

Resurrection and Our Struggle with Sin

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Colossians 3:1-15

¹ If then **you have been raised with the Messiah**, **seek** the things that are **upward/above** (*ano*), where the Messiah is, *seated at the right hand of God* [Ps 110:1].

² **Think** about things upward/above, not what belongs only to earth. ³ **For you have died**, and **your life is hidden with the Messiah in God**. ⁴ When the **Messiah is revealed**, he who is **your life**, then **you also will be revealed with him in glory**.

⁵ **Put to death** therefore parts of you that belong only to earth: sexual immorality, impurity, destructive emotions, desire for evil, and greed, which is idolatry, ⁶ on account which God's wrath comes. ⁷ In these you too **once walked**, when you were **living** in them.

⁸ But now you must **get rid of them all**: anger, rage, meanness, slander, and shameful talk from your mouth. ⁹ **Do not lie** to one another, since you have **stripped off the old self** with its practices ¹⁰ and have **put on the new self** that is being **renewed** toward true **knowledge in the image of its creator**.

¹¹ Here there is no Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but **Messiah is all, and in all**.

¹² **Clothe yourselves** then, as God's **chosen, holy** and **beloved**, with compassionate hearts, kindness, humility of thought, gentleness, and forbearance, ¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, giving grace to each other; as the **Lord has given grace to you**, so you must also.

¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which **binds everything together** in perfect **harmony**. ¹⁵ And let the **peace of the Messiah** rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in **one body**. And become thankful.

Matthew 6:33

"Seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you."

Philippians 3:13-14

One thing I do ... I press toward the goal for the prize of the **upward** (*ano*) **call** of **God** in Messiah Jesus

1 John 2:1-2

¹ My little children, I am writing these things to you so that **you may not sin**. But if anyone does sin, we have **an advocate** with the Father, Jesus the Messiah, the righteous One. ² And he himself is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Romans 6:8-14

⁸ Now if **we died with the Messiah**, we **believe** that **we will also live with him**. ⁹ We **know** that the Messiah, being **raised from the dead**, will never die again; **death no longer has dominion** over him. ¹⁰ For the death he died he died to sin, just once, but the life he lives he lives to God.

¹¹ So you also must **consider yourselves dead to sin** and **alive to God in Messiah Jesus**. ¹² So **don't allow sin to rule in your mortal body**, to make you obey its desires. ¹³ Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but **present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life**, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. ¹⁴ For **sin** will have **no dominion** over you, since **you are not under law but under grace**."

Genesis 4:7

(God said to Cain) "...*sin is crouching at the door. It wants to have you, but you must master it.*"

The Struggle with Sin

What's wrong with the world? The Bible answers "sin and death." Both are profoundly complex: cosmic and individual; titanic and banal. They unite the moral, intentional ways we mess up ourselves and the world around us and the pain, suffering, loss, meaninglessness, and destruction that we experience and multiply in our world.

"The wages of sin is death but the gracious gift of God is eternal life in Messiah Jesus our Lord." (Rom 6:23) Sin is tempting, deceptive, enslaving, destructive. It is deeply rooted in our nature ("flesh"), our desire. It is a powerful enemy, the devil.

Paul in Col 3:5-11 points to pervasive types of sin. God-given pleasures and emotions that are misused and distorted: sexual relations intended for union within marriage made trivial or traitorous. Emotions, desires out of control, corrupted. Money that can be a tool for good becomes a god – idolatry. Our self-assertion, self-protection: anger, rage, maliciousness, violence. Hurting with our talk, slander, shame, lying. Stereotyping, dehumanizing, oppressing others. Vast variations for each individual.

These are realities in which our world walks and lives. We learn them, see them every day. We're experts. We often admire them and don't know any other way to be.

In sin we are both perpetrators and victims. We choose; we rebel, but we are also enslaved, corrupted by our action. We can't get free and save ourselves. We are mired in a world that does not know its creator, alienated, self-absorbed, dying.

Resurrected with the Messiah – A New Self in Jesus

God's response to sin is "wrath" toward all that destroys his creatures and creation. But astonishingly God reaches out in grace to humanity. He wants both our moral freedom and eternal life for us. He responds in the long story from Abraham to Jesus.

The seriousness of sin and death is seen in Jesus' crucifixion – God takes it all on himself in Jesus who is both God and us. Our Creator/Messiah dies for his creatures and takes every creature with him into that death. Through resurrection he conquers death and all its powers, and takes us with him in that victory and new immortality. We could never do such a thing, but God can and did. We are invited to receive all the love and life that it truly embodies by trusting God's love and action in Jesus.

We are raised to new life in Jesus. We share in his story, suffering (*"you have died"*), glory. But we are not simply set back down in our old hopeless struggle with sin. God gets involved in our life through his Spirit enabling a "new person" to emerge.

God's Gift – Sharing in Changing my Live

We are given real and powerful hope – true eternal life – without taking away our humanity, our freedom. That means that we are still ourselves but that God has changed the narrative of our life, joining us to the powerful life of Jesus, Messiah, Lord, Creator, Giver of life. We are given his victory over sin and death even while we learn – often slowly and with difficulty, but also wonderfully – to experience in our own life what it means to be truly human in the image of God. It's work: "putting to death" and "getting rid of" and also "clothing ourselves" with new ways of life.

We see the way of life vividly embodied in Jesus' own life and teaching, in God's grace and compassion toward us. We learn to give what we have received. Above all, we learn Love, the heart of God. We trust his grace and thus let the Peace that only the Messiah can give guide our hearts. People of gratitude living God's own gift of life.