

Do Christians Have Two Natures?

*“If a house is divided against itself,
it cannot stand.” Mark 3:25*

Many born again Christians believe they have two natures within them, a new Christ-like nature and an old sinful nature, which war against each other. They believe that their new nature loves God and wants to practice righteousness, but that their old nature loves sin and wants to practice lawlessness. They think that their Christian life reflects whichever of these two conflicting natures they yield themselves to the most. However, this “tale of two natures” is not Biblically true. This falsehood is one of the greatest deceptions the devil has ever foisted on the church. Many Christians have become overcome by sin and hopelessly discouraged because they have swallowed this lie, while countless others have become deceived by this lie and their own self-righteousness into thinking that, through willpower and self-discipline, they can stop practicing sin.

The Bible says that every person is born with a fallen spiritual nature, which we inherited from our spiritual ancestor Adam. This inner sinful nature, which the Bible also refers to as the old man or the old self, is hostile and rebellious to God. Since this is man’s inward nature before he is born again of the Spirit, it controls man’s attitudes and actions and compels man to sin. This sinful nature is like a “sin factory” inside unregenerate man that continuously produces sinful thoughts and behavior that are alien and hostile to God. Since we were born into sin and were, therefore, sinners by nature, God’s plan of redemption was to get rid of the “sinner” or “sin factory” within us. Therefore, when we were born again, God spiritually immersed us into Christ’s death (Romans 6:3-4). The Scriptures are very clear on this fact: when Christ died, we died with Him (Romans 6:7-8; 2 Corinthians 5:14; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 2:20; 3:3; 2 Timothy 2:11).

Contrary to the faulty theology currently taught in many churches today, born again believers do not have two natures. The Bible says, “For we know that our old man was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin (*our sinful nature*) might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin (Romans 6:6).” Our sinful nature died and was removed from us when we were born again. The apostle Paul taught that since our old sinful nature is dead and gone, we have been freed from the power of sin. “For he who has died has been freed from sin (Romans 6:7).” This Biblical fact is so fundamental to our Christian faith that God has ordained the practice of water baptism for new believers to always remind the church of this powerful truth of Christ’s Atonement. When we are buried (or immersed) under water during baptism, this act of

faith outwardly demonstrates that our old sinful nature died and was removed from us. The Bible says, "Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death (Romans 6:4)."

This truth is basic to our Christian faith. However, if we do not believe this Biblical truth of Christ's Atonement to the point that we *act* on it, we will not experience the divine provision that Christ died to give us. For example, if we do not believe and *act* on the Biblical truth that Christ's death on the cross has completely removed the penalty of our sins, we will not experience freedom from the condemnation of sin. In the same way, if we do not believe and *act* on the Biblical truth that Christ's death on the cross has completely removed our sinful nature, we will not experience freedom from the power of sin. The Bible says, "For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard (Hebrews 4:2)." We simply cannot walk in sanctification and grow into spiritual maturity in Christ if we do not believe and act on this fundamental truth of the gospel of Christ.

Since Romans 6:6 plainly states that our old sinful nature was crucified and *done away with* through Christ's death on the cross, the devil has fabricated two other deceptive variations to the lie that Christians have two natures, in order to subvert the truth and power of the cross of Christ. The first variation of this lie alleges that even if a Christian's sinful nature has died, it was never completely destroyed and removed from him when he was born again. In other words, this devilish fabrication promotes the false idea that a Christian's sinful nature is not irrevocably dead and extinct, but instead resides in a Christian much like an idle and dormant volcano, which can spontaneously erupt into life and cause destruction and havoc in your life at any time. There is absolutely no Scriptural support for this falsehood, which is aimed at keeping Christians fearful and captive to sin, so that they cannot walk in the fullness of Christ's life and power. There are a dozen Scripture verses that plainly state we have died with Christ. The New Testament Greek word used in many of these verses is *apothnesko*, which means expired or died and conveys a sense of finality – of being very dead. For example, in Romans 6:7-8, the apostle Paul declared, "Because anyone who has *died* has been freed from sin... we have *died* with Christ." Based on the New Testament Greek, this is clearly not just conceptual or symbolic, nor is it merely a figurative or positional death. Our sinful Adam nature, which was at the very core of our inner being and the root of our self-identity and rebellion toward God, actually died when we received Christ into our heart; it was not merely rendered idle or inactive.

