

God's Highest Purpose For The Sacrifice Of His Son, Jesus Christ

There seems to be a great many professing Christians in our churches today whose testimony sounds like this –

“I am thankful for God's plan in sending Jesus Christ to the cross to save me from hell.”

Of course it is true Christians are saved from the judgement of eternal death by our Saviour Jesus Christ's sacrifice, but what does God say about His purpose for this sacrifice of His Son?

The answer to this question is that God's highest purpose in the redemption of sinful humanity was based in His hope that we would allow Him to reproduce the likeness of Jesus Christ in our once sinful lives?

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.”*

This is why we should fully understand and apply this scripture to our lives.

What did Paul really mean?

This is **not** a portion of scripture which we can take lightly, we are obligated as a true Christian to seek its full meaning.

The Galatian Christians were known for their backslidings, [**Galatians 1:6-9**].

It is plain in this scripture that Paul was forthright and frank in the matter of his own personal involvement in seeking and finding God's highest desires for Christian experience and victory.

Not only does Paul testify, “I have been crucified,” but in the context of this verse he uses the words “I, myself and me” a total of 14 times.

There is certainly in the Christian Bible a good case for humility but there are legitimate times and places for the use of personal example to obtain full impact of what is being taught.

It is as though Paul is saying, *“I am not ashamed to use myself as an example, I have been crucified with Christ.”*

Only Christianity recognises why a person who is without God and without any spiritual perception gets into deep trouble with their own ego.

The Christian Bible teaches that every un-regenerated human being will continue to have problems with their natural ego and selfishness, [**Proverbs 11:2; Proverbs 13:10; Proverbs 16:18; Proverbs 29:23**].

The Christian Bible also teaches that a person may be *“born again,”* [**John 3:3, 5-6**], thus becoming a new person in Jesus Christ.

It is the first *“I”* in Paul's statement that stands confronted with the just anger of God.

God **cannot** accept me as a natural selfish human being for I am un-regenerated and an alien, the complete essence of everything that is anti-God, for we all are slaves to sin, [**Romans 6:6, 11-13**].

Matthew 12:30 [NIV] *“He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.”*

It is a Biblical fact that whoever does not go through the process of crucifixion and transmutation to a new creation is anti-Christ, there are no “grey” areas, we are either for Jesus Christ or we are acting against His will.

There is much spoken in today’s society about tolerance but much of this comes from the spirit of godlessness in the nations.

The most intolerant book in the whole world is the Christian Bible, the inspired Word of the Creator God.

The most intolerant teacher that ever addressed an audience was and still is, the Lord Jesus Christ.

On the other hand, Jesus Christ demonstrated the vast difference between being loving and being tolerant.

John 3:16 [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.”*

Jesus Christ was so loving that He was willing to die even for those who hated Him [**Matthew 23:37**].

But even with such love for humanity, Jesus was intolerant in His teaching.

Mark 16:16 [NIV] *“Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”*

Jesus Christ did not leave any middle ground to accommodate those who preach tolerance.

Love is one thing but tolerance is quite another matter.

Tolerance can easily become a matter of cowardliness if spiritual principles are involved and if the teachings of God’s Word, the Christian Bible, are ignored and forgotten.

Suppose we take the position of tolerance that many preachers do.

“Everyone come and be saved if you want to, but if you do not want to be saved the way God’s Word tells us, perhaps there is some other way that we can find for you, for there are those who say that there are many ways to God.”

Such a statement would **not** be a spirit of tolerance, it would be downright cowardice, such a spirit of compromise can easily become an anti-God attitude.

True Christianity deals with the human problem of the “self life” the “me, myself and I.”

This selfish “I” cannot live if God is to be glorified in this human life He has given us.

Colossians 1:15-16 [NIV] *“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.”*

Do **not** overlook the last two words “for Him.” **This includes all human beings as part of the total creation.**

John 15:8 [NIV] *“This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”*

We are to bring glory to God the Father by reflecting His character, the “fruits” of the Holy Spirit, [Galatians 5:22-23].

Matthew 5:14-16 [King James] *“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”*

Our good works, expressing God’s love for all humanity, is to bring glory to God.

In this matter of how God deals with human pride, perverse and sinful nature, we find two positions within the framework of Christianity today.

Some Christian leaders take the tolerant view that Jesus Christ came into the world to bring about an adjustment of our human nature, which leaves human problems being moved from the church to the psychiatric couch.

On the other hand, thankfully, other Christian leaders preach plainly that Jesus Christ came to bring about the crucifixion of the human self-life, not to educate it or tolerate it.

Paul outlined the full spiritual remedy, *“I am crucified with Christ.”*

Romans 6:1-4, 6-13 [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.” ... “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. 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.”*

The *“old self-life”* is crucified.

