

We Must Die If We Are To Live

“Let me die – lest I die – only let me see Thy face.”

That was the prayer of St. Augustine.

To die that we might **not** die!

There is no contradiction here, for there are before us two kinds of dying.

A dying to be sought and a dying to be avoided at any cost.

To Augustine the sight of God in his mind’s eye was life itself, and anything less than that was death.

To experience the presence of our Creator God in our lives is to experience highest joy and fulfilment.

Nothing that society or this world offers can come near to the special presence of our Creator God by the anointing of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

To Augustine whatever hid God’s face, God’s presence, from him must be taken out of the way.

What would have hid God’s face from Augustine?

Isaiah 59:1-3 [NIV] *“Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. For your hands are stained with blood, your fingers with guilt. Your lips have spoken lies, and your tongue mutters wicked things.”*

Our sins, that is, our unloving acts, words and attitudes of mind, our pride and self-righteousness.

Even his own self-love, his dearest ego, his most cherished treasures.

So Augustine prayed *“let me die”*.

Augustine’s daring prayer was heard and as might be expected, was answered fully by God.

How did Augustine die?

Augustine died the kind of death that Paul testified was his.

Galatians 2:20 [NIV] *“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”*

The “I” in Paul’s life died, Paul gave up his will to live out the will of God in his life.

Just as Jesus Christ did to the end of His physical life.

Luke 22:39-42 [NIV] *“Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. On reaching the place, he said to them, “Pray that you will not fall into temptation.” He withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”*

Paul’s life and ministry continued and his presence is always there in his letters, in the church, in history, but his own personality is strangely transparent, it is scarcely seen.

What does shine through Paul is the light of Jesus the Christ with a kind of healing splendour.

Romans 6:1-4 [NIV] *“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?** Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”*

Baptism, by complete immersion, is an outward sign of what has happened in our mind and heart, unless this has happened baptism is a hollow sign of self-righteousness.

Romans 6:5-8 [NIV] *“For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin, because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.”*

Our “old self” the old Adamic human nature can only be conquered on the cross, it has to be crucified.

Crucifixion is a very painful and drawn-out death, we don’t crucify our old nature overnight, we have to persistently put ourselves back on the cross to fully accomplish this task.

In every Christian’s heart there is a cross and a throne.

We are still on our throne until we put ourselves on the cross.

If we refuse to be crucified on the cross we remain on the throne of our own pride and ego.

Romans 12:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, **in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.”***

We sacrifice ourselves on the cross out of pure gratitude of what Jesus Christ did for us on His cross.

Too often we want salvation but we insist that Jesus does all the dying.

We want to remain king within our little kingdom and wear our tinsel crown with all the pride of a Caesar; but by such an action we doom ourselves to the shadows of weakness and spiritual sterility.

Romans 12:2 [NIV] *“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, **but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.** Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

To become a living sacrifice we have to have complete re-making of our mind.

Our new mind will be God-centred not self-centred.

Only then will we know what God’s Will for us is.

What is the will of God?

Genesis 1:26 [NIV] *“Then God said let us make man in our image, in our likeness.”*

“Image” – a shadow not the real thing. All humans are created in the image of God.

“Likeness” – one and the same, a child and character. Character is not instantly created, it is learnt by association.

God the Father invites us to become His eternal children with the same character as His.

We learn this through an intimate relationship with God by the active indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

If we are **not** willing to allow our will to die now in this physical life we will be forfeiting eternal treasures.

Our un-crucified flesh will rob us now of purity of heart, Christ-like character, spiritual insight and fruitfulness.

But most of all, it will deny us the special presence of God in our life, hiding from our mind's eye the vision of God's face, His glory and majesty.

Let us all willingly be crucified with our Saviour Jesus the Christ.