

## Jesus in Us

by Rene Brown

(A note previously written to a brother in Christ in Africa.)

Dear Brother,

As I look back over my teachings for the past 17 years, I find the seed of the truth that I am seeing now always there but the entire picture seems to be emerging on the subject of grace, complete grace, of Jesus living in us and through us and as us so that it is more of Him and none of me. People strive to live the Christian life only to find they cannot do it successfully. Only Jesus can live it - for us, in us, through us, as us.

Most of us have always known that we could do nothing good enough to please God enough for us to be forgiven all our sins and receive eternal life - it is all through the blood of Jesus His Son. Now we find out that we also cannot do anything of ourselves or by ourselves to please Him as we attempt to live the Christian life with Him as our Assistant as compared to Him living out His life through us, as us. What the Father wants to see in us is His Son. That is what will please the Father - the work of His Son working through us, as us.

Just like when Jesus was on earth He only did what the Father was doing and saying what the Father was saying. He did nothing of Himself. Now it is our turn to do nothing of ourselves - only what we see Him doing. We are the branches but He is the vine (John 15:1-8). All life comes from the vine. There is no life in the branches apart from the vine. NONE! All the Life we have is Jesus! He said that "apart from me you can do nothing." But we have been trying apart from Him. We have been doing it and asking His approval. Or when we got in over our heads in life, we asked His help! Now we see that we just have to let Him live the Life through us.

When Jesus went to the cross, we went with Him. (Gal 2:20 NNAS) "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." When He died, we died. (Yes! In the Eternal realm of God, that is possible and it happened!) That got rid of the Adamic nature in us. We died to the Law (all law) as in Gal. 2:19. We died to sin (Romans 6:2 and 6:10). At that time, our death separated us from the law, sin and our Adamic nature. That is what death is all about - separation. And our death on the cross with Jesus separated us from everything that was in us from our forefather Adam. When Jesus arose from the grave; we arose with him! We arose a New Man - really a New Man! (Yes, in the eternal realm of God where there is no time dimension, this is entirely possible!) This new man has a brand new spirit - not the old dead spirit that was in Adam and from Adam but a new one IN CHRIST. This NEW MAN has a new heart just like God promised to give us in (Ezek 11:19 NNAS) "And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh," Yes, Ezekiel saw that God was to give us a brand new heart - that deepest part of us that is connected to God - our spirit.

This new heart wants to serve God. This new heart loves God and the things of God. Down deep inside, in our new spirit man, we do not want to sin. God has now written His laws on our new heart. It wants to follow God. Yes, we can sin but then we are convicted by the Holy Spirit dwelling in us and so we repent and turn from the sin. IF WE ARE IN CHRIST - The sins we sin are not who we are. We are this new person with this new spirit with this new heart. This NEW MAN wants to follow God and do what God desires. [This NEW MAN (spirit man), birthed "in Christ" and in union with Christ is not and never was a "sinner." 1 John 3:9 "Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God." Man sins in his "members" as Paul says.]

When we sin in our "members" as Paul says (that is, in our body), it is not our spirit sinning. It is not coming from this new alive spirit which is connected to Jesus but it is coming from our "members" as Paul teaches in Romans 5 and 6 but particularly in Romans 7. When Satan whispers to us through "sin that dwells in us" that is, in our "members" we do not accept that but we take the thought captive unto Christ to obey Christ. This "sin that dwells in us" is what we were separated from and died to when we died on the cross with Jesus. It may hang around but we are dead to it and it has no power over us! (Our old sin nature was alive to this "persona" of sin or let us call it Mr. Sin. Since we were alive to it originally, it could control us and cause us to sin! But that power is broken and the New Man is not subject to the demands of this Mr. Sin that dwells in our members as Paul puts it.) Though Satan uses our thoughts to get at us, it has no power except what we choose to give it. If we give in and assume the evil thoughts are coming from ourselves, if we begin to follow or carry out those thoughts, sure enough, we will sin. Actions will follow our reception of the thought life from Satan who wants to see us defeated by sin.