There is yet a second variation to the lie that born again Christians have two natures. This second fabrication alleges that even if a Christian no longer has a sinful nature, he still has the malignant presence and power of sin dwelling in his physical body. Once

again, there is absolutely no Scriptural support for this falsehood, which is also aimed at keeping Christians fearful and captive to sin. Some Christians are confused when they read Romans Chapter Seven and think perhaps the person being described in this passage is a Christian who has two conflicting natures – a good and evil nature. However, Paul wrote this particular chapter to his fellow Jewish brethren (see Romans 7:1) to convince them that in Christ, they died not only to the ungodly yoke of sin, they also died to the unbearable yoke of the Old Covenant Mosaic Law. In this chapter, Paul describes the frustration and anguish of a person who wants to obey God but cannot do so because of his sinful nature. Finally, at the end of Chapter Seven, this miserable person cries out, “I am a wretched man! Who will set me free from this body of death (*this sinful nature*)? (Romans 7:24).” Based on his own personal experience, Paul then triumphantly reveals who has freed us from our sinful nature. Paul declares, “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! (Romans 7:25).” When reading Romans Chapter Seven, it is important to remember that Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans in the Greek language, a precise and expressive language which often strategically uses the *present* tense to dramatically describe a *past* action and experience. In Chapter Seven, Paul made effective use of this *historical present* tense, as it is called in the Greek language, to vividly describe the futility and misery of a person who wants to serve God but finds himself continually frustrated and sabotaged by his rebellious sinful nature because he is not born again. In writing this chapter, Paul drew from his own past personal experience as a devout Pharisee before he became a born again Christian. We should also point out that if a person is born again but mistakenly believes he still has a sinful nature, then he will also subconsciously (if not consciously) think that he is still captive to the all-consuming power of sin and inwardly think of himself as a hopelessly chronic sinner.

God knew that man’s sinful nature was his Achilles heel, which Satan could use to continually snare him in sin. This is why the Old Covenant could not accomplish God’s eternal purpose since man’s sinful nature prevented him from truly obeying God’s commandments. Therefore, what the Mosaic Law was powerless to do because of our sinful nature, God did in the New Covenant by sending His Son who perfectly fulfilled the Law and became sin on our behalf when He was crucified, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Christ (Romans 8:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Not understanding the purpose and meaning of Romans Chapter Seven, some Christians cite Romans 7:17 (“sin... dwells in me”) to justify their mistaken belief that the evil presence and power of sin still resides in a Christian’s physical body. However as we said earlier, Paul was describing a person who is not born again, yet wants to obey God and cannot do so because of his sinful nature. Also we must ask: where does this spiritually cancerous sin dwell in our physical body after we are born again? Is it in our hands and feet? Jesus said, “If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away from

you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than to have two hands or two feet and be cast into the eternal fire (Matthew 18:8).” However, Jesus did not mean that sin resides in our physical body like a malignant tumor and we must now amputate our hands and feet to become free of sin. Jesus meant we must decisively stop (cut off) practicing sin if we want to be His disciples and enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus revealed where sin resides in unregenerate man when He said, “From within, *out of the heart of men*, proceed evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting, and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within man and defile the man (Mark 7:21-23).” Once again, Jesus did not mean that sin resides in our physical heart; otherwise we would need a physical heart transplant to be freed from sin. Jesus meant that sin dwells in man’s unregenerate spiritual heart. Everyone was born with a heart of sin (a sinful nature); this was our spiritual condition before we were born again (Psalm 51:5). Therefore, God’s solution was to perform a divine heart transplant to save man from the cancerous power of sin and certain death and doom. When His Son died on the cross, God exchanged our terminally sin-sick heart with His Son’s divine heart (Romans 6:6; Colossians 2:11). The Bible says, “God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts (Galatians 4:6).” By this divine heart transplant, God completely delivered us from all indwelling sin, so that Christ could now dwell in us by His Spirit. This is the miracle of our new birth, made possible by the divine operation of the cross of Christ. Although our physical body will age and die because of sin’s effect upon the human race, this does not mean that evil now indwells our physical body as a malignant power that can cause us to sin. The Bible clearly and emphatically declares that the presence of sin does not indwell the body of a born again believer. The Scriptures testify that, after you are saved, you are now a “new man, which has been created in the likeness of God in righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:24),” and “your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you (1 Corinthians 6:19).”

