

*Nuggets and Gems from the Bible*

**THE GOAL**

**OF THE**

**CHRISTIAN LIFE —**

**TO LIVE CHRIST**

**WITNESS LEE**

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***Living Stream Ministry***  
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# **THE GOAL OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE— TO LIVE CHRIST**

According to God's economy revealed in the New Testament, the goal of the Christian life is to live Christ. When I was young, I was taught that the central thought of the Bible is related to Christ. Now I realize that the central thought of the Bible is not only Christ, but also to live Christ.

## **CHRIST ABIDING IN US AND LIVING IN US**

Simply to say that Christ is the central thought of the Bible is rather objective. In our experience, Christ should be very subjective to us. For instance, the Lord Jesus says, “Abide in Me and I in you” ([John 15:4](#)). This expression is simple, but the meaning is profound.

In [Galatians 2:20](#) Paul says, “I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.” To say that Christ lives in us is even stronger than to say that He abides in us. When I visit another locality, I may abide

in a brother's home. However, I cannot say that I live there. I only abide there temporarily with certain limitations. But when I return to my home, I can live there. To live in a certain place is to have full liberty. To say that Christ lives in us means that He has the full liberty to speak, act, and behave. He is able to do in us whatever He desires, for He has redeemed us and made us His dwelling place.

## **CHRIST MAKING HIS HOME IN US AND BEING FORMED IN US**

According to [Ephesians 3](#), Paul prayed that the Father would strengthen us through the Spirit in our inner man that Christ may make His home in our hearts. First Christ abides in us, then He lives in us, and then He settles down in us, making His home in our whole inner being. On the one hand, Christ may live in our spirit. But on the other hand, we may not give Him much room to live in our mind, will, or emotion. From experience we know that sometimes we restrict Christ to our spirit. When He tries to spread from our spirit into our emotion, we may not allow Him to do so. For example, in the morning a brother may pray to the Lord, enjoy Him, and declare, "Hallelujah, the Lord Jesus is living in

my spirit!” But, later that day he is tempted to do a certain thing. Even though the Lord who lives in his spirit does not agree, the brother, living according to his emotion, insists on doing that thing. He reasons with the Lord, trying to persuade Him to stay in his spirit and give him the freedom to live according to his emotion. He even promises that the next day he will give the Lord the freedom to spread into his emotion. But when the next day comes, he does not keep his promise. Thus, the Lord is not given the liberty to settle down in this brother’s emotion.

This is why we need our inner man, our regenerated spirit, to be strengthened. Then Christ will be able to make His home in our hearts. He will not only abide in us and live in us, but spread into every part of our inner being and settle down there.

It is important for us to see that Christ should be subjective to us in our experience. He abides in us, He lives in us, and He desires to make His home, to settle Himself, throughout our inner being.

In [Galatians 4:19](#) Paul says, “My children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ is formed in you.” For Christ to be formed in us means that

He abides in us, lives in us, settles down in us, and then saturates every part of our being.

## CONSTITUTED OF CHRIST

As Christians, we differ in the measure of Christ we have within us. Some have given more ground to Christ; others have given Him less room to grow in them. No doubt Paul's measure of Christ was full. This means that Christ had been fully formed in him. In [Philippians 1:21](#) Paul could even declare, "To me to live is Christ." Christ had been wrought into Paul and had actually become his constituent. Therefore, Paul was a man completely constituted of Christ. This was the reason he could say that to him to live was Christ.

Dietitians often tell us that we are what we eat. The food we eat eventually becomes our constitution. It is wrought into our fibers and even our cells. If a person eats a great deal of a certain food, he will eventually become constituted of that food.

By the time Paul wrote the book of [Philippians](#), he had been a believer in Christ for nearly thirty years. Throughout those years, Christ had been more and more wrought into Paul's inner being. Paul was continually eating

Christ, partaking of Him. Eventually, having been constituted of Christ, he became a Christ-man. As one who was constituted of Christ, he could testify, “To me to live is Christ.”

We today should be the continuation of Paul’s testimony. We are here to live Christ, to have Christ wrought into us until our mind, emotion, and will are constituted of Him.

## A METABOLIC CHANGE

In [Romans 12:2](#) Paul charges us not to be conformed to this age, but to be transformed by the renewing of the mind. To be conformed to this age is to be fashioned outwardly according to the style of the age, according to the trend of the world. To be transformed is to be inwardly and organically renewed.

The more we are transformed, the more Christ is given room to settle down in us. In fact, the process of transformation is the process of being occupied and possessed by Christ. For our mind to be transformed means that Christ has taken possession of it and saturated it with Himself. Likewise, when our emotion and will are saturated with Christ, He becomes the very constituent of these inward parts. In this way Christ becomes subjective to us.

## THE EXPERIENTIAL CHRIST

According to Christian experience, the Christ who dwells in us is identical to the Spirit who indwells us. The indwelling Spirit is the practical Christ, the subjective and experiential Christ. The Three of the Godhead are one. The Father is in the Son, and the Son is realized as the Spirit. When the Spirit reaches us and comes to live in us, all Three of the Godhead come to dwell in us. How wonderful that Christ is in us! Our Christ is subjective and experiential.