As we learn to allow Jesus to live out His life through us, we begin to move in God's rest. It is all up to Him. What God wants is a living sacrifice as He says in Romans 12:1. I need to lay down my life to Him that He might do as He pleases - Jesus in me, the hope of glory.

Gal 2:20 (RSV) "I have been crucified with Christ; **it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me**; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Col 1:27 (RSV) "To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory**."

The scriptures teach us in (Gal 5:4 RSV) "You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace." And yet Christians all over the world are taught every Sunday they must keep rules and laws. "You must obey the laws of God" or the ten commandments or our denomination's rules of the Christian life or even rules we make up ourselves like "I must read 5 chapters of scripture every day" or "I must pray at least 15 minutes every day" and on and on. These are all laws we cannot keep. The scripture abundantly teaches that man is incapable of keeping God's laws - any laws! That was the Israelites problem in the wilderness - they said "we can do it" and immediately proved they could not. The Pharisees said, "We can do it" but failed in even comprehending God's heart that was in His law. We teach potential converts that "Jesus loves you just as you are!" But as soon as they say, "Yes, I believe" we immediately begin to tell them what they must do to be a "good Christian".

What do we need to be telling a new believer? Just this: "You cannot, you absolutely cannot, live the Christian life!" If you try, you are doomed to failure. Also, "You cannot, absolutely cannot, keep God's laws!" We should tell them: "The only Person who has ever kept God's laws is the Person who now lives in you. He can keep God's laws. And if you let Him, He will keep them in you and through you, as you. But if you try to keep them on your own - apart from Him living in you, you are doomed to failure! So start correctly - determined that you will allow Jesus Christ, the Life that is now in you, to live out His life through you." It is a matter of giving all over to Him and not a matter of our trying. In all our strength we cannot keep God's laws. But there is One within us who loves us and died for us that can do it. We should tell new believers all of this, and we should certainly believe it and live it ourselves! God's grace is sufficient for us if we only allow it to flow in us and through us to His glory.

Paul shows us more than once in Romans 7 that **the Law only stirs up sin** - it does not reduce it. The Law was given to show man that he could never keep the laws of God and that man needed God to do it for him. Instead man has kept on thinking "I can do it - everyone else in the entire world has failed but I

can do it.” But in Romans we learn that we are dead to the law! What does that mean? It means that the Law does not hold anything for us. We are not related to the law at all. Paul explains this carefully in (1 Tim 1:8-9 RSV) "Now we know that **the law is good, if any one uses it lawfully,** <sup>9</sup> understanding this, that **the law is not laid down for the just** but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers."

The law is not for us! We are the just. Paul teaches us that we are now righteous and holy and complete in Christ. We are saints of God. He tells us this over and over again. But you may say, "But brother Rene, I still sin". Yes, that is correct. We do sin but we are not "sinners". That is, "sinner" is not our identity. Our identity is now that of "saint." The alive spirit that is within us, the spirit that is now connected to God and joined to His Holy Spirit and is alive in Him - that spirit cannot sin. (1 John 3:9 RSV) "No one born of God commits sin; for God's nature abides in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God." Down deep inside in our new alive, holy and righteous and complete in Him spirits, we cannot sin because God keeps us. Then where do we sin because we all plainly do sin???

It is in our members (physical bodies) according to Paul. We may have a new spirit but we have the same old body and the same old brain. And we have a propensity for listening to the lies of Satan. He whispers lies to us, and we then act as if the lies are true. Then as we act on his whispers, we sin. For example Satan whispers to us, that is, to our members: "Your wife doesn't love you. If she loved you, she would cook your favorite food." And what do we do? We may say in our thoughts, "yes, that's right, if she loved me, she would cook my favorite food." What should we say in our thoughts or even out loud? Just this: "get behind me Satan. My wife does love me but regardless of that, Jesus loves me and I am complete in Him. He will never leave me nor forsake me. I reject your lies and whisperings."

