God; the sacrifice has been made, Jesus blood has been shed. We come by Jesus' blood, blood that can wash us so clean that we are able to have fellowship with God without polluting Him; such is the power of the blood of Jesus. We come to God having "Our hearts purged from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water". This is all through Jesus' flesh. How wonderful is Jesus' discipline to be able to do that for us in His flesh. Now Gentile and Jew can come and find peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Every person in every tribe and nation who will receive the Lord Jesus can come, all because of what Jesus accomplished in His flesh.

We have already quoted the verses in Romans 8 about Jesus being "Made in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemning sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit". Looking at this more closely we see what Jesus did in the likeness of sinful flesh; it is important to understand Jesus **did not have** sinful flesh. He never sinned and did not inherit the principle of original sin from Adam. Jesus' flesh looked the same as natural flesh, had the same natural frailties and weaknesses and, of course, strengths of natural flesh. That is why He could be tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin and why Jesus could be touched with the feelings of our infirmities (weaknesses), as we live in our natural bodies, and be able to succour those of us who are tested or tried. However Jesus **in His flesh** "for sin condemned, or judged, sin in the flesh". He took the sin of the world into Himself and dealt with that sin once and for all. 2 Corinthians 5.21 tells us that "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him". So **in His flesh** Jesus judged sin, He was made sin but He overcame sin in the flesh. The root of sin is in unbelief, "Has God said?", but we see that the Lord Jesus believed God even in death, even in His separation on the cross, and having overcome in faith was able to offer Himself without spot to God.

At the same time the right standing we need with God is in Jesus Christ. He took our sin away in Himself and rendered us right with God. Jesus' faith was all accomplished in Jesus' flesh; wonderful faith in flesh, wonderful offering in flesh. All we need to do is to live in our flesh what Jesus has already done for us. This life is available in the spirit, so we walk in the spirit, not in the flesh, and find the same principles of life that worked in the Lord Jesus work in us. So we can understand what was accomplished in Jesus' flesh for us, in condemning sin in the flesh.

We have seen all the wonderful things which the Lord Jesus has accomplished but perhaps the greatest thing of all was to make His flesh "eatable" for all those who will receive Him. When Jesus was talking about being the Bread of life, "The true Bread which comes down from heaven", He went on to say, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is **my flesh**, which I will give for the life of the world". The Jews asked "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" Jesus did not answer but went on to say that "Unless you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man you have no life in you". It was clear from Jesus' point of view that it was perfectly possible for Him to give them His flesh to eat. As we have already seen Jesus was a spiritual man, and

He came to lay down His life, to give His flesh for the life of the world. This giving, offering is maybe an even better word, was to be spiritual. We read in the book of Hebrews that Jesus offered Himself through the eternal Spirit. His whole life went into the Spirit, even His flesh was offered through the Spirit thereby making it available for all. As the very eternal life of God was in Jesus' flesh, through His offering God's life becomes available to us. Hallelujah. Therefore we come to Jesus and eat of Him, not in the natural, but in the Spirit. That is why the Jews could not understand; they were looking at the natural flesh, a natural food not a spiritual. If we eat of the flesh which Jesus has given, we shall live by Him.

Jesus, we are told in Hebrews chapter 5 was "Heard in the days **of His flesh**". One of the great requirements for the Christian is to be heard of God. Jesus, in Psalm 22, at His moment of triumph in faith, having been separated from God, says "Thou hast heard me from the horns of the Unicorn" (the place of authority). Psalm 22 is, of course, a prophetic psalm, with David looking forward in his heart to all that would happen on the cross 1000 or so years later. David is privileged to get into the deep things of God, to hear and to be aware of the wrestlings and strong cryings of the Lord Jesus. Jesus was heard in that He feared; Jesus held God His Father in total awe and respect. The secret of overcoming was being heard of God, being heard in such a way that the answer came. That is always the requirement for Christians, to be heard of God our Father so that the answer comes. Whatever our needs are, physical, material, mental, spiritual or emotional the secret is to get the answer from God, being heard in such a way that God moves and all is well. The problem for many Christians is that, if they are honest, they are not heard, God does not seem to answer and then they are cast on human resources and their own efforts. That brings compromise and working in the flesh and "They that are in the flesh cannot please God".

Jesus was heard, in that He feared. There was such trust and confidence in His Father and yet such total submission to the will of His Father. He became obedient unto death, even death on the cross. Jesus learned that obedience through the things which he suffered. So here we have our example, in human flesh, of how to live and how to be heard. So much Christianity is superficial, with no idea of

suffering or obedience. So much is using God for our purposes rather than God using us in His will. Too much is about 'me' and not the Lord Jesus. Here is the secret; Paul wanted to know the fellowship of Jesus' sufferings, to know the same obedience through sufferings which would bring Paul's own flesh into subjection and under the authority of God in the same way Jesus experienced.