If we would live Christ, we must realize that He is subjective as well as objective. As the mighty God, the Lord of all, the One who has ascended to the heavens, and who has been enthroned and crowned with glory, Christ is objective. Of this we should not have any doubt. But Christ is also subjective. He dwells in us, He lives in us, He is seeking to settle Himself in us, and He is also working to saturate our entire being with Himself.

## CHRIST MAGNIFIED

Let us now consider [Philippians 1:19-21](#). In verse 19 Paul says that his circumstances will turn out for his salvation through the petition of

the saints and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. According to [verse 20](#), we see that the salvation Paul expected to experience was that instead of being put to shame, in everything Christ would be magnified in him with all boldness. Thus, for Paul's environment to turn out to be for his salvation means that it would turn out for the magnification of Christ in him. Hence, salvation here is actually Christ magnified in him. The words, "To me to live is Christ" in [verse 21](#) are an explanation of what it means to magnify Christ. To magnify Christ is to live Him. On the negative side, Paul expected that he would not be put to shame; on the positive side, he expected Christ to be magnified in him.

According to the context of these verses, salvation here is not salvation from hell. Instead, it is salvation from being put to shame. If Paul had been sorrowful and downcast when he was in prison, that would have been a shame. Suppose Timothy came to visit Paul and found him weeping over his difficult situation. What a shame that would have been to Paul! But suppose Paul rejoiced in the Lord and sang praises to Him. Then Christ truly would have been magnified in his body, even though he was a prisoner in Rome. This is the salvation spoken of here.

Paul's earnest expectation was that instead of being put to shame, he would magnify Christ. What a tremendous salvation it is to magnify Christ in all circumstances! The jailers and the guards could see Paul rejoicing in the Lord. In him Christ was magnified. To magnify Christ in such a way is to live Him.

## **SAVED THROUGH THE INDWELLING SPIRIT AND THE OPERATING GOD**

In [Philippians 2:12](#) Paul charges us to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. In [Philippians 1:19-20](#) Paul speaks of something turning out for salvation, but in [2:12](#) he tells us to work out our salvation. In [verse 13](#) he goes on to explain, “For it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure.” In [chapter one](#) salvation comes by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. But here salvation comes from the operating God within us. Now we must see that the operating God is actually the Spirit of Jesus Christ. The One who operates in us both the willing and the working for His good pleasure is the indwelling Spirit of Jesus Christ with His bountiful supply.

Paul says in 2:14, “Do all things without murmurings and reasonings.” If we murmur or reason, we offend the indwelling and operating God. When we murmur or reason, we may have the sense deep within that we are offending the operating God, grieving the indwelling Spirit. Furthermore, we may have the sense that the indwelling Spirit is telling us not to reason or murmur, but to work out our own salvation. We have received an all-inclusive salvation, which is Christ Himself, but now we must work out this salvation. The very God who is the Spirit with the bountiful supply is operating in us. With fear and trembling, let us respect Him and cooperate with Him to work out our salvation. If we do this, we shall be saved from murmurings and reasonings. This is a practical and instant salvation worked out according to the inward operation of God.

## **SHINING AS LUMINARIES AND HOLDING FORTH THE WORD OF LIFE**

In Philippians 2:15-16 Paul continues, “That you may become blameless and guileless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation, among whom

you shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.” To shine as luminaries is to magnify Christ. This indicates that the salvation in chapter two equals the salvation in chapter one. The operating God equals the Spirit with the bountiful supply, and shining as luminaries is equal to magnifying Christ.

According to verse 16, the way we shine as luminaries is to hold forth the word of life. It is rather difficult to understand adequately the meaning of the phrase “holding forth.” It means to present something to people, to offer them something, and even to apply something to them. To hold forth the word of life is to offer such a word to others, to present it to them, and even to apply it to them. This is to minister Christ to others, to offer Christ to them. What do you offer to your family, relatives, neighbors, colleagues, friends, or classmates? What do you present to them? Your answer should be that you offer Christ to them, present Christ to them, and apply Christ to them in their situation. This is to hold forth the word of life. The word of life is actually the living expression of Christ. To shine as luminaries is to magnify Christ, and to hold forth the word of life is to live Christ.

## A DEFINITION OF LIVING CHRIST

Both [Philippians 1:19-21](#) and [2:12-16](#) refer to the same thing. In [chapter one](#) Paul says that his circumstances will turn out to his salvation. Then instead of being put to shame, he will magnify Christ. This is to live Christ. In [chapter two](#) Paul charges us to work out our salvation according to God's operation within us. Then instead of murmuring and reasoning, we shall shine as luminaries, holding forth the word of life. [Philippians 2:12-16](#) is thus a definition of [1:19-21](#). In [1:19](#) we have the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. This Spirit is the very God who operates in us. Furthermore, to magnify Christ is to shine as luminaries without murmuring or reasoning, and to live Christ is to hold forth the word of life.

## SATURATED WITH THE WORD OF LIFE

This brings us to a crucial matter: to live Christ we must first receive the word of life and be constituted of it. If we would live Christ, we need to receive the Word into our being and allow it to saturate us. The more we are infused with the Word, the more we shall be transformed. Spontaneously our thought, love, aspiration, and

conversation will become Christ. The word of life infused into us will wash away the elements of culture and become the new constituent in our inner being. Then we shall live Christ.

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