What is the source of our stance against Satan? It is our new spirit, reborn in Christ, alive to Christ that is holy and righteous and complete in Christ. We resist him, firm in our faith! He is a liar and the father of lies just like Jesus told us. But if we take those thoughts captive, trusting the power of Christ in us, we do not sin. What are we doing? We are "walking in the spirit". Walking in the spirit simply means that our new holy, righteous, and complete spirit, alive to Jesus Christ through His Life that is in us will dictate to our soul-man what we are going to do. We have for the most part lived out of our soulish life all our lives. Mostly the soul - man decides things based on "feelings" and not on the word of God. Walking in the spirit demands that we walk as if God's word is true - which it is - and not pay attention to our feelings.

Your soul life is completely captive to its surroundings in a sense. It responds to what people say, what people do, what is happening to us in the physical world. If things are going good, the soul is "up" and happy. If things are going bad, the soul is "down" or sad. If we make decisions based on these feelings, we are living out of our soul life and not out of our spirits. At that moment we are not "walking in the spirit".

Our spirits, our NEW MAN spirits are totally alive to Jesus Christ and joined to His Spirit. In our spirit we believe the word of God, we desire the things of God, we desire to do what God desires we do. So long as our spirits dictate to our soul, we will follow God. Down in our spirits the word of God is received as truth because it is truth. But in our souls, given the opportunity to control, the word of God is set aside in favor of "feelings". Our soul always wants comfort! It will not voluntarily choose suffering nor deprivation nor problems. It always desires to respond to our surroundings. Its focus is always on performance. It responds to performance in others and tries to perform itself so that others are impressed by its performance. It even tries to serve God with performance. Soul life will never please God, however. He is not looking for performance coming out of our soul life. He is looking for relationship through His beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

In the Christian life most Christians spend time concerned about sin - more time concerned about sin than time relating to Jesus. They sin, feel badly, even get depressed and determine to obey God. But God

has already dealt with sin for all time. Jesus gave His Life, shed His innocent blood, to pay for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:2 RSV) "and he is the expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world."

God's focus is not on our sins. God is not angry at us! God is not somewhere in the sky thinking of how to deal with our sins! Sins were dealt with on the cross! God's eternal purpose concerns relationship. He desires sons and daughters. And in the death of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, He made provision to have sons and daughters. You do not have to worry about sin. If the Holy Spirit living within you convicts you of sin, repent! Turn away from the sin! (Forgiveness was already purchased on the cross for every sin you will ever commit! You do not need more forgiveness! Everything that could ever be forgiven you has been forgiven!) In His power, turn from the sin. Remember this: Christians do not have to sin! They have a choice. (Rom 6:14 RSV) "For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace." So long as we are willing to live in the grace of God and not resort to the law as our way of relating to Him, we do not have to sin! Sin will have no power over us! But law empowers sin so we need to reside in the grace of God in order to be free of sin. (1 Cor 15:56 NNAS) "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law;"

So, are we to just sit down and wait until Christ in us does something? Not at all. We get up every day believing that He is in us and is working through us. That is where faith comes in - we totally trust our lives to God, trust that He is living His life in us, through us and as us, and then we go about our daily business. We fully expect Him to speak to our hearts. We expect thoughts to come that are from Him - thoughts that suggest what we are to do. We receive these, examine these, test these by the scriptures. And we begin to walk in that direction, trusting in God who is in us and loves us. Yes, we read the scriptures. Yes, we pray - in fact our life is one long "prayer" or ongoing communion with God (more listening than speaking!) We simply believe that the Christ living in us will cause us to sense the things of God and what God is doing. What He is doing, that is what we do. We do not wring our hands trying to find out what He wants. We rest in the thought that as our spirits commune with Him, we will think on the things God is doing in us and through us and as us. Things will come to mind; we will have a sense we should do something or write someone or call someone or read a particular scripture. Or along more everyday lines, we might be reminded to purchase a loaf of bread on our way home so our wife will not have to go out later and do it. We might be reminded to say something to our children. Or to complement our wife in love. To call a friend with encouraging words. Do these things seem too simple for God to dwell on? Not at all. If Jesus is going to live His life in me, through me, as me, it has to be this way. I cannot be concerned about one thing and Him another no matter how simple it is. Life is mostly made up of thousands of simple things. He wants to be part of them all.

