

From Death to Life



Identification (Part 10)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, as we draw near to the close of another week. Our theme throughout this Easter week has been: Identification.

We've looked so far this week at four successive specific aspects of this exchange. The first, from curse to blessing. Jesus was made a curse that we might receive the blessing. He endured the curses of the broken law that the blessings of obedience might be made available to us. Second, from sickness to healing. Jesus, on the cross, took our infirmities, our sicknesses, our pains. He endured the physical wounds in his body that through that we might have physical healing. The third aspect of the exchange, from poverty to prosperity. On the cross, Jesus exhausted the poverty curse that comes upon those who are disobedient to the law.

The curse is summed up in Deuteronomy 28, verse 48; hunger, thirst, nakedness, lack of all things, and that's exactly what Jesus endured on the cross. He was hungry. He was thirsty. He was naked. He lacked absolutely everything. He exhausted the poverty curse that in return we might enter into prosperity which was due to his obedience.

The fourth aspect of the exchange we looked at yesterday, from rejection to acceptance. Our sin had excluded us from the grace and the favor and the family of God. We were aliens. We were strangers. We were outside looking in, nothing better than beggars, but Jesus endured that rejection which was due to our sin. On the cross he cried out to God, "Why have you forsaken me; why am I rejected?" and there came no answer from God because the rejection was due to our sin with which Jesus was identified, and then he died of a broken heart caused by the rejection of his Father. But, at that moment that he died, the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom, signifying the way was opened up for us to enter into the acceptance which belonged to Jesus by divine eternal right as God's beloved Son.

Today we're going to look at the final aspect of the exchange, summed up in the words: from death to life. Jesus died our death that we might enter into his life.

In my talk yesterday, I explained that it was our sin that caused our rejection. The same applies to death. The original cause of death is always, and only sin. If there'd never been any sin, there would never be any death. This relationship

between sin and death is stated many, many times over in the Bible. I'll just select three passages which sum it up very briefly.

The first is in the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapter 18, verse 4: "The soul who sins will die". That's very clear. Romans 6:23: "The wages of sin is death". The due, just reward for sin is death. And, James 1, verse 15: "When sin is accomplished, it brings forth death". The final outcome of sin is invariably and inevitably death, and death in the Bible is not merely physical death; that's just the first part of death. But the Bible speaks of something far worse, the second death which is not just the death of the body but it's final and eternal banishment from the presence of God. That's the second death. Both the physical death of the body and the second death are the inevitable consequences of sin, but in this also, on the cross, Jesus was our substitute. Hebrews. chapter 2, verse 9 says this:

> "We see Jesus... made a little lower than the angels... that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone." (NIV)

Notice, this is the grace of God. It's not something we can earn or claim as a due reward for our obedience because we have been disobedient. We have broken the law. Our due reward, our wages for our sin was death but, by the grace of God, on the cross, Jesus tasted the death, personally entered into the death that was due to everyone of us. You see, in every child of Adam, from Adam himself onwards, there has dwelled a rebel, a person; he's called "the old man" or "the old self." He's incorrigible. He cannot be reformed. He is in continual, ineradicable rebellion against God and God's holy Law and God only has one remedy for that rebel. He doesn't reform him. He doesn't send him to church. He doesn't teach him the Golden Rule. He doesn't teach him to memorize scripture. God's remedy is very simple, very radical; it's execution. That must be the end of that rebel. But the gracious message of the Gospel is that on the cross our old man, our old self was executed in Jesus. Jesus identified himself with that rebel. God made to meet together upon him the rebellion of us all and all its evil consequences. He was actually identified with the rebel and then he paid the penalty for the rebel's sin. Our old, rebellious, fallen, incorrigible nature was put to death in Jesus. This is so vividly stated by Paul in Romans, chapter 6, verses 6 through 8:

