

Life of Grace in Jesus
(A letter written to a brother in Asia.)

Dear Brother in Christ,

I have no plans to travel to Asia or anywhere in your part of the world at this time. However, I have attached several of our current teachings to this e-mail.

Frankly speaking, the gospel being preached around the world is frequently only a part of the total gospel which Paul preached. Paul preached a gospel of liberty in Christ. Our re-birth (being born again of the Spirit) provides much more than we normally preach. We really are changed inside - our inmost self is totally renewed. It is alive in Christ and Christ lives in us in reality - not just some Christian thought and not just "positionally" or "legally." Jesus will live out His life through us just as His heavenly Father lived out His life through Jesus. Jesus never did anything except what the Father was doing nor said anything other than what the Father was saying. When you saw Jesus, you saw the Father. This was not because He was God, though He was. It was in His total manhood. Though God, he really was one of us (fully man) though without sin.

Many people think Jesus did what He did because He was God, and we cannot do it. But this is not true. He is indeed our example. He did His miracles with the same spiritual gifts listed in the bible that were given to the church. We can do likewise. More importantly, each and every Christian can learn to hear the indwelling Jesus and be guided by Jesus - day by day, moment by moment - just as Jesus was guided by the Father day after day.

Paul teaches us in the book of Romans that we are dead to sin and dead to the law. We do not relate to God by trying to keep the law. Telling new Christians they must keep the law of God is setting them up for failure just as the Jews could not keep the laws God gave them. The law is intended only for unbelievers to show them they are sinners. [(1 Tim 1:8-11 NKJV) "But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, **knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person**, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, ¹⁰for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, ¹¹according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust."] But we are no longer identified as "sinners". That is not who we are. We are saints of God.

Do we sin? Yes, most of us sin from time to time. But that does not change our identity and that must not be the focus of our life. Just as you were born into a certain family and can never change that, so Christians are born into the kingdom - they are now "in Christ" and no amount of sinning will change that. They are still "saints" as the bible teaches over and over.

We can never succeed to overcome if we do not know who we are in Christ. But when we begin to understand who we are, we can begin to act like our true identity. You, brother, are a saint. You, brother, are now "in Christ". You were crucified with Christ. (Gal 2:20 NKJV) "**I have been crucified with Christ**; 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 for me."

You died and went to the grave with Christ just as the bible teaches. (But in the eternal, spirit realm and not in the natural or temporal realm.) When He arose, you arose from the grave - an entirely new person inside. Paul says we are holy and righteous and complete in Christ in various scriptures. No, we do not always act like it. I can make a barking sound like a dog but I will never be a dog. The way I sound or look does not determine my identity. Our identity is determined by birth and not by our actions. If I am "in Christ", that is my identity and no amount of sinning will change that. But when we are "in

Christ” we do not focus any longer on sins. All our sins were dealt with forevermore by the precious blood of Jesus. I do not have to center my attention on sins. I will never stop sinning by focusing on sins. I will only stop sinning by focusing my entire life, every fibre of my being on Christ - in His strength and with His power, not in my own strength or will power. When I do that, sins will diminish in my life.

The Old Testament economy was entirely based on Performance. If you did something, God would do something. We even find this in Jesus' teachings because Jesus was under the Law and came to preach to those under the Law (the Jews) since Jesus came to keep the law for us. So he magnified the Law for one purpose: He wanted the Jews to see that it was impossible for them to keep the Law. For example, adultery was not just having sex outside marriage; it was even entertaining such thoughts fully in the mind and taking such thoughts into yourself (not just having a thought - that is not sin. Thoughts are not sin unless we take them into ourselves and keep them or embrace them as it were.) Now He had His listeners' attention. No one hearing Jesus could possibly think anyone could keep such a stringent law. Later when they heard the message of Jesus dying for their sins on the Day of Pentecost, they rushed to Peter to be saved. This was Jesus' plan all along. For people to see that “we cannot save ourselves!!” That “we need a Savior!!”

We must come to understand the gospel that Paul preached because the Lord left the gospel of Grace primarily for Paul to preach. (Remember: When Jesus preached, the Old Covenant was still in place.) And this is the economy of the New Covenant - the economy of Grace. It is all about God's grace - Him doing for us and not us doing for Him. It is not at all about our Performance. Do we do for God? Yes, but not to get Him to love us or to think more of us or to forgive us. We do for God as Jesus lives out His life through us but only because of our great love for God. I can do nothing - absolutely nothing - to get God to love me more nor will any of my actions cause Him to love me any less. He loves me when I am obedient, and He loves me when I sin. His great love for me is all based on the sacrificial death of His dear Son and not on my Performance. And yet, in effect, I do perform as Jesus lives out His life in me, through me, as me. But it is always Jesus in me - not Rene. I do only the things Jesus is doing in my life, and I say the things Jesus is saying through me. Impossible? Not at all. We get there by giving ourselves over to Him totally, completely and begin to see that He really is living in me and I am “in Him” just as Paul taught. This is why He said to Thomas: (John 14:9-11 NKJV) "Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? **He who has seen Me has seen the Father**; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰"Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. ¹¹"Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves."

Now this was Jesus the man speaking. He did not say this by virtue of being God (though He was). He left all the trappings of being God in heaven and came to us completely as a man. When He related to the Father, He was showing us how we could relate to Him - He in us and us in Him - so that someone could really see Jesus in us. Are we Jesus? Of course not and yet - it is Jesus in us who is doing the works as I give myself to Him just as Jesus had given Himself over to His heavenly Father.

We keep judging our identity based on our actions. But Performance does not determine IDENTITY!!! Identity is determined only by birth. I am a Brown because my father was a Brown. I can never be otherwise because I was born into the Brown family (in the natural realm).

When I came into the world, I was born “in Adam” and I had a “dead to God” spirit which I inherited from my forefather Adam. But now, in the Spiritual Realm, I have been born again and thus have a new identity: My new identity is “saint,” and I have been born into a new family of “In Christ”. Now I am in this new family. I may act like something else from time to time but I cannot change my identity. If I sin, I am not a sinner - I am a saint who sins. I can come back to acting like my true identity. Gradually, more

and more, I will begin to act like the new person I am as I become comfortable with my new identity “in Christ”.

When I was a child, my mother and father were a moral family though they did not preach it. They lived it before us children. The message I got was simply this: Browns do not lie, cheat and steal. Somehow without a lot of preaching, I saw this was my identity because I was a Brown. Many a time when I had opportunity, I was kept from sin by remembering my identity. I could not lie or cheat or steal because we Browns did not do that. Did I ever fail? Certainly! And yet, most of the time I was completely kept by the knowledge of my true identity of “I am a Brown”.

Now I am “in Christ,” and I can remind myself that those “in Christ” have a new identity of “saint”. In my new Identity, I am dead to Sin and I am dead to the Law. (Rom 6:11 RSV) "So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus." (Rom 7:4 RSV) "Likewise, my brethren, you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God."

I do not need to think of sin or sins and try to avoid them. I am dead to them. I do not get up each day and try to keep God’s Law. I am dead to that. I do not think on sins. I am dead to sin. And besides, Jesus became sin for me. And also, Jesus shed His precious blood for the sins of the entire world. Sins are no longer what is keeping man away from God. God has solved the problem. Is sin bad? YES!! Will it destroy us in this life? YES!! Are there consequences of sins in this life? YES! Terrible consequences. However, it is not sins that is keeping men away from God. (2 Cor 5:19-21 NKJV) "that is, that God was in Christ **reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them**, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. ²¹For **He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us**, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

So what am I? I am a new creature in Christ. (1 Cor 6:17 NKJV) "But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him." My new, reborn, holy, righteous, and complete in Him spirit is forever joined to the Spirit of the Lord. I cannot change that. In this spirit realm, I cannot sin just as John teaches us in (1 John 3:9 NKJV) "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."

My spirit is completely in union with the Spirit of the Lord. This can never be a source of sin. All my righteousness and holiness has one source: The Lord Jesus Christ. I have no other source of righteousness. Strangely enough, if Adam had only eaten of the Tree of Life there in the Garden of Eden instead of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, He would have ingested The Lord and lived forever. The Tree of Life represented Jesus in effect and so Eternal Life was right there. But Adam failed and so we must all suffer until we come back once again to the point of choosing the Tree of Life which is none other than the Lord Jesus Himself.