One of the main reasons why Christians mistakenly think they still have a sinful nature is because they continue to practice sin. Since our sinful Adam nature is dead and gone, then why do we continue to sin? The Bible says the reason why Christians continue to sin is because their minds have not yet been spiritually renewed by the truth of God’s Word. Although our *Adam sinful nature* is dead, our *Adam way of thinking* (our unrenewed mind) will still continue in the habit of worldly thinking and sinning until it is transformed by God’s Spirit of truth. More specifically, our mind needs to be transformed by God’s Word to the point that we act consistently on the truth that our sinful nature died with Christ and we have, therefore, been freed from sin. Paul taught, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is (Romans 12:2).” He also exhorted

believers to “be made new in the attitude of your mind... take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ... and put on the new man (*your new mind*) who is being renewed to a true knowledge in the image of God who created him (Ephesians 4:23; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Colossians 3:10).” In other words, our unbelieving, sinful attitudes need to be transformed and converted to Christ’s attitudes. The Bible calls this process of renewal, by which we “put off” or “put to death” our unconverted soulish attitudes and behavior, and “put on” the mind of Christ and His attitudes and behavior, the practice of sanctification. Paul wrote, “Therefore, brethren, we have an obligation, not to the flesh (*our unconverted soul-life*), for if you are living according to the flesh (*your unconverted soul-life*), you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live... put to death, therefore, whatever is soulish: immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire and greed... those who belong to Christ Jesus have put to death on the cross their flesh (*their unconverted soul-life*) with its passions and desires (Romans 8:12-13; Colossians 3:5; Galatians 5:24).” As we present ourselves each day to God as a living and holy sacrifice, and believe and act on the truth of His Word that we are “dead to sin but alive to God,” we can count on the Holy Spirit to transform our soul-life into Christ’s likeness.

We should always remember that there is a great difference between the sinful nature and the unrenewed mind. The unrenewed mind does not have the same spiritual power as the sinful nature. Our old sinful nature was like a continuously operating “sin factory” that had to be destroyed by Christ’s death on the cross before we could be freed from slavery to sin. The unrenewed mind or unconverted soul, on the other hand, is simply our soulish mindset, which the Holy Spirit within us can now transform, if we live by faith in the truth and power of the cross (Romans 1:17; 1 Corinthians 1:17-18). Since we have become united with Christ in His death and resurrection, we no longer have the presence and power of sin indwelling us; we now have the presence and power of Christ indwelling us. If we believe and act on this divine truth of Christ’s completed work on the cross, we no longer have to practice sin because we have been freed from sin and Christ now lives in us. The Bible says, “No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed abides in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God (1 John 3:9).”

The devilish lie that Christians still have the malignant presence of sin residing somewhere in their natural body is just another devious way of saying Christians still possess a sinful nature. Those who mistakenly think that a born again Christian still has a sinful nature sometimes justify their opinion by focusing on the interpretation of one Greek word, *katargeo*, as it appears in Romans 6:6: “For we know that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin (*our sinful nature*) might be *done away with* (*katargeo*), so that we would no longer be slaves to sin.” In this verse, the New

American Standard Bible translates the Greek word *katargeo* by the phrase, "done away with." This is an appropriate translation within this Scriptural context since our old sinful nature died and was buried (done away with) by our baptism (immersion) into Christ's death. The King James Version translates *katargeo* in this verse as "*destroyed*," which also fits this Scriptural context since our sinful nature (the sin factory) was destroyed by Christ's death on the cross. However, those who mistakenly believe that the sinful nature still resides within a born again Christian think the word *katargeo* should be translated as "inactive" or "idle." In other words, they think the sinful nature is just sitting "idle" in a Christian, and that a Christian can unwittingly "reactivate" their old sinful nature whenever they commit a sin.

