

Victorious Living - Now or Then?

written by Tim Jennings, M.D. | January 8, 2010



I am in tune with the trust and healing model of atonement and posted this on-line:

"Those who believe on Christ and obey His commandments are not under bondage to God's law; for to those who believe and obey, His law is not a law of bondage, but of liberty.

Everyone who believes on Christ, everyone who relies on the keeping power of a risen Saviour that has suffered the penalty pronounced upon the transgressor, everyone who resists temptation and in the midst of evil copies the pattern given in the Christ life, will through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ become a partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Everyone who by faith obeys God's commandments will reach the condition of.....((((SINLESSNESS)))))))..... in which Adam lived before his transgression. {HP 146.5}

Someone countered with:

As we have CLEARER views of Christ's spotless and infinite purity, we shall feel as did Daniel, when he beheld the glory of the Lord, and said, "My comeliness was turned in me into corruption." We CANNOT say, "I am sinless," TILL this vile body is CHANGED and

fashioned like unto His glorious body. But if we constantly seek to follow Jesus, the blessed HOPE is ours of standing before the throne of God without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; complete in Christ, robed in his righteousness and perfection.” ST, March 23, 1888 par. 13

What do you think of the above? What is your present position? Do you believe from Bible...that any authentic/consecrated Christians can/will stop sinning before 2nd coming? I am not speaking of clerical mistakes or whatever.

J

Wow, what a question – one I have heard hotly debated by Christians my entire life. Do the saved live victoriously over sin before Christ comes or do they live in continual sinful living right up to the moment He appears in the clouds?

It is clear from scripture that this mortal doesn't put on immortality or this corruption incorruption until Christ comes again (1Cor 15:53,54). We will not live in the fully glorified state Adam had prior to the fall until Christ appears and transforms us. So, sinlessness in the first passage cannot be referring to living free from the effect sin has had on nature (Romans 8:22). We will still suffer with aches, pains, disease, bad hearing, poor eyesight, etc. until Christ comes and heals our bodies fully. This would mean our brains will not be fully restored to God's original ideal until the second coming. Therefore persons with Alzheimer's, stroke, schizophrenia, OCD, ADHD etc. will still have brains with biological problems interfering with perfect function. We will not be in the perfect physical state Adam was until Christ appears in the clouds and clothes us with immortality. So sinless living doesn't mean living without the impact of sin on our lives. This may also give insight into the second paragraph as we see ever more clearly God's design for humanity we see how devastated we are physically from sin's assault upon this creation.

But ultimately the passages are not merely about the physical impact of sin on creation. They are about character, heart, mind, the true identity and individuality of a person. Will Christians experience a transformation of character so they are actually like Christ in heart/mind/attitude and life prior to His coming? Or will they continue to live with hearts/minds/attitudes and lives that are sinful and like the unconverted?

The Scripture teaches a clear expectation of victorious living:

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Romans 6:1,2

The Messiah came to save us from our sins, not in our sins:

She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. MT 1:21

So how do we bring balance? As I understand it the sin problem is a problem of the heart and mind which manifests in our behavior and lives. Thus the acts of sin are the symptoms of sinful hearts. Jesus said in Matthew five that the real problem in adultery is not merely the behavior but the lust in the

heart that leads to the behavior. Therefore, in the New Covenant God puts His law in our hearts and minds. We are recreated internally, in our thinking, heart desires, motives to be like Christ! This recreation of heart and mind happens before Christ returns. Without such recreation prior to His return we would not rejoice to see Him. In fact, those who don't experience such renewal run and hide from Him because they don't love and trust Him.

And what is the ultimate root transformation that takes place in the heart? The fear based, selfish, survival of the fittest, watch out for me instinct, which all humans are born with since Adam's fall, is replaced with perfect other centered love. This is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit applying Christ's achievements to our hearts and minds. This happens before Christ returns for those ready to meet Him are described in these words:

They did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Rev 12:11

Notice they no longer seek to save self, or are self-centered, or selfish but instead are willing to lay down their lives that others might live!

We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death...This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. 1Jn3:14,16

Those who are ready to meet Jesus will, prior to His return, experience such a close relationship with Him that His love will free them from fear for self. They will love God and others more than themselves and will no longer seek to exploit others to protect self, but rather they will give their lives for others. Yet as they come closer and closer to Christ they recognize more acutely the difference between their natural heart and His purity and even though they feel unworthy of His goodness and grace are simultaneously changed to be just like Him.

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 1Jn 3:2

What an awesome day that will be! Let's keep our eyes fixed on Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith!