

Are We Negative Or Positive Christians?

Which of the following is the basis of our Christian life?

We are saved **from** eternal death by accepting the sacrifice of our Saviour Jesus Christ, as a substitute for our own deserved death.

Or are we saved **to** live a new life?

One attitude is negative, the other is positive.

Saved from

John 3:16-17 [NIV] *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall **not perish** but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to **save** the world through him.”*

This is the starting point of every Christian life.

Acts 4:12 [NIV] *“Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be **saved**.”*

Accepting Jesus Christ as our Saviour is the only way we can be saved **from** eternal death.

Romans 5:9 [NIV] *“Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be **saved from** God’s wrath through him!”*

Saved **from** God’s righteous wrath because of our sins.

In the Church of England book of common worship this is the pattern for worship services every week, the main direction the service takes is indwelling.

Confession of personal sins and a cry for God’s mercy and deliverance from the penalty of sin, so that we may **receive** eternal life.

All the above comes under the heading “*saved from*.”

There is in the offering prayer the mention of it being used for “*the service of your world to the glory of your name*.”

But this is impersonal, give your money and your commitment is concluded.

Also for the blessing for Pentecost the prayer is for the congregation to be “*strengthened to proclaim the word and works of God*.”

But very little, if anything, is proclaimed as to how these very limited statements are to be fulfilled.

The congregation leaves feeling that their part in the work of God is fulfilled, no further commitment until next Sunday.

Or are they left in a vacuum?

Is this all there is to a Christian life?

This sudden obliteration of our familiar past sins, as enlarged above, must **not** leave us in a vacuum but spur us to positive action every moment of our daily life.

The spiritual life **cannot** feed on negatives.

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.”*

This is our “*spiritual*” act of worship.

The Greek word translated “*bodies*” is “*soma*” which refers to the whole body, mind and human spirit.

The Old Testament sacrifice referred to in this passage by Paul, was the sin sacrifice in which the total animal was consumed on the altar.

This represents the total sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Note it is to be a “*living sacrifice*” – also referring to the resurrected back to eternal life of Jesus Christ.

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.”*

We worship God in spirit by the total crucifixion and burial of our old sinful life to live a new life.

Romans 6:5-8 [NIV] *“If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. 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.”*

A life that is devoted to serving God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Romans 6:9-13 [NIV] *“For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, **he lives to God.** In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.”*

Live as a cleansed servant of our Saviour and Creator God.

Romans 6:18 [NIV] *“You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.”*

Slaves, the Greek word refers to “*bond slaves*” who had **no** personal rights only personal responsibilities.

Romans 6:19 [NIV] *“I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.”*

This action on our part will lead to “holiness”, that is the character of our Creator God that all of His created children must have.

1 Peter 1:14-16 [NIV] “As obedient children, **do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.** But just as he who called you is holy, so **be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”**”

Every thought and action in our new life is to be that of our holy Heavenly Father and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

What does this involve?

Colossians 3:12-14 [NIV] “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, **clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.** Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. **And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.**”

These are characteristics that we of our own power **cannot** generate in our lives, **only** the indwelling of the Holy Spirit can accomplish this transformation.

Galatians 5:22-25 [NIV] “**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.** Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. **Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.**”

When we have an intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit, who is God, these godlike characteristics will “rub off” on us.

How is this “rubbing off” accomplished?

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.”

By the transforming [making new] our mind that will then understand what the personal will of God for us is.

Ephesians 2:8-10 [NIV] “**For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no-one can boast.** For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

We have been called by our Creator God, cleansed by the sacrifice of His only non-created Son “to do good works.”

These “works” were prepared even before we were born, for us to personally perform.

Our “works”, can never save us from the penalty of death that our sins have earned, but our gratitude for what God has done for us through Jesus Christ should motivate us to perform these acts of love and kindness towards all other human beings.

How do we have the power to perform the “works” ?

John 7:37-39 [NIV] “On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. **Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.**” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.”

We can **only** fulfil these acts of love and compassion, by yielding our lives to the Holy Spirit and allowing Him to love and have the very compassion of God through us as His vehicles.

1 Corinthians 3:16 [NIV] *“Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?”*

Each of us individually, but also every true Christian fellowship, should be the temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells and works.

Matthew 28:18-20 [NIV] *“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.**”*

This is a commission given to **every** Christian, **not** just the leaders in the church.

Jesus Christ will be with us in this commission in the presence of the Holy Spirit who is the *“Spirit of Christ.”*

Romans 8:9 [NIV] *“You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.”*

The Holy Spirit and the *“Spirit of Christ”* are the same, both part of the Triune God.

The weakness of much current Christianity lies in the fact we have **not** learned where to lay our emphasis.

Particularly the Christian church as a whole has **not** understood, because of a lack of teaching, that we are saved by God, to enter into a wonder-filled new and living way and to remain then in an everlasting presence and preoccupation with our Creator God.

John 17:3 [NIV] *“Now **this is eternal life:** that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”*

This is what eternal life is about.

Our having an intimate relationship with our Creator God.

This is what the Greek word translated *“know”* means.

1 John 5:11-12 [NIV] *“And this is the testimony: **God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.**”*

When we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, the Spirit of Christ, we can experience eternal life right now.

The Triune God with all His mystery and majesty is ours and we are His, and eternity will **not** be long enough to experience all that He is of goodness, holiness and truth.