

The Problem with Christians

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By C. Benjamin Dill

Good morning, Lighthouse!

Are you ready to learn something this morning that will transform your life forever?

I am talking about a concept so big that once you understand it, you will never see yourself the same way again; your self esteem will go through the roof; your insecurity will turn to confidence and your outlook for the future will in all likelihood become the best it's ever been.

Some of you are already thinking, "OK, what do I have to do?"

That answer is simple; you don't have to do anything.

When you study and read God's Word for 30 or 40 years, you begin to see certain things; as you uncover small profound truths they begin to form your belief system.

As you learn and grow from continued right dividing of the Word; these small truths begin to fall in place together in harmony with each other; a bigger and bigger picture then begins to form.

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Today I want to take you back; way back in the Old Testament to begin showing you one special part of this big picture concept we are going to share today.

Back when Moses turned aside to see the bush that burned but was not consumed, God spoke with Moses and told him that he had come down to deliver His people Israel. God told Moses that he was chosen to be His mouthpiece unto Pharaoh.

Exodus 3:11-14

11 And Moses said unto God, Who *am* I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?

12 And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this *shall be* a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

13 And Moses said unto God, Behold, *when* I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What *is* his name? what shall I say unto them?

14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

We know the story of all the things that happened next; the plagues, the deliverance, the parting of the Red Sea, the destruction of the Egyptians and more; it is an amazing story.

We get all wrapped up in what God did and we often forget the main thing; it's not about what God did, **it's about Who God is!**

Certainly our God is a God of doing, but God did not say, "Tell them 'I Do' hath sent you."

God could have 'done' a thousand different things and the score would have still been God 10 and Egyptians 0.

Go ahead and read the end of the book; God wins; He always wins!

Let me ask you this question: Is it what we do that determines who we are; like the world wants us to believe?

Or is it who we are that ultimately determines what we will do?

We are constantly working on what we do. We get more education so we can do greater things, we get counseling to do better at this or that or to stop doing this or that.

Christians today are constantly bearing the consequences of what they do; they are generally so messed up you can often see little difference in them and the rest of the world.

We hear about "Back in the day when I was a boy we didn't do this and we didn't do that and we had respect for God's house and we revered the Word and da ta da ta da."

Let me tell you a little secret about 'back in the day;' Christians were just as messed up then as they are now; they just hid it better.

Back in the day it was called 'shacking up' and 'living in sin' so most would sneak out before daylight so they didn't get caught.

Today we call it 'living together' and we sanction it by showing it as the accepted pattern on every movie and TV show made; it's normal; everybody does it.

Let me remind you that living together without being married to each other is still the same sin as it ever was; read it:

Hebrews 13:4 Marriage *is* honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

There are consequences for what you do and those consequences are severe. You may not feel them now but wait until your little girl hands her virginity over to some smooth operator who is going to use her and throw her away like so much trash and then she says, "But Momma, that's how you did it."

The situation is really pretty simple; you want to give your flesh what it wants more than you want to give the Lord what He wants; that's pretty much what all sin comes down to.

The mentality of religion is all about what you do or can refrain from doing. You will be an accepted regular member in most churches if you simply show up and look like you are a good person. (You will obviously have to hide some things and you may need to do some giving.) But you will look like and be considered a Christian.

There are a lot of outwardly good acting people that are headed to hell because they think what they do defines who they are.

From this point on in the message today, I am going to be talking about true Christians; I mean the real ones; those who have understood the gospel and placed their trust in Jesus to save them; those whose spirit God has raised from death to life.

Why do real Christians often continue to live in bondage to sin; why do real Christians battle sinful addictions of drugs and alcohol and pornography and worse?

Many do, and this is not new to our age.

James paints a common picture among believers:

James 4:1-3

1 From whence *come* wars and fightings among you? *come they* not hence, *even of* your lusts that war in your members?

2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts.

What is the problem with Christians? Is it unthankfulness; this is Thanksgiving week, after all?

I am convinced that the problem with most Christians is simply that they do not understand how special they are.

Before you label me as a religious Dr. Spock or Sigmund Freud, consider the facts.

Going to heaven is not dependent on what you do or how you live; but rather one thing: if you are a born again child of God.

Scripture informs us of consequences but it does not use the fear of consequences to motivate us. God rather motivates with love which the Lord first showed toward us.

We desire to walk with the Lord because we are alive from the dead and that's what the living do!

Galatians 5:25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, had fallen sick and died; what we are about to read takes place four days after they buried him:

John 11:43-44

43 And when he thus had spoken, he [Jesus] cried with a loud voice, **Lazarus, come forth.**

44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, **Loose him, and let him go.**

It does not make sense for someone whose spirit is alive from the dead to continue living in bondage to sin any more than Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead, would have chosen to stay in the tomb.

