

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God*

IN CHRIST JESUS.

(Philippians 3.13-14 NASB)

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HIS SEED ABIDES IN HIM

Lately, I have been impressed with this word from John about His seed abiding in all born of God.

Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. (1 John 3.4-9 NASB)

All born of God are born from above; they have received a new life that has its source in heaven or, as I like to state, among the celestials. We could say that a piece of heaven or that which is of the spirit realm has been planted within all who believe. Please do not take this thought to support the notion that believers die and go to heaven. This is not what I mean. Quite the contrary; I believe that God's purpose and plan of the eons is to bring heaven, which is better called the spirit realm, to earth. Through God's Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, *the reign of the heavens* will be brought to earth, and the conquerors through the life of Christ shall be reigning on the earth (Revelation 5.10).

Although, as of this writing, the reign has not come upon the kingdoms of this world, it has come in some small measure upon the ecclesia, the body of Christ, the dwelling of God that is being built *in* spirit (Ephesians 2.19-22). All who believe are new creations *in* Christ (2 Corinthians 5.17; Galatians 6.15), having received an earnest of the spirit of God (2 Corinthians 1.22; 5.5; Ephesians 1.14), and each has received a foretaste of living *in* spirit, for God has seated us together *among* the celestials, *in* Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2.6 CV).

These are undeniable verities according to the word of God and have been made possible because of the seed of Christ, which is implanted in all who by grace through faith are given the faith of the Son of God to believe on Jesus. It is the very life of Christ, for, as Paul wrote, it is **Christ in you** (Colossians 1.27), and **Christ, who is our life** (Colossians 3.4).

Now, a natural seed is made up of the outer coat called the seed coat and an embryo within the seed coat that contains all the genetic material that transforms the seed into its species, that is, what kind of plant it will be. Spiritually speaking, the seed coat is our body that now contains the heavenly embryo, which is the seed of Christ. Our heavenly Father is the father of the seed, and we are likened to a woman who ingests the spiritual food of God's word and, along with the spirit of God, brings this seed to gestation. Paul wrote of this seed as **Christ formed in you** (Galatians 4.19) and referred to it as **this treasure in earthen vessels** (2 Corinthians 4.7). This seed is to grow until you are **complete in Christ, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ** (Colossians 1.28; Ephesians 4.13 NASB).

In other words, when we first believed, by the grace of God through the faith of the Son of God, the Father impregnated us with His seed, which is the very life of His Son, Christ in you. God is the Father

of this seed and we became the mother of the seed, which is to grow until it bursts forth from our earthly tents into our dwellings from heaven, our glorified bodies.

The nature of the seed is actually a celestial seed. It is called our inner man, and we are to nurture it by feeding upon the word of God under the leading of the spirit of God so that it grows until it is a complete man in Christ. Sin may continue to operate in some measure in our bodies of death, for sin reigns in death. However, our lives are to grow in such a fashion that our inner man, the new man, the seed of Christ in us matures to the likeness of Christ so that sin no longer has sway in our lives. When unrighteousness or lawlessness does rear its ugly head, we know that it is not coming from our inner man, the new *I*, but from the old *I* and our bodies of death in which sin dwells. Consider Paul's testimony.

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2.20 KJV)

However, Paul did not mean that there is no longer an *I* in the believer, as if all identity is lost. On the contrary, he saw a new *I* in the believer: **Nevertheless I live! The life I now live! I live by the faith of the Son of God!** The new *I* is who you are in Christ; it is the new you and who you are becoming.

In reference to sin, Paul wrote: **So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me** (Romans 7.17 NASB). Or, according to another translation: **Now it is no longer I that do these things, but the sin which has its home within me does them** (WNT). Paul had a new *I* in him that was not capable of sinning. It was what he also called the inner man. **For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man** (Romans 7.22 NASB). Notice how Paul did not do away with the law of God but concurred with it, for, as he wrote, the law is good. Sin is lawlessness. The inner man, the new *I*, does not sin because it concurs with the law of God. Simply, the inner man is law-abiding and practices the righteousness of God. According to John, the heavenly seed planted within cannot sin because it is of God and God knows no sin. As Paul wrote: **For the One not having known sin, He made sin on our behalf, so that we shall become [the] righteousness of God in Him!** (2 Corinthians 5.21 ALT). So now, those who have this seed within them do not practice sin, which is lawlessness, but practice righteousness because the seed within only knows righteousness. The seed of God is perfect, and we must nurture this seed.

I have heard it said that a believer can never sin, but this is not what John meant at all. Of course, some use this as an excuse to do what they want to do, even if it is sin, and explain away their lawlessness based on this verse. It is called licentiousness. However, earlier in his epistle, John wrote that if we say we have no sin, then we are deceiving ourselves (1 John 1.8). In other words, John saw that sin can and does continue to operate in a believer, but its source is the old life from the seed of Adam housed in a body of death, not the new life from the seed of God that is growing into a celestial body.

Let us be clear that the flesh cannot be reformed, cleaned up, or made to be righteous. All attempts to make the flesh into something holy will fail. Our focus must be on nurturing the seed of God within that is life itself, and not on trying to reform the flesh that is dying. The seed is a new *I*.

The seed coat, that is, our body of death, must be put off one day when the embryo has grown to maturity. For all who conquer through the life of Christ while they lived in bodies of death, there is a day of glory coming. This new life within will burst through the old seed coat of those who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, and they will be transfigured into the new creation that is *in* Christ; glorified as Christ is glorified, celestial as Christ is celestial, *in* spirit as Christ is *in* spirit. Those who are asleep in Jesus will be roused from among the dead through the *out*-resurrection, and they too will be transfigured. The seed that grew in them while in bodies of death is being preserved by the Father and is waiting to burst forth from the cords of death. If you have been born from above, then His seed abides in you. Nurture it!