> "For we know that our old self [the King James says our old man. That's the inner rebel that's in everyone of us], our old self was crucified with him [that's with Jesus], so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin, [this is the escape from the slavery of sin; it's through the death of Jesus], because anyone who has died has been freed from sin [and we're freed from sin because Jesus died our death and we identify ourselves with him and we are freed from sin], now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him." (NIV)

Notice the exchange. We die with him that we may live with him. He died our death that we may live his life. Through his death for us, on our behalf, his life is now made available to us. The exchange is from death to life. This exchange from death to life, which has been made possible by the death of Jesus, is very beautifully stated by Paul in Galatians, chapter 2, verse 20. What makes Paul's summation so beautiful is that he doesn't state it as a general principle or a doctrine, but he states it in personal testimony, as a matter of his own experience. This is what he says:

> "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

That's the substitution. Christ gave himself for us. He took our place. He was identified with our rebellion and he paid the penalty of the rebel. He was executed under God's judgement in our place. And then, Paul sees, not only the identification of Jesus with us, but our identification with Jesus and he states it, "I have been crucified with Christ." "When Christ died," he said, "I died, that was my death." "As a consequence," he goes on, "I no longer live." Then how are you still live? The answer is, "but Christ lives in me." It's now Christ living out his life in me. It's no longer my old, rebellious, fallen nature that's at work, but it's the new nature, the divine nature of Jesus working out in me the righteousness of Jesus, enabling me to live an entirely different kind of life. That's the exchange, from death to life.

Paul also states it again very vividly and beautifully in Colossians, chapter 3, verses 3 and 4, writing to Christian believers. He says:

> "For you died, [I like that simple past tense, you died. When did we die? We died when Jesus died; that was our death]. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. [You don't have your own life any longer, you have a hidden life, a secret life, a life that this world, which is restricted to the senses, cannot appreciate or understand, but you have a hidden life. Then Paul goes on to say] When Christ, who is your life,

appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." (NIV)

Notice that beautiful, simple statement, "Christ is your life." There are two such simple statements there. Put them together, "for you died," and then, "Christ is your life." Jesus died our death that we might have his life. Paul said, "It's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. The life I live now, in this present age, in this present body, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." That's the exchange from death to life. Jesus died our death that we might live out his life in us. We've passed, the Scripture says, from death to life.

Well our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again next week at this same time, Monday through Friday. All next week we'll be looking at the opposite side of the exchange: Our identification with Jesus in all that followed His death.

Radio Program

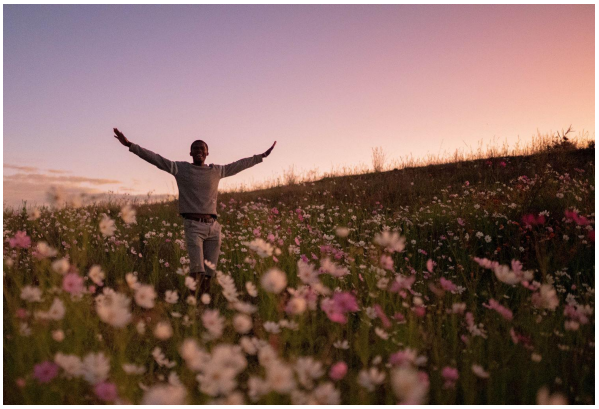
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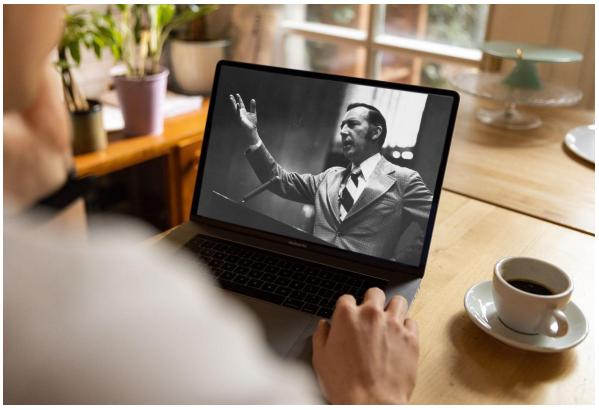
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