For those in ministry, what about great ministry projects? If He wants them, He will bring them up in your thought life. Remember that you are following the word in Romans: (Rom 12:1 RSV) "I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." You have given yourself over to Him. He can do with you what He wants.

You may ask me, "Brother, how does this work out in your own ministry in Africa?" How do you know when you are doing God's will? Let me say that I am on a journey in this resting in the Lord. I confess I have not arrived! Something inside me is always very concerned about what God wants me to do in Africa. Where does He want me to go? Whom does He want me to work with on a particular trip? Whom should I ask to go with me from America? I realized long ago that one cannot even begin to decide things based on need. Need is everywhere all over the world. Since my focus is on the Continent of Africa, I tend to see the need there - both spiritual and physical. Knowing need does not help me at all in determining what God is doing through me at any moment in time. Need is always all around me. I could go to virtually any nation in Africa where I was allowed and find people to teach and people to

help. And I am convinced that they would be blessed even if I were totally out of the will of God as to location! God's word sets people free. How can that be? Because God is a God of mercy and grace. He loves His people (in fact He loves His entire creation). If I teach the word of God, He will bless people. If one of the Team teaches, people will be blessed. If an evangelist preaches the gospel, people will be saved no matter if the evangelist is not in the nation where God may have desired that he go. Nevertheless, for us it may be a dead work as we are out of the will of God. The fact that people are blessed does not mean we are in God's will. God loves to bless His people even if we are doing something that He may have to discipline us for.

If I have given myself over to God to do with as He pleases, I am going to be led by the Spirit of God. As I begin to think and make decisions, He is going to participate. I must trust that the Lord is going to guide me. If I make a wrong decision, He loves me and will correct the decision. (Acts 16:6-7 RSV) "And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. <sup>7</sup>And when they had come opposite Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them;" When our entire life is given over to Jesus, we will indeed be the branch attached to Him, the Vine. He loves us enough to correct our direction. There have been times when I was preparing to go somewhere and my peace departed and there was turmoil in my spirit. The further I went in the plans, the more distressed I became. That is a sure sign something is wrong. It might only be the timing but something is wrong! We stop; we seek His face; we open our heart to hear Him. As our peace returns and we see fresh direction, we begin again. In a few cases, I have cancelled a portion of a trip or an entire trip sensing in my heart that God was not in it.

So, in sum, we just begin to walk, that is, to plan our day, our trip, our whatever. In our heart, the Lord Jesus is always with us. As we are walking in the knowledge that He is living out His life through us, we begin to go about our day. As we plan and think, we think of something and pursue it. (It might be as great as a trip to another nation or a simple reminder to not forget to purchase milk and bread at the store.) If we are planning something in ministry, we think of something and we see how that fits. And then something else comes to mind and we look at that. Inevitably we will, at the end, have deleted some items or some places or some ideas that were on the table of our thinking. We may have changed our timing for example. (I was recently working on a trip for some 14 months in the future when I suddenly realized the entire timing was wrong. I re-set the trip for only six months out and the peace of the Lord was in it.)

By faith we know Jesus loves us and is in us and working through us. Continue in the joy of Him! Realize He is our everything and that He desires to make the trip of life with us as much as we desire the trip with Him.

I close with these verses that seem so appropriate:

Col 2:2-10 (NNAS) "...resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself, <sup>3</sup>in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. <sup>4</sup>I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument. <sup>5</sup>For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ. **<sup>6</sup>Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,** <sup>7</sup>having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude. <sup>8</sup>See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. <sup>9</sup>For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, <sup>10</sup>and in Him you have

been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;"  
[Emphasis by RPB]

**\*\*\*\*\*End of These Thoughts\*\*\*\*\***