So today, what is the source of my sins? It is simple. It is our flesh just as Paul abundantly teaches in the book of Romans. No good thing dwells in our flesh. (Rom 7:18 RSV) "For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it." As long as we allow our Soul Man (our mind, will and emotions) to control the actions of our body, we will sin. The Soul bases everything on feelings and whatever feels good is what the Soul Man wants. But I am fundamentally a “spirit man” and my spirit has been born again - completely reconstituted and is now related to the Lord Jesus Christ. My spirit man will never be the source of sins because it is in union, complete union with the Lord who dwells in me.

If I do indeed sin, it is because I have allowed myself to walk in the flesh instead of walking in the spirit. So long as I walk in the spirit, I will never sin. God intended that our spirit man would touch the

world at large via our soul man and the soul man would in turn control our flesh. So long as that is the way I live, I will never sin. The moment I am not walking in the Spirit, I will open myself to sin because of my flesh. It wants to “do its own thing” and that will be whatever it is programmed to do. If I have lived in the lust of sex all my life, that programming is still in my flesh. If my flesh rules the day and determines what I do, I will go back to my old ways. But if my spirit controls and keeps my soul man under authority, my soul will keep my flesh under control, and I will do the will of God.

I must learn what Paul means in (Gal 2:20 NKJV) "**I have been crucified with Christ**; 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 for me." [Also, Romans 6:6-8 “knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. ⁷For he who has died has been freed from sin. ⁸Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,”].

The old Rene Brown died on the cross with Jesus Christ. No, not in this physical, temporal realm but in the eternal realm. And the eternal realm is reality - far more real than the realm which we see and feel. In eternity it is perfectly possible for me to go to the cross with Jesus, to die when He dies, to be buried when He is buried and most importantly - to be resurrected a new man when He is resurrected. Paul teaches over and over that we died but few people believe it because we are alive and well and breathing. But in the spirit realm, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, we did die. All of the old Rene Brown died - that is, the “dead to God” spirit of Rene Brown did indeed die. I was born with a spirit “dead to God” because of my forefather Adam. That old spirit must be gotten rid of. And the way to get rid of it is death. So God allowed me to die. And then He resurrected me with His Son Jesus. Now there is a new Rene Brown with a spirit alive to God.

Now it sounds heretical and scary to suggest that we not concern ourselves with sin or sins. But the bible teaches that we are now connected to our Lord Jesus. He is to be the focus of our attention. So long as I focus on sin and sins, I will fail. So long as I try to keep the Law, I will fail. Paul abundantly teaches that in Romans. I cannot overcome sins by concentrating on sins and trying to avoid them. [That is simply continuing to eat of the wrong tree - the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil - the sin of Adam our forefather.] It simply will not work and this is why the church at large continues to have tremendous problems with sin and sins. So long as we put ourselves under the law, any law, we will continue to break that law.

1 Cor 15:56 RSV "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law."

Rom 7:5-6 RSV "While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. ⁶But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit."

Rom 7:8 RSV "But sin, finding opportunity in the commandment, wrought in me all kinds of covetousness. Apart from the law sin lies dead."

Instead of using head knowledge and what seems logical to us, let us follow the scriptures. It is obvious from the three scriptures above that the law empowers sin and causes our failure. Our rational mind just cannot accept that. Why would God want it that way? Because He wants us to walk in the Spirit - to walk by faith. He does not want to relate to us based on rules and laws. He wants to relate to us

based on the spirit. Look at the scripture quoted above: “so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.”

If we are stubborn and will not do things God’s way, we will fail. But if we desire to walk in the Spirit, by the Spirit, we will overcome because He desires that we overcome. He wants our relationship to Him to be based solely on the Spirit and not on rules and laws. With rules and laws we will never get beyond “religion” and God does not want a “Christian Religion”. He wants a living relationship with sons and daughters of the King. In short, God wants a family, and He will have it one way or another. He wants all things to be centered in Christ.

If we yield every part of our being to Christ, reach out to Him to live His life in us and through us and as us, He will do it. To the world it will look like we are doing everything, but just as Paul teaches in Galatians 2:20, it will actually be Christ doing it. Each day I get up and go about my business knowing and trusting that He is living in me, through me and as me. If I do indeed sin or make mistakes or do other than His desires, I can absolutely trust the Holy Spirit to tell me quickly. If I need to repent, I can repent and correct anything I have caused to affect my relationship. Meanwhile the Lord will not be angry with me or sad or any such thing. He will be waiting until I return to the warm relationship we have established. I do not need to wring my hands or beg God’s forgiveness or wonder if somehow He now hates me or is disappointed in me. I can trust in my relationship with Him which is totally based on His Son - our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I do not need forgiveness because when I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior, I appropriated the forgiveness available to me because of His blood. His blood paid for all my sins past, present and future. I may need to repent which only means to change direction and once again go the way of the Lord. But I do not need more forgiveness - I am totally forgiven in Christ.

Now someone will ask: Rene, do you mean we do not in any way keep God’s laws? My answer, “Yes, we do - but not by reading the scripture as a law study and applying will power.” God has made a provision. He has made a New Covenant in the Blood of Jesus. (Heb 8:10 RSV) "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

Heb 10:16-18 (RSV) "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds, ¹⁷then he adds, “I will remember their sins and their misdeeds no more.” ¹⁸Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

Most people do not understand the New Covenant in His Blood. But it is simply that God is going to put God’s Laws (His laws for us) on our hearts. We do not need to try to keep external laws and rules but we will appropriate the ones written on our heart. And Jesus will cause us to keep these laws. **That is His Covenant in His Blood!!!** The Jesus within us will keep God’s laws or we might say that He will cause me to keep them because they are a part of me.

At this point, people always want to point to this scripture: (Jer 17:9 RSV) “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt; who can understand it?” And that is a true picture of our old heart. But we have died and been born again by the Spirit, and God has given us a new heart. Here in Ezekiel is the description of our new heart: (Ezek 36:26 RSV) "A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."

God has written His laws on my NEW HEART that Jesus will keep in me, through me, as me. Our new relationship with God is all based on Grace and not on Performance. It is all Grace. It is not a relationship based on works. When we needed redemption, God did it all. The shedding of the Blood of Jesus, God’s only Son, paid for the sins of the whole world. It was all God. That is Grace.

Next we come to Sanctification. Though many people understand that the payment for their sins was all by Grace and not of our own works, when they think of Sanctification, they assume that they must go to work and work out their own Sanctification. This is false thinking and not biblical. Just as Salvation was a work of Grace so Sanctification is a work of Grace. God does it all. I have one thing I must do and one thing only: I must yield to God totally and completely. Once I am yielded, God begins to work in my life. He has given me a completely new birth. I have a brand new spirit - a re-born spirit that is holy and righteous and complete in Him. So my spirit is completely sanctified, made holy, set aside to God.

What does God do now? If I am yielded to Him, He begins to work out in my Soul Man what is already true in my spirit man or inner man. As I walk in the Spirit, people begin to see a new me, a sanctified me. I will begin to do the things of God. People cannot tell if it is me or if it is Jesus in me because in my spirit we are in Union just as the scripture says. (1 Cor 6:17 RSV) "But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him."

That which is now in my heart begins to be outworked so that those around me can see it. Without any striving I am doing what God has put in my heart. I have come to complete rest and peace in Him. (Heb 4:10-11 RSV) "for whoever enters God's rest also ceases from his labors as God did from his. ¹¹Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, that no one fall by the same sort of disobedience."

I no longer have any list of "have to's". I am under no pressure to perform for God. I am at rest just as God rested on the seventh day of Creation. Does this mean I do nothing? Not at all. In my own life I am busier than ever but without any sense of pressure and no sense that I have to accomplish anything. I just rest in Him, and I know I am doing His will. (When I am not, the Holy Spirit immediately shows me this, and I can change the way I am going or what I am doing.) Even as I do ordinary things in life like paying my bills or purchasing a loaf of bread, I do it all with Him involved. As I am involved in something, He frequently interrupts my thoughts with something else I need to do and I do it. It might be telephone a friend and encourage him.

Or it might be as simple as to remind me to call my wife and see if she needs me to pick something on the way home from the office. I no longer have a life separate from the Lord. He is an integral part of everything I am and everything I do. May the Lord be praised and magnified and blessed.

Rene Brown

*******End of Letter*******