However, this is neither Scriptural nor logical. A careful review of the twenty-seven times that *katargeo* is used in New Testament reveals that "*done away with*" or "*destroyed*" is the proper translation of *katargeo* in Romans 6:6. In fact, *katargeo* might be accurately and more clearly translated as "*removed*." This is exactly how *katargeo* is translated in 2 Corinthians 3:14 to describe how the Old Covenant veil that blinds Jews to seeing Jesus as their Messiah is removed (*katargeo*) whenever someone turns to Christ. This veil certainly is not rendered just inactive or idle; it is taken away! With this in view, the Old Covenant prophet Ezekiel foretold of the divine heart transplant that God would perform in the New Covenant: "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will *remove* your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26)." The Bible here does not need any subjective interpretation; it is very clear. God, through His prophet Ezekiel, declared that our old heart of stone (our sinful nature) would be *removed* in the New Covenant!

The Bible says we have died with Christ (Romans 6:8; 2 Corinthians 5:14; Colossians 2:20; 3:3); we were buried with Christ (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12); and we were raised with Christ (Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 2:12; 3:1). Consider this divine fact: resurrection means to be raised from the dead. Just as Christ was raised from the dead, we were raised from the dead with Him. Therefore, we had to die and be buried before we could be raised from the dead. Water baptism outwardly demonstrates this divine truth when we were buried in a watery "grave." But when we died with Christ, who died and was then buried? Was it our physical body? Of course not! We know that our physical body did not die when we received Christ. Was it our soul? Certainly not! We know that our soul (our personality - our will, intellect and emotions) did not die when we received Christ. Yet, the Bible clearly states that we died with Christ when we were born again. Then who died? According to the Bible, our sinful nature died. The question we must ask ourselves is this: do we believe what the Bible says, that as born again believers, our sinful nature was put to death and removed from us? Do we believe this Biblical truth to the point that we act on it? When faced with the temptation

to sin, do we believe this divine truth to the point that we resist sin by believing that we have been delivered from sin's power because we have died to sin and no longer have sinful nature?

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul confirms the Biblical truth that our sinful nature was removed when we were born again. Here, Paul uses the picture of circumcision to describe what happened to our sinful nature when we were saved. "In Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, *in the removal of the sinful nature*, by the circumcision of Christ (Colossians 2:11)." We can say with absolute certainty that when someone is circumcised, their foreskin is definitely removed! It is not left attached in just an idle or dormant manner to continually cause infection and disease. Therefore, in this passage of Scripture (Colossians 2:11), Paul declares our sinful nature has been removed in Christ. Paul then shifts in the very next verse (Colossians 2:12) from the Old Covenant seal of righteousness (circumcision) to the New Covenant seal of righteousness (baptism) to further demonstrate that our old sinful nature was removed. Paul logically states that since our old sinful nature died and was removed (verse 11), it was then disposed of by burial: "Having been buried with Him in baptism and raised with Him through your faith in the power of God, who raised Him from the dead (verse 12)." Thus, by linking Old Covenant circumcision with New Covenant baptism, Paul leaves no doubt that the death and removal of the sinful nature (as portrayed by circumcision) is also portrayed by the burial stage of water baptism. Again, we can say with absolute certainty, that when someone dies and is buried, their dead body is definitely removed and buried! In this way, water baptism confirms (just as circumcision also did) that our sinful nature not only died, but was definitely removed from us when we were born again. Thus both the Old Covenant and New Covenant clearly portray what happened to our sinful nature when we were born again of the Spirit.