In the Christian life, this is what baptism by total immersion is supposed to mean. It is an outward and visible testimony of an inward, spiritual transformation, declaring that the old self-life and perverse human nature has died in this watery grave.

By the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ we are to begin to live a new life in Him.

There really is **no** way to patch up and repair our old life of self.

That old life had **no** basic goodness, it held to false values, and its wisdom was questionable to say the least.

It is this new self in Jesus Christ, a true Christian alone now lives, [*“Christian”* means *“a little Christ.”*]

I believe there is a subconscious desire deep within every human being to realise and utilise their full potential, to desire a full and complete life.

Yet when we meditate on our dreams and hopes, we find we have nothing that is certain in life, nothing has eternal value, and as an honest spiritual person there is nothing which we can do that is acceptable in the sight of a Holy God.

Isaiah 6:1-5 [NIV] *“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.’ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. ‘Woe to me!’ I cried. ‘I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.’”*

When God revealed His holiness to Isaiah he recognised his own sinful and unholy nature.

Most human beings have as yet to have this experience of God revealing His holiness to them.

So human beings continue to lean on a variety of crutches to support their ego, nourish their pride and cover up their obvious defects of human existence.

Example crutches are: **extended education**, pursuit of **philosophies**, cultural achievements, **ancestry, environment and personal status**.

John 15:1-8 [NIV] *“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; **apart from me you can do nothing**. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”*

In God’s sight without His help and His enabling, we have nothing and can do nothing.

But the life of the new person in Jesus Christ is so very different.

This new person has made room for Jesus Christ in their lives through the active presence of the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit.

Philippians 4:13 [NIV] *“I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”*

The “*him*” is the Lord Jesus Christ [verse 10]. This brought great contentment to Paul’s life.

Colossians 1:27 [NIV] *“To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”*

The hope of a glorious fulfilled life is yet a mystery to most human beings, Jesus Christ living within us, directing our life.

Colossians 2:8-10 [King James] *“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.”*

We are only complete in Jesus Christ.

Our one great need is simply Jesus Christ. He is what we need, He has what we need, He knows what we need to know, He has the ability to do in us what we cannot do.

John 14:15-18 [NIV] *“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; **I will come to you.**”*

Notice two important things about this scripture:

Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are one and the same God, “*another counsellor*” that is the Holy Spirit, “*I will come to you,*” Jesus Christ speaking.

There are two stages with which we receive the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ.

“*With you*” that is when the Holy Spirit begins His work in us.

John 16:8 [NIV] *“When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:”*

“*Convict the world of guilt*” bring each person to the place of repentance, turning their lives around and start to live heading in a new direction and a new style.

“*Will be in you*” this is when we make our decision to offer our whole life to serving and worshipping God.

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 make this “*living sacrifice*” to show our gratitude for what God has done for us through the life, death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ.

The Greek word translated “*bodies*” is “*sōma*” meaning our whole life, body, mind and human spirit, [Job 32:8].

The main work of the Holy Spirit can then begin as we yield to Him.

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.”*

Our total re-education. Drawing us away from this world and into the spiritual world of God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, the Triune God.

Galatians 5:19-21 [NIV] *“The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.”*

This is the world we are to leave behind us, not be a part of, [John 17:14-23].

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.”*

This is our new reason for existing, to allow the Holy Spirit to develop these god-like characteristics within us.

We will then be fulfilling the second goal of our Creator God.

Genesis 1:26-27 [NIV] *“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”*

We, like every human being, are created in the “*image*” of God, Hebrew word “*tselem*” meaning resemblance, shadow or outward form, but **not “likeness”** Hebrew word “*demûwth*” meaning manner, attributes [“*fruits*”] and **character**.

As we know, character takes time to develop, time spent with the One whose character we wish to reflect. This is why we are told, as were the Galatians, to “*keep in step with the Spirit.*”

John 3:30 [King James] *“He must increase, but I must decrease.”*

John the Baptist made this very meaningful statement that can be applied to every maturing Christian.

There must progressively be an increase of Jesus Christ in our lives and a decrease of our own human nature.

Every day we will have to continue to face a choice and decide, “*my way or Christ’s?*”

“Will I insist on my own righteousness [Isaiah 64:6] or the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, [Romans 4:13, 16, 18-24] as did Abraham?”

God can **only** be honoured as we make our choices in Christ, that is be directed by the Holy Spirit, [John 16:13; John 14:26; Acts 5:32].

How many Christians understand all we have just studied when they pray, “Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done” [Matthew 5:10]?

God’s Kingdom will not be realised in our lives until our own selfish “kingdom” is deposed.

It is when I resign, when I am no longer “*king*” of my domain, that Jesus Christ will become King of my life, [“*I have been crucified with Christ.*”]