

UPWARD CALL

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but this is my one aim: to forget everything that's behind, and to strain every nerve to go after what lies ahead. I press on toward the finish line, where the prize waiting for me is the upward call of God

IN KING JESUS.

(Philippians 3:13-14)

#10-1611

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Christ, Our Life & Expectation

Now I am making known to you, brethren, the evangel which I bring to you For I give over to you among the first what also I accepted, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that He was entombed, and that He has been roused the third day according to the scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, thereupon by the twelve." (1 Corinthians 15:1-5 CLV)

For the love of Christ is constraining us, judging this, that, if One died for the sake of all, consequently all died." And He died for the sake of all that those who are living should by no means still be living to themselves, but to the One dying and being roused for their sakes." (2 Corinthians 5:14-15 CLV)

If, then, you were roused together with Christ, be seeking that which is above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God." Be disposed to that which is above, not to that on the earth, for you died, and your life is hid together with Christ in God." Whenever Christ, our Life, should be manifested, then you also shall be manifested together with Him in glory." (Colossians 3:1-4 CLV)

... the Lord Jesus Christ, our Expectation [Hope] ... the promise of Life which is in Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:1)

In these few verses, Paul the apostle of the nations makes it abundantly clear that there is only one message in the gospel (evangel) or good news that came to him by revelation and that he was charged to deliver to the nations. Pauls' evangel is summed up in one word: CHRIST! Or, to make it more personal, his evangel is summed up in Jesus. In the Greek, the word *Christ* means *Anointed One* (of God) or *Messiah* in Hebrew. Thus, we could say *Jesus the Anointed One* or reversing it, *the Anointed Jesus*. To be clear, the origin of this anointing is from God Himself.

Using the word *absolutely* in its ultimate and legitimate meaning, Paul's evangel is absolutely summed up and fully expressed in Christ alone. Jesus the Anointed One is central, supreme, and preeminent in Paul's gospel. He is the center, the circumference, and everything in between in relation to all things in heaven and on earth and to the fulfillment of God's ultimate purpose of being All in all. Absolutely nothing is excluded and absolutely nothing is outside of His realm. By the consummation of the ages, Jesus, not only as the Anointed One but also as the Son of God and the Son of man and the King of all kings, will have summed up or headed up all things in heaven and on earth. He will be all in all in the fullest sense of its meaning as He ushers all creation and all mankind into the glorious new creation in which there is no death, no sin, and no rival kingdoms. All of the old man, the first Adam, will be gone, never to be seen or heard from again. Humanity will be a new creation, a new people, a new race patterned after the pattern Son, Christ, the beloved Son of God. There will be only one kingdom in that day; it will be the kingdom of His Father in which God the Father is All in all. The will of God, rooted in the love of God, will fill all things; there will be no more doubt as to God's will as all of creation lives the will of God manifesting His love through and through. This is good news.

But, how does mankind arrive at this glorious future? This is where Paul's evangel comes in. The answer is through death. Only through death does mankind of the first order (old man) come into mankind of the second order (one new man). This is God's way and there is no other way through no matter what man thinks or does.

Considering the above verses, Paul starts with Christ died for our sins. There are all sorts of theological explanations of sin and how it got here, but these are merely window dressing to our understanding of the gospel. Simply put, sin is missing the mark or goal of God, which is glory. As the creator of all, God has the right to set the rules and to

decide what the mark is and He has done just that. Argue with Him if you will, but does the pot argue with the potter? His mark is His Son in glory. This is what mankind is to achieve. The bad news is that all born of Adam's race have missed this mark and can never attain to it on their own, no matter how hard they try and no matter how much *free will* (actually *affected will*) they exercise. Last time I checked; we all are of Adam's race. This would be a cruel joke on all of us, if there were no way to achieve God's end. The good news is that there is, and God has provided the way and freely given it to us, not based on man's free will, man's faith, or on some condition, some requirement on our part. No; God the Father has provided an unconditional and guaranteed way. You could say it has an unlimited lifetime warranty.

God did not expect man to clean up his act, so to speak. In fact, God knew that, given an eternity of ages, man could never achieve such a lofty ideal. So, the solution was simple. Mankind in total had to die in order to live. The first Adam had already introduced a kind of death into his race, but this could not produce life as God sees it and expects it to be, namely immortal, beyond sin and death of all kinds, whether physical, soulical, or spiritual—for the theological minded.

So, what did God do? He placed all of mankind—past, present, and future—into His Son, and He took all of the first order of man (the first Adam) with Him into the grave. In case you missed it, Jesus took all mankind with Him on the cross. We can get all caught up in the theology of a substitutionary death and the whole Judaistic ritualistic system, but it is not necessary. ***One, that is Christ, died for all; consequently, all died.*** This is an extremely simple equation to understand even for those who like common core and the new math. Jesus died, we all died. End of discussion. He died for all, not just a select few who somehow figure out the good news. With this great achievement, all of mankind became dead men walking. Yes, mankind continued with breath, but in God's eyes they were all dead; they continued in mortal, corruptible bodies doing corruptible things and continually missing the mark. Mankind still does!

Of course, if it stopped at death there would be no good news. What good is there to God having a race of dead men walking, or of what value is it to God to have His Son die for all if it stopped there? There is no good until we see that God raised His Son who knew no sin from the dead and seated Him at the right hand of the throne of God in glory. Part two to the good news is that He has made the way to raise up all mankind into the glory of God. Paul tells us: *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive* (1 Corinthians 15:22). Don't go off on some theological side stream over this; it's a simple equation: **Adam = Death; Christ = Life**. All in Adam die. Fact! All in Christ live. Fact! This is not a conditional statement as many make it out to be, that is, man has to get himself into Christ first. No; this is an unconditional statement. *All will be made alive for all will be in Christ*. Think about this: If all died with Christ based on God's doing, how does anyone of the all get out of death on their own. A dead man has no ability; there all in the grave. So how does man get out? God must do it! If He doesn't do it, then He could rightly be accused of an injustice. Consequently, all died in Christ and all will live in Christ, not all in the same age but each in their own order or rank.

Now, here is where it gets a bit sticky. In God's wisdom, not all will be brought into this place of life in this age. This is reserved for those who are called and chosen. Again, argue with God if you will, but He set the rules and has the plan which says that at the end of the ages no one will be left out, for all will be in Christ and will enter glory. However, a study of scripture indicates that God works through the few to bring in the many. We see this with Caleb and Joshua and Jesus' disciples. He chose twelve men but only three were allowed to see Him manifested in glory. God starts with ones that could be called *pioneers* and works through them to forge the way for others.

For those who have been given *the* faith of Jesus—His faith—to believe all this, their lives are now hidden with Christ in God. Notice how Paul reminds believers that they died, meaning they have no life apart from Christ. The fact of the matter is that Jesus is their life; they have no other life. And, this life is now hidden with Christ in God. Here is the good news: *You have been raised up with Him who is seated now in glory, and when He is manifested, you too will be manifested with Him in glory*. This is the promise of life, eonian life, and our hope or expectation, which is a better word. Hope to the world is a should happen, a could happen, a maybe it might happen, a desire for it to happen, or a wish it will happen. But in all of these there is no absolute, 100% fact that it will happen. **Our expectation in Christ is absolute and without question or doubt. Expect it! Glory is coming!**