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Crucifixion of the Self-Life

We see in Jonah a man who had to die to himself before he could do any real good. The great lesson of Jonah's life is the need for crucifixion of the self-life. In the story of Jonah we see God lovingly pursuing the selfish prophet. He caused his misfortune so that He could bless him, as He really wanted to.

This was Jonah's prime opportunity to die to self. That he did not surrender his will completely was his own fault. He speaks of that living tomb as the belly of Hades – the very bosom of death. The prayer he uttered certainly sounded like the voice of a man who meant what he said. And when he came forth it really did seem as if the old Jonah was going to be out of the picture henceforth. But as we see later, he was only half dead. God can use only a crucified person to preach about the crucified Savior.

When Jonah came out of the fish, he was ready to go anywhere

that God wanted him to go. When we are dead to self and sin we too will be ready to do what God commands. Our only question will be: "Lord, what will You have me do?"

Dead, but Only in Part

Despite all his suffering and humiliation we see that Jonah had only died in part. For a time he carried out God's commands. He warns the Ninevites of God's impending destruction and a great revival takes place. Everyone from the king to the lowest of his subjects is prostrate at the feet of Jehovah pleading for mercy. But the moment God hears their cry and disappoints Jonah's predictions of their destruction, the prophet breaks down and falls into a fit of petulance and anger. God had failed to do what He had threatened, thus destroying Jonah's reputation as a prophet. It was but another form of the self-life. A person may give up the selfishness that seeks its

gratification in the pleasures of the world, yet seek gratification of the same self-life in some religious form.

The orator, for example, as he holds spellbound the hearts of thousands as he tells them about Jesus and salvation, may be just as selfish and self-conscious as an actor on the stage or a politician on the rostrum who speaks only for personal triumph and ambition. Jonah's success was his snare. It led him to forget his Master's glory and the good of the people whom he was sent to save. God can never use anyone until the person has grace enough to forget him or herself entirely while doing God's work. He will not give His glory to another or share with the most valued instrument the praise that belongs to Jesus Christ alone. We can never succeed in our service for God until we learn to cast our own shadow behind us

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and lose ourselves in the honor and glory to our Master. It is said that Alexander the Great had a famous horse that nobody could ride. Alexander spent much time trying to break it. In the course of his efforts, he saw that the horse was afraid of its own shadow. Leaping into the saddle one day and turning the horse's head to the sun, he struck his spurs into the flanks of the noble steed and dashed off like lightning. From that moment on the fiery charger was thoroughly subdued and it never gave its master any trouble again. It could no longer see its own shadow. Oh, that we could look into the face of our Lord and forget forever ourselves? Then He could see us for His own glory and afford to share with us the glory and gladness of our work.

A.B. Simpson
"Christ In You"

Words from the wise...Self-Life...

The thing that we have to deny is self. The hardest thing to see and to crucify is our own self-confidence and self-will. We have to pass through many a painful incident and many a humiliating failure before we find it out and fully recognize it.

Self-Life...

We are helpless to perform any act of self-surrender or true consecration except by Him. We can pass sentence of death upon ourselves, we can yield up ourselves to the deathblow, but He must strike that blow, and we must trust Him to do it.

Self-Life...

All that God wants of any of us is room for Himself, the displacement of our self-consciousness and strength in sufficient measure to let Him have His way without resistance and interference.

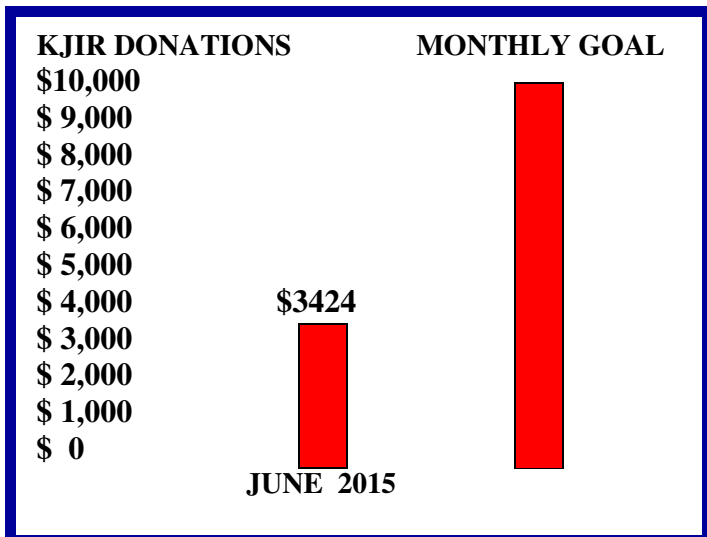
A.B. Simpson
"The Quotable Simpson"

"Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:" (Romans 6:8)

To "reckon" means to count upon a fact because it is so. Because you died with Christ at Calvary, and you have accepted His death in your behalf, you have the right, yea the duty, to count upon this fact in the tests of life when sin would overpower you. This admonition instructs you, therefore, to "be reckoning" (literally) yourself alive unto God because you died with Christ, and were raised up with Him to walk in "newness of life." Meditate upon this. Give yourself over to the Spirit in meditation until He sinks the wonderful truth of it into the depths of your soul. For the time being, look away from what you are, and consider the perfect, finished work that the Lord Jesus accomplished for you through His cross. Look away from your poor vacillating experience, revealing you in the natural to be one easily moved to discouragement, irritability, resentment, impatience, jealousy, or to any of the other man-centered characteristics. The absolute inevitability of death was provided for you there at Calvary for every circumstance of the earthly journey. Your past experience has not changed the fact of God's provision, but the fact of God's provision will mightily change your experience if you will yield to appropriate that fact by faith.

The redemptive work was finished. Christ died for our sins. We died in union with Him to sin, to all that came through the fall; and we were raised up with him, and were seated with Him in the heavenlies, and by His stripes we were healed. Moreover, through His death the devil was brought to naught. Nothing was left out in God's provision that would be necessary to a life of full overcoming. Only one thing must be added, and that is our appropriation of all of this by heart-faith, step by step, in all the circumstances of daily living. It is ours to choose whether or not we will thus yield to let the Gospel work in our lives for His glory.

~ Dorothy Gregg Wright~



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