

Shepherd My sheep

We are doing a study on the essential attitude for preserving the unity of the body of Christ as we operate in our spiritual gifts. It is the attitude of humility. NOT I.

And we have now completed our study of the NOT I BUT CHRIST life.

This morning, we will see in the scriptures how /the NOT I BUT CHRIST life leads to the NOT I BUT OTHERS life\. And since we are all united as one body, it is also lived as the /NOT I BUT ONE ANOTHER\ life. We are members one of the other.

We begin today with the scripture in which we ended last Sunday.

2 Cor 4:7-12

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; 8 we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

11 For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So death works in us, but life in you.

/Living for Christ leads to living for others. \

We saw in Philippians 3 that the NOT I BUT CHRIST LIFE requires us to be conformed to His death.

/In our passage, we see that being conformed to His death results in a life of NOT I BUT OTHERS. \ Death works in us, but life in you.

10 always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

Carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus.

Here we see the practical fruit of being conformed to His death. Here we see that being conformed to His death results in a certain manner of living.

It is described here as carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus.

/What does it mean to carry about in the body the dying of Jesus?\

Let's start with the dying of Jesus. He died on the cross two thousand years ago.

It's a fact of history. But we cannot carry about the literal dying of Jesus.

/This must be talking about a spiritual reality that has its origin in the death of Christ.\

What spiritual realities came from the death of Christ on the cross?

/Here's one: when He died, we died.\ We were placed into the death of Christ when we believed. He died to sin. We died to sin.

We have been crucified with Christ.

We no longer live. /We died, and our life is hidden with Christ in God.\

One other thing about His death: He died so that we could live.

Christ lives in us. /We have been raised up with Christ.\

Can you see how we are always to keep rehearsing these facts about Christ and about us?

Having died with Christ and having been raised with Christ demands that we live a new life in a new way. What does that life look like?

2 Cor 5:15

and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

/Living no longer for ourselves - that's what carrying in the body the dying of Jesus looks like!\

/No longer for ourselves, but for Him. That's first.\

/But then, no longer for ourselves but for OTHERS.\

Always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also might be manifested in our body. The passage continues:

2Co 4: 11 For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So death works in us, but life in you.

Christ died so that we may live. Death works in us so that life may work in others.

Yes, living this way involves a fair amount of suffering. We see that in verses 7-9:

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; 8 we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;

/Living the not I but Christ life involves suffering. \

When we carry about the dying, what's comes next?

LIFE!!!

/Death works in us so that life can work in you.\

This is what the love of Christ is all about.

/ Love means sacrificing for the benefit of the one loved.\

That of course is what Christ did. He tells us to follow His lead.

John 15:12-14

*12 "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.
13 "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. 14
"You are My friends if you do what I command you.*

John, in his first epistle, takes what he heard from the Lord and lays it out plain:

1 John 3:16-18

We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

/NOT I BUT CHRIST leads to NOT I BUT OTHERS.\

We find this principle again and again in the New Testament scriptures.

John 21:17

17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep.

Jesus asked Peter the same question 3 times. One way to look at the question is as follows:

/Am I more important to you than your own life is?\ Yes.

You said this before "I will lay down my life for you". Are you sure now? Yes.

Are you completely sure?

/OK Good. So you are all in for the NOT I BUT CHRIST life.\ Now watch this:

Feed My Sheep!

/Turn this into the NOT I BUT OTHERS life.\ Some special others – Christ's sheep.

In the time remaining, let's consider two more of them, in the book of Ephesians.

Eph 4:32-5:2

32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

5:1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

/When we put our eyes off ourselves and onto Christ, we see once again how magnificent He is. \

Magnificent that Christ loved us. /It's magnificent that He gave Himself up for us.\

And since He did, we ought to walk in love. /We ought to be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another.\

After all, God in Christ has already forgiven you.

See how it works? It's really simple when He puts it that way, isn't it?!

All right. Let's proceed now to verse 22 of Ephesians 5.

Now this gets really practical. The not I but Christ life leading to the not I but others life – /this principle is proven out in our daily living with those closest to us.\

Eph 5:22-6:4

22 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

Now ladies, the only reason I lead with you is because Paul did! It's short enough: 3 verses. Wait til we get to the husbands. 9 verses for them!

Here's how this works. /When you live the not I but Christ life, it has implications for your marriage.\

If we are truly subject to the Lord, putting aside our own will and living according to his, then certain things follow.

One of them pertains to wives.

/Since you are subject to the Lord, you ought to also be subject to your husband.\

To say it another way, you are called to see that standing between you and your husband is the Lord. /You are to be obedient and respectful to your husband, not because he deserves it, but because Christ does! \

OK, that's all we have time for this morning. Next week we will continue looking at these intimate family relationships

/For now, keep recalling this simple principle: the NOT I BUT CHRIST LIFE leads to the NOT I BUT OTHERS Life. \

Next week it will be the husbands' turn....

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. 28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, 30 because we are members of His body.

31 FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.

32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), 3 SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.

4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

But that's for next time. For now, remember the simple principle: the NOT I BUT CHRIST LIFE leads to the NOT I BUT OTHERS Life.

Next week, we will see how this works in the life of the body of Christ. Hint: It's the NOT I BUT ONE ANOTHER life. We are members one of another. UNITY!