

## Dead Man Walking

In some of the Death Rows in the USA – when a prisoner is taken to be executed the guard that leads the procession shouts out, “dead man walking”. It means, get out of the way this man is on his way to his execution. Have some respect and stand or give a last word of encouragement for he is about to leave this life.

For a few minutes this morning I want us to look at our life **in** Christ as the Apostle Paul understood it. God uses pictures to help us grasp spiritual realities so that we can understand His ways. This particular picture is founded in the words of Christ. Luke 9:23-26 When a Roman official sentenced a man to death he would shout, “Put the cross on the man”! The cross beam was strapped to his arms and the victim had to carry it to the sight of the crucifixion. When Jesus says take up your cross every day, He is telling us to consider ourselves Dead Men Walking. The sentence of death each day is accepted and we are dead men.

Romans 6:1-3 Your baptism was picture of your crucifixion and burial with Christ. When you came to Christ you were to repent – turn away from – the ways of the old nature. You were to see it put to death with Christ upon the cross. I think we don’t realize the finality of this. Failure to realize this is where modern Christianity turns into a club of people that are little different from the world. Do you know that today there is a higher percentage of a divorce among Evangelicals in America than among atheists? What is wrong with this picture?

Do dead men hold grudges? Insist on having things their way? Demand their rights? But here is the problem, we aren’t dead. No, we are very much alive and demanding our own ways, refusing to change, to be loving and considerate because the old nature doesn’t want to give in inch. All the old nature can do is take. Even what appears to be giving is so it can take more later. What did Jesus say back there in Lk 9? We’re still trying to save our life, gain the world. Jesus says that is the sure way to loose it all.

But if we die, then there is the promise of real life, resurrected life. Ro 6:4-11. Many Christians don’t find the power of the resurrection in their life because they have never died. Look at verse 5 again. If – then! If you died with Him you will be raised with Him, not only one day at the last trump, but right now in this life. Ro 8:11 And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies! Your mortal body is now not then. Go back to Ro 6:6,7 – see- no longer a slave but freed. Are you freed? If there is habitual repeating of the same sin in your life, then you have not been freed from the master – the carnal nature. It is still a hard demanding master. It shouts “me” “I want” “I deserve” And when you wake up in the morning and consider taking up the cross that master screams – “NO!!!” and gives you a million great reasons why not to.

But let us consider the example of the One who took up his cross daily. From the time He was born He was on His way to Galgotha (the place He was crucified) because He was crucified before the foundation of the world was laid. Early in the morning, while it was still dark He rose and picked up that beam. In prayer He said to the Father each day, “not my will but yours be done.” And because He said it each day, the hour of temptation in the Garden came and He could say it again.

And because He did, He has a name above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and tongue confess that HE is Lord! The Apostle Paul said, "I die daily." God was able to use Him so mightily because he was a Dead Man Walking.

Dead Men Walk - in resurrection power! Eph 1:17-21 They are no longer slaves to men but are slaves to God, to righteousness. Ro 6:18 Each day you rise and you say, "Lord, what would you have your servant do, and how would You have me do it?" And as you go to do it, Jesus does it in you. You find it is no longer your peace, but His manifested in you. It is no longer your strength or wisdom or love, but His very own being manifested in your mortal life. WOW Now if your heart isn't racing a little bit faster you haven't experienced it or you don't yet have the vision for it.

Listen, Without Him you can do nothing! Do you believe that? My favorite Oswald Chambers' quote, "the thing that ought to make the heart beat is a new way of manifesting the Son of God." But the only way to experience that is death. Death to your will and way and ability, to all your old nature. Pronounce your own sentence, "Put the cross on the man, Dead man walking!" And then as you hear the directives of the Holy Spirit and obey, the very life of Christ will help you do that job as He would do it, will help you offer to pray for that friend, and then pray through you! Wouldn't that be awesome? Then DIE!

I think the disciples began to die when they backed away from Jesus in the Garden. See, the Gospels say they had all said, "not me Lord, I will never leave you, I would die with you." But then they found out they could not overcome their own fear. They couldn't stay awake to pray the last hour they were with Him. Then they couldn't stand with him but stood far off while he was dying. Peter couldn't even tell the truth. Then after He died, they couldn't remember what He said or just couldn't believe it. Even after the women came with eyewitness accounts that it was true, they still couldn't believe and didn't go to Galilee like they had been told. Finally Jesus had to make a personal appearance. They couldn't catch fish either. After the ascension they couldn't just wait, they had to pick a replacement for Judas. Finally they do what they should of done all along. They pray. And when you pray realizing you can't do it, you ask for His life to do it in you. And suddenly this bumbling Pete who can't even say he is Jesus' friend, delivers a powerful message of conviction by the Holy Spirit. What happened? They died to their own ways and own strength and waited for the resurrected life of Jesus to operate in them. Then, what a difference we see in these men.

The one thing that Satan hates is resurrection! He had priests pay soldiers to lie about it. Why? It means he is defeated. What was the chief function of the Apostles, "bear witness of the resurrection!" And how did they do it? Not only did they say, "Our own eyes have seen death was defeated", but they walked in resurrected power themselves! Imagine the hate Satan has for that! He thought he did away with Jesus, and that death meant Jesus' defeat. Then he thinks he is defeating you and suddenly you choose to die. Oh no, he's seen this before. Once you are dead you'll be back – a dead man walking – resurrected life! He thinks he did Jesus in and now Jesus is everywhere in all these men of God that choose to die and let his life flow through them. Imagine the horror that strikes in his doomed being. He's going to do everything he can to keep you from choosing to die to yourself because the resurrected life of Jesus is the one thing he fears the most.

Col 3:1(NIV) Since then you have been raised with Christ, (have you? Not unless you died with Him) set your hearts on things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2. Set your mind on things above and not on earthly things, 3. FOR YOU DIED! (did you?) and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

That is not the end of the battle it is the beginning of many victorious battles. In Romans 6 and Colossians 3 death and resurrected life results in victories over the flesh, setting it aside. The only reason you can do it is because of that resurrected life now available to you. Each day you can take up the cross – you can be a dead man walking in the power of the Resurrected Lord! His very life can be manifested in you, if you are willing to die.

Everyday we choose to walk in our own ways and do our own thing – to save our life, **or** we choose to surrender to the life of Christ in us. We put our foot on the throat of the old nature and see it dead on the cross. Consider the power of the resurrection that is available for you to walk in each day. One way results in futility and the loss of real life. The other is the way to find out what Your Heavenly Father really has in store for you. His plan is so much better than anything you could come up on your own. And as you lay up your treasure in heaven you are often unaware that it is happening. But one day you will see all the fruit that Christ has produced from a life surrendered to His very life, a life that has chosen to be a co-laborer with Him.