We break free from the bondage of sin because in Christ we can! That's who we are!

Today I am going to share with you just a glimpse of who you really are in Christ:

If you really are in Christ;

And if you come to understand who God says you really are;

You will definitely leave here today different than you came!

First:

I. Understand what God has already accomplished in you.

A. *You are alive from the dead.*

1. **Ephesians 2:1-5**

- 1 And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins
- 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:
- 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.
- 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,
- 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath **quickened us together with Christ**, by (grace ye are saved;)

2. **John 5:24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is **passed from death unto life.**

3. Your spirit which was dead in sins is now alive; yea, even more than just alive in the sense we normally understand it.

4. God calls your newly living spirit 'the new man'.

Ephesians 4:21-24

21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

24 And that ye put on the **new man**, which after God is **created in righteousness and true holiness**.

5. So, just how holy and how righteous is your new spirit [which is the real you] created by God?

1John 3:9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

B. What does that mean for your life?

1. It means that new life inside leads to new life outside.

2. Romans 6:1-5

1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up

from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so **we** also **should walk in newness of life.**

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness of his* resurrection:

3. It simply does not make sense for those raised to new life to abide in death any more than Lazarus would have stayed in that tomb.

4. **1John 3:14** We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death.

Next:

II. Understand who you now are in Christ.

A. If you are born again, everything I am about to read and much more is a specific description of who you are.

1. **Ephesians 1:3-6**

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace,
wherein he hath made us **accepted in the
beloved.**

You are accepted in the beloved!

2. **John 8:36** If the Son therefore shall make
you free, ye shall be **free indeed.**

You are free indeed!

3. **Acts 10:15** And the voice *spake* unto him
again the second time, What **God hath
cleansed**, *that* call not thou common.

You are now clean!

4. You are **justified**...Romans chapter 5!

5. You are **righteous**...Romans chapter 3!

6. You are **blessed**...Romans chapter 4!

7. You are **God's workmanship**...Ephesians
chapter 2!

8. You are an **overcomer**...I John chapter 5!

9. I could do this all day!

*B. You are not a loser; you are a victorious
conquering winner!*

1. Everything you will ever need has already been provided; haven't you wondered why no matter what, you always somehow make it?

2. **Romans 8:31-39**

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?

32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth.

34 Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

3. How is it that we are 'more than conquerors'?

4. We are conquering sin in our lives as we grow and learn to live out who we really are.

5. But the fact is that we; in Christ, have already conquered!

6. **John 16:33** ...be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

7. If you are in Christ, you have overcome it too!

Next:

III. Understand your destiny.

A. You are destined for greatness!

1. You are being and will ultimately be transformed into the image of Jesus!

2. Romans 8:28-29

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

3. **1John 3:2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

4. Just like the Apostle Paul; you are a chosen vessel.

Acts 9:15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

B. Who do you think is the greatest man who ever lived; besides Jesus, that is?

1. George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Ronald Regan, Mohammed Ali said he was; President Obama?

2. Maybe Billy Graham; many think he is the greatest Christian of our day?

3. God's standard of greatness may be different than ours.

4. Check out who Jesus says is the greatest:

Luke 7:27-28

27 This is *he*, [John the Baptist] of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

28 For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist:...

5. Now catch the next part...but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

6. When you close your eyes in death and wake up in the Kingdom of Heaven, you will begin an eternity of greatness that will surpass anything this planet has ever seen; except for Jesus; and yes, if you are born again, I am talking about you.

C. Why would someone like you be satisfied to live in bondage to sin; any sin?

1. Why would someone like you give your time and energy; your life...to this world?

1. It just doesn't make sense!

2. No one that is who you are in Christ would be OK with that!

3. We shall reign with Christ for 1,000 years right here on this earth after Jesus comes and this **is** the preparation time for it.

4. We have better things to do than to spend our time being swept along with the rest of this world.

In Conclusion:

2Corinthians 6:14-18

14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

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15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial?
or what part hath he that believeth with an
infidel?

16 And what agreement hath the temple of
God with idols? for ye are the temple of the
living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in
them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God,
and they shall be my people.

17 Wherefore come out from among them,
and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch
not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you.

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall
be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord
Almighty.

**Why should you come out from this world
and give it all to Jesus?**

**Why should you put Him first in
everything?**

It's simple; it's because that is who you are!

**I am in Christ! I don't do what I do to get
blessing or to avoid consequences
although both of those things do happen; I
do what I do because that is who I am!**

Who you are?