

In SPIRIT and TRUTH



Planted in the Likeness of Christ

TO BRING FORTH FRUIT

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” John 12:24

Jesus often used simple illustrations from nature to help His disciples understand important principles of the kingdom of God. For example, in John 12, He prepared them for His impending death, with the comparison of a seed falling to the ground to die. From His example, we are able to make an important parallel; just as a seed must be planted in the ground to die before it can produce life (John 12:24), Jesus also had to experience death, so He could be resurrected to give *eternal life*.

It is upon this simple analogy of a seed, that the kingdom principle of living “*the crucified life*” in Christ is established. For we are told in Galatians 3:16, that to Abraham and his *seed* (singular), the promises were made; *and that seed was Christ*. Therefore, according to Romans 6:5, if we, as disciples of Christ, are planted together in the likeness of His death, we have the hope that we will likewise be in the likeness of His resurrection.

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

Romans 8:9

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

Romans 6:4

“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection”

Romans 6:5



PLANTED... In The Likeness of His Death

“Therefore we are buried with him by (water) baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”
Romans 6:4

Romans, chapter 6, explains how we are “planted” in the likeness of Jesus’ death. It is through obedience to the commandment for *water baptism* (in the name of Jesus) that each believer is able to identify with the death and burial of Christ, thus conforming to His image. Being baptized in water, by full submersion, is representative of “the old man of sin” being *buried*; then allowing “the new man” to be raised up to experience “newness of life”, which is the new birth or *being born again* (Romans 6:1-7; John 3:3-5). It is important to note that it is only by *being submerged* in the water, that a type of burial can take place. Therefore, baptism by sprinkling, being dipped into water, or any means other than full emersion, would be in error and scripturally unacceptable.

In Matthew 13:3-23, Jesus teaches about “The Parable of the Sower”, where He expounds upon how the heart of man determines the type of disciple he will become, based upon how he responds to the message of the gospel. In this parable, we learn that *the seed* is the Word of God, and *the ground* in which the seed is planted represents the hearts of men. True disciples of Jesus Christ are those who receive the word in good ground (meaning, hearts prepared by true repentance). When they “hear the word and understand it”, then they are able to bear good fruit, and can also begin to make



more disciples for the kingdom of God (Matthew 13:23).

PLANTED... In The Likeness of His Resurrection

“Jesus said... I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believes in me shall never die...”. John 11:25-26

Being in the likeness of Jesus’ resurrection is all about the need for the natural man to be *born again*. When we have been water baptized (signifying the death of the old man), and have received the baptism of the Holy Ghost (born of the Spirit), we are then “new creatures” in Christ, conformed to His image. And if the resurrection power that raised Jesus from the grave lives in us, it is by that same power that we will be resurrected at His return.

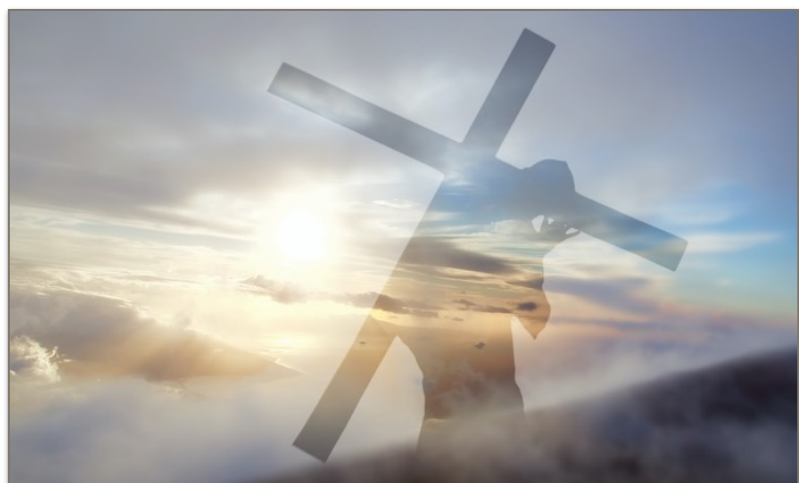
“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;”
Philippians 3:10

“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”
Romans 8:11

Living The Crucified Life

The message of “the crucified life” was first introduced when Jesus called His early disciples. From His messages of discipleship, He reveals some important aspects of the crucified life. One of the first things He spoke of was, “**forsaking all to follow me**”. “Forsaking all” specifically meant that His disciples were not to allow anyone... spouse, father, mother, sister, brother, not even children, to hinder them in their decision to follow Him. He expected an immediate response to the call, and did not even allow for delays due to personal family obligations (such as with the man who wanted to first go bury his dead father, in Luke 9:57-62 and Matthew 10:37).

Jesus also commanded His disciples to “**deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me**” (Luke 9:23; Matthew 10:38; Mark 8:34). Although many did not fully understand why He said these things, He was actually preparing them for the trials to come after His death. As Christians today, we have the advantage of having the written Word of God, along with revelation knowledge from the Holy Ghost, our teacher; therefore, we are able to understand that the cross was a symbol of death. And the purpose of the cross *now*, is the same as it was *then*... ***we are admonished to take up our cross. Why? ...to die on it!*** We must be willing to die to our own will and ways to follow Jesus Christ, as our Lord. The Apostle Paul understood this when he stated in *Galatians 2:20*, “***I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me***”. Another important principle of discipleship that Jesus taught was, “**to save your life, you must lose it; but if you lose your life for My sake, you will save it**” (Luke 9:24; Matthew 10:39; Mark 8:35). This view is quite contrary to the mindset



of those in the world, usually aimed at self-preservation. In Romans 12, the Apostle Paul describes it in this manner... “***I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a LIVING SACRIFICE, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind...***”
Romans 12:1-2

Furthermore, in *Galatians 5:24-25*, we are told that “***they that are in Christ have crucified the flesh with the affections and lust... if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.***” In other words, as children of God, we cannot live a self-centered life of pleasing ourselves and still obey the commandments of God. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we must all understand that accepting the call to follow Jesus is actually ***a decision to live a crucified life of self-denial*** in this present world. We must follow His example, and willingly lay down our lives for others. This is the ultimate sacrifice a disciple must make, to identify with our crucified Savior.

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” 1 John 3:16