



March 2002

Joy has started giving her own blood to be used for her back surgery in June...she has given 2 units of the 8 units needed. Joy is so precious to me, and I know it's the precious life of Christ who shines through her. As I have witnessed this life this month, I am reminded how Christ gave all of His own blood for me and Joy...and for you. I want to try to share in this newsletter some amazing truths regarding the blood of Christ that I believe He is showing me through all of this...truths that affirm the foundation of this ministry...and my life.

I am grateful to the testimony of these Scriptural truths in Ian Thomas' book *The Saving Life of Christ and the Mystery of Godliness* (Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI, 1988) and Jennifer Kennedy Dean's book *The Life-Changing Power of the Blood of Christ* (The Master's Touch Publishing, Independence, MO, 2000). I ventured out to begin sharing these truths with nine gracious men at Henderson County Correctional Center on March 21st, and they were so receptive. Romans 5:9-10 is so foundational:

*For if when we were enemies...
we have now been justified by His blood...reconciled to God through the death of His Son,
MUCH MORE, having been reconciled,
WE SHALL BE SAVED BY HIS LIFE.*

I would not hesitate to take Joy's place in the hospital. However, could I take the place for an enemy? That's exactly what Jesus did for me on the cross...I was His enemy seeking to do "good" while shunning God. **That's MERCY...me not getting what I do deserve.** But the gospel is even MUCH MORE than that...I am saved by the very life of Christ NOW. **That's GRACE...me getting what I don't deserve!**

My physical life is in my blood. I cannot survive without my own blood being produced in my bone marrow. Blood is the carrier of oxygen, the breath of life. And my physical identity is in my blood because my blood contains Gregg-DNA, which determines all of my physical attributes. I can now begin to understand Leviticus 17:11, "For the life of a creature is in the blood." Also I can begin to understand 1 Peter 1:19 that says I was "redeemed by the precious blood of Christ." His blood is so precious because it was His own precious, pure Life.

A Greek word translated "life" in the Bible is *BIOS*, and refers to physical life (the root for our words *biology* and *biography*). However [and this is so amazing ☺], there is another Greek word also translated "life" in the Bible but is a completely different word...*ZOE*...and it refers to the very life of God. John uses this word all through his gospel. When Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am THE Life," He is saying, "I am the *ZOE*, the only true life there is." Life does not exist apart from Christ. Everything else that claims to offer "life" (good works, successful ministry, wealth, health, happiness, etc.) is really death in disguise. Why? Because only the Son can give true life to you. Life must come from life.

The gospel is all about *ZOE* life - the very life of Christ - given to anyone who receives Him (John 1:12). My *BIOS* life - my body - is now the dwelling place of the *ZOE* life - Christ's Life! Before I trusted Christ, my *BIOS* was a body of death, totally void of any true life.

Now consider another amazing truth ☺. If I want my bone marrow to produce something other than Gregg-DNA, I would have to die and then to be born again a different person with different DNA. Physically, this is impossible. But spiritually, and actually, this is exactly what happened to me! Spiritually, and actually, my identity was IN ADAM, and I was headed for everlasting separation from God (Romans 5:12). However, by God's grace I was "crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:20) and was then reborn with His *ZOE* life! "For as IN ADAM all die, even so IN CHRIST all shall be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22)! Through the cross, God transferred me out of Adam (death) and into Christ (Life) (Colossians 1:13)! I don't understand this with my mind, but I believe God's Word with all my heart.

Romans 1:20 says God uses His created world to reveal His invisible attributes. I believe He uses His created blood to reveal the spiritual reality of the life-blood of Christ flowing through a Christian. Hebrews 4:12 relates the "spirit" (the "heart") of man (where Christ dwells) to "marrow." So, my true life (Christ's life) comes from my "spirit-marrow" and flows through my "spirit-veins." **Therefore, we are reconciled to God by the DEATH OF CHRIST FOR US on the cross (His earth-blood), AND MUCH MORE we are saved by the LIFE OF CHRIST IN US moment by moment (His Spirit-blood)!** I hope my paraphrase of Galatians 2:20 on the back is an encouraging summary.

GRACE NOTE

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have the LIFE (*ZOE*) of Christ who has no beginning and no end (John 3:16).

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ;
it is no longer I who live,
but Christ lives in me;
and the life which I now live in the body
I live by faith in the Son of God,
who loved me and gave Himself for me.

My testimony and paraphrase of Galatians 2:20:

*I have been crucified with Christ...
...the old Gregg is dead! He's really dead I'm telling you!
My spirit-marrow no longer produces Adam-life...that old sinner life!
I was raised in Christ to be a new creation with new spiritual DNA...
the spiritual DNA of Christ Himself!
My new heart – my new spirit-marrow – now produces only Jesus-life!
That's why God says I am no longer a sinner.
I am trusting Christ's life – His pure Spirit-blood – to flow through me
flushing out contaminants left over from my old life!
The life I now live in this body is Jesus' life in me...
...He's the treasure in my earthen vessel.
His life-blood - His Spirit-blood - flows through me...
...to others...for God's glory!
He gave His life, what more could He do?!
Oh, how He loves you and me!*

It is truly a joy to grow in experiencing Christ living His life and giving His life through me to others...teaching a Grace Life Conference with Christ Life Ministries to 25 people at Brevard Community Church on March 8-9...teaching the Bible study at the Henderson County Correctional Center on March 21...simply sharing with people, including someone who wants to be equipped through Christ Life Ministries to "minister grace, rest, and hope to troubled women"...praying for family and friends...reckoning on the Truth and the Life when things are good but also when things are often so difficult and demanding.

Here is a picture of my Joy and me at the Golden Gate Bridge when we went out to see the doctor in February who will perform her back surgery on June 6th. The photo was taken by a couple who opened up their lives to us in San Francisco, to whom we are so grateful.