All Christians have "days of their flesh". Our life on earth is the days of our flesh, living out our natural lives unto God, no longer unto ourselves thanks to the grace of God. Now having seen what Jesus did in His flesh it is important to see what we can learn from His way of life as an example for us. It is important to confirm that there is never any suggestion that we can be redeemers, saviours, healers or a sacrifice for sin as Jesus was. Those operations are for Him and Him alone.

If we go back to John's gospel, chapter 6, we discover the progression which Jesus tried to develop for those who followed Him, to take them from flesh to spirit. He knew Himself the secret of His own life as one born of the Spirit of God and living in the Spirit. Therefore in His ministry, to those who listened to Him, there is a clear direction towards the things of the spirit. At the end of the chapter, once Jesus has explained it all, we are told many went away from Him, maybe it was just too hard for them to believe and receive, maybe that is why even in our generation few seem to find the secret of outworking Jesus' life in their flesh, to live to the glory of God. Jesus asks His disciples whether they would go away too; their response, "Lord, you have the words of eternal life". Let's look at the progression.

Jesus had fed them with fish and bread and their stomachs were filled. They followed Him, Jesus says, not because of the miracles they saw but because they had eaten and were filled. Perhaps it was a rare thing for them not to be hungry. But Jesus was so honest realising that, as with most of us, the instincts are all very primitive, it was all about natural food for the flesh. But Jesus wanted them to eat spiritual food, to have His life in them. His love was to redeem us, all His people, and he knew that if they did not eat His flesh and blood they would have no life in them. He must lead them to spiritual food. So when the people asked Him about Moses, Jesus tells them the truth about Moses, the law and the Old Covenant. Moses had given the manna in the wilderness but their fathers were all dead. Don't look to Moses; he did not give you the true bread from heaven; "I am the true bread that came down from heaven".

So natural food was not right, neither was all that they had believed from their heritage, from their traditions. They had to leave behind all their culture and move to Jesus and believe on Him. He was the true bread that would give them everlasting life. For the Jews to eat Jesus flesh would have been an abomination, against all they held dear. However Jesus Christ moved on with determination. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man shall eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is **my flesh**, which I will give for the life of the world". It is **my flesh** which I will give for the life of the world. Jesus knew what He was going to do, He laid down His life, it was the way, the only way and He did it. Those who eat of Him shall live by Him.

So here is the answer to our life; it is Jesus' life laid down, and that gives us eternal life and we shall be raised up at the last day. So we see that Jesus **in the days of His flesh** was able to lay down that flesh so that the life within Him could be given to all who would receive Him. Wonderful offering.

So we must follow, as before, not as saviours but as Sons of God. We too must lay down our lives for Jesus' sake. It is not our old lives God wants but the new living ones he has given us. Those are the ones He wants to be laid down. The old profits nothing; it is flesh and fallen and corrupt, but the new man is incorruptible. We are born of incorruptible seed, the life is eternal, it will live in death; that is why we can be living sacrifices by the mercy of God. How? Paul tells the Corinthians, in chapter 4 of his second letter, that they have treasure in earthen vessels. The vessel is their natural flesh, come from the earth, as humans were formed of the dust of the ground. The treasure is the life of God which we have received. The reason for the treasure is so that the excellency of the power can be of God and not of us.

Paul then writes "Always bearing about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus can be manifest in our mortal bodies". Here is the truth; it is constantly, by faith allowing what Jesus did on the cross for us to work in our bodies, rendering us dead to the world and the world dead to us. Then we live, we live by Him, by His life.

Living, we then lay down our lives for Jesus' sake; we are delivered to death, death to self, dead to our own will but alive to the will of God. Then Paul tells us the life of Jesus will be manifested, shown, outworked, evident, real and wonderful even in **our mortal flesh**. Christians can then begin to discover the power of God bringing discipline and obedience into their own flesh. They can experience in their own flesh what Jesus knew of God living in Him and doing the works. This is really what Paul meant of "Christ living in me"; all because of what Jesus did for us **in the days of His flesh**.

May the Lord Jesus lead you into this blessed and yet humble life and allow you to discover **in the days of your flesh** the real power of God working in you. This is what you were called to; don't use your calling or liberty for an occasion for the flesh but in love serve one another.

This is the only way really to live and the only way to please God.

"We who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus sake". Amen.