The Bible says, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he (Proverbs 23:7)." In other words, a man speaks and acts based on who he is – in his inner being. This is why Jesus said that a man's sinful thoughts and deeds originated from out of his unregenerate, sinful heart (Matthew 15:18-19). This was our spiritual identity before we were saved: we were sinners by nature and no matter how hard we tried, we could not escape our identity problem. God's divine solution to our identity crisis was to get rid of the "sinner" – the "sin factory" within us. This is the Biblical truth: when you were born again, God changed your inward identity. He removed your sinful nature and Christ now lives in you by His Spirit (Colossians 1:27). The Bible says, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new person; his old being is gone, a new life has begun! (2 Corinthians 5:17)." If you persistently believe this truth, your new Christ-like attitudes and actions will spring from out of your new identity - who you are in Christ! You are no longer a

sinner by nature, you are now a new person in Christ. You can resist the temptation to sin by believing and acting on this Biblical truth. Remember that faith is not a feeling, it is a decision to believe God and take Him at His Word. Therefore, you can overcome your old sinful habits by simply making a decision to believe in this truth of the cross that God has given you a new spiritual identity in Christ. We are not hopelessly chronic sinners! We are saints - holy ones – who are dead to sin and alive to God because we no longer have a sinful nature, and we now have Christ’s holy nature dwelling in us. This Biblical truth is our God-given “Declaration of Independence” from the tyranny of sin, which Jesus Christ died on the cross for us to possess.

God does not mix what is holy with what is unholy. God would never pour His Holy Spirit into an unholy vessel containing a sinful nature. Jesus said, “No one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, he pours new wine into new wineskins (Mark 2:22).” The reason God is able to pour His Holy Spirit (His new wine) into our hearts is because He made us a new creation - a new wineskin in Christ - and we no longer have an old sinful nature within us. The Bible says, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! (2 Corinthians 5:17). Once again, remember that before God could make us a new spiritual creation (born into Christ), He had to first deal with our old spiritual creation (that we inherited from Adam). Therefore, He not only dealt with its bad fruit (our sinful actions) by forgiving our sins; He also got rid of its bad root (by removing our sinful nature).

There are only two kinds of people who would insist that they have a sinful nature. The first person is an unbeliever who really does have a sinful nature because he has never been born again of the Holy Spirit. Even if that person falsely claims to be a Christian, he is still a prisoner to the power of sin because he still has a sinful nature (John 8:34-44). The second person is a born again Christian who does not believe that God ever removed his sinful nature from him when he was saved. Since he refuses to believe God’s Word, he still inwardly thinks he is a prisoner to sin even though Christ died to free him from sin (Romans 7:17-25). The word of the cross can only free a Christian from sin if they believe and *act* on it. Jesus said, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free (John 8:32). It is very evident in this particular Scriptural passage that Jesus was specifically referring here to being freed from slavery to sin (see John 8:34). Therefore, the unbeliever is a wretched and miserable person because he has a sinful nature and is in bondage to sin - even if he is outwardly religious; whereas the *unbelieving* believer is a wretched and miserable person because he erroneously thinks he still has a sinful nature and, therefore, continues to experience bondage to sin. Remember that the unbelieving “believer” may not be aware he is poor, wretched and

miserable because he may be blinded and deceived into thinking he is spiritually rich and in need of nothing (Revelation 3:17). As God said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6)." This mistaken thinking and resulting spiritual deception and defeat stems from ignorance and unbelief concerning the power of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. Jesus said, "Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not understand the Scriptures or the power of God (Mark 12:24)?"

Unfortunately, the false belief that born again Christians still have a sinful nature also provides a religious excuse and cover for those Christians who want to keep sinning. As Paul warned, "You were called to be free, but do not use your freedom as an opportunity to indulge in sin (Galatians 5:13)." And Peter warned, "Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God (1 Peter 2:16)." Anyone who teaches that Christians have two conflicting inner natures of good and evil, or that God never actually removed our sinful nature through Christ's death, is impeding the church from entering into Christ's fullness and God's eternal purpose. Once again, some teach this falsehood out of spiritual ignorance, but others deliberately teach it because they themselves knowingly and willfully practice sin. In their case, Jesus' warning is appropriate, "Woe to you... for you have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering (Luke 11:52)."

When God completed His divine heart transplant through Christ's death on the cross, He did not leave us with two hearts or two natures. If God had left a sinful nature within us, we would be divided in heart and mind. We would be constantly conflicted with two opposing natures and never be able to stand up to Satan's attacks and temptations. Jesus said, "If a house is divided against itself, it cannot stand (Mark 3:25)." If we still had a sinful nature, the devil would always have a spiritual foothold of sin within us to deceive and defeat us. This would have been an incomplete and pitiful salvation that would only be effective to overcome sin and the devil in heaven - not on earth where we need the victory most! But thank God that Christ's death on the cross has given us complete victory over sin! By the cross, Jesus Christ triumphed over the devil and sin. The Bible says, "And having disarmed the (*spiritual*) powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross (Colossians 2:15)." Thus God, by His Son's death on the cross, delivered us not only from the penalty of sin; He also delivered us from the power of sin and the dominion of Satan, by destroying and removing our sinful nature, so that His Son's Spirit could dwell in us and empower us. Jesus Christ has freed us from sin's power by His death on the cross so that we do not need to practice sin. However, many Christians still believe they have a sinful nature and, therefore, continue to live in sin. Of this grievous

situation, Paul declared, "Shall we continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized (*immersed*) into Christ Jesus have been baptized (*immersed*) into His death? (Romans 6:1-3)." In other words, "Do you not know that you have died to sin, and sin does not have to be master over you anymore?"

Jesus is the first born of God's new creation, His church. Jesus did not have a sinful nature. He was born with a human body and He had a human soul (his personality, will and emotions). However, since Jesus was born of a virgin and God was His Father and indwelt Him, He did not inherit Adam's sinful nature like we did. This is why He was able to obey God and live a sinless life. This is why Jesus said that Satan had no hold on Him (John 16:30). Now that we have been born of God, we no longer have a sinful nature and Satan no longer has a foothold in us. As the body of Christ, we too are capable of obeying God and not practicing sin, if we live by faith in the Son of God who died for us and now lives in us (Galatians 2:20). This is true liberating theology – because this is the gospel of Jesus Christ!

To sum up, the Bible is clear that when we were born again, our sinful nature died. The Bible is equally clear that our sinful nature not only died, it was completely removed from us. Our unholy sinful nature is dead and gone! How can we possibly be betrothed as a pure holy virgin to our bridegroom, Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2), if we still have an adulterous, evil, sinful nature lurking somewhere within our body, which lusts to commit spiritual adultery and rebellion toward God? Christ does not share His body, His church, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit, with the malignant presence and power of sin. If we preach and teach anything less than the complete *removal* of our sinful nature by the power of Christ's crucifixion, we are guilty of not proclaiming the true gospel of Jesus Christ and treating as unclean the holy blood of Christ (Hebrews 10:26-31). The gospel truth is this: Christ's Spirit alone lives within us, and our mind can now be spiritually renewed and our soul transformed if we believe and act on the power of the cross of Christ. Therefore, we preach and teach the gospel that we are now a holy, new creation in Christ, born of the Spirit and partakers of God's divine nature (2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 1:27; 1 Peter 1:4).

Many Christians do not realize the full significance and redemptive power of God's gift of eternal salvation. The gift of salvation is priceless; it was paid for us by the blood of Christ, the Lamb of God. God has given us the gift of total salvation and complete freedom from sin – not only forgiveness for all our sinful deeds by His Son's death, but also deliverance from all the power of sin by including us (that is, our sinful nature) in His Son's death, so that Christ could sovereignly live in us. However, if we reject this precious gift of Christ's life, which God has entrusted within us as a heavenly treasure, by holding onto the false belief that we still have a sinful nature in us and then use this

falsehood as an excuse to practice sin, God will reject us. "From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be required... so take care how you listen (*hear and obey*); for whoever has, to him more shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him (Luke 12:48; 8:18)." Only those Christians who receive this word of the cross by faith and wholeheartedly obey it will experience true freedom from sin and be able to faithfully serve God as His bondservants (Romans 6:17-22). Therefore, we pray that God would open the eyes of every believer's heart to see what Jesus Christ has fully accomplished for us on the cross. This is the gospel that Paul proclaimed and this was his personal testimony: "I (*my old self*) have been crucified with Christ and I (*my sinful nature*) no longer live but Christ lives in me; and the life that I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself up for me (Galatians 2:20)."

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