

Dead Men Walking

July 1997

Volume 2 Issue 3

On a recent trip to Bolivia I was able to witness first hand an instant miracle. A group of four of us left to go to a village way out in the middle of nowhere three hours from the closest big city. Before we had left, we had gone out & eaten steak sandwiches, and then we were on our way. As we were in the village, the group and I were walking along the street with the Pastor who had invited us out to his church. We were coming from his television studio when I began to feel a little rumbly in my tumbly (as Winnie the Pooh would say). Along with that, I had been getting a fever to go with the headache I had. I asked the Pastor what type of service he wanted, what type of service he wanted, what type would bless the church. He said that he wanted me to preach a revival type service.

As we prepared for the service, I began to feel worse & worse. The sandwich I had eaten seemed to have been a bad one. It was about a half an hour before the service and I was beginning to have serious doubts about even being able to speak (I was the guest speaker and the only one on the team who spoke Spanish.). I went outside to try to pray, but something was seeming to work. I was hoping to just get in the car and go to sleep. As the service started, I was in rough shape and was praying outside and the Pastor came out and said, "You can pray behind the platform." So I came in and began to pray there. There was a wall between the platform and where I was praying, so no one could see me.

Previously that week I had taught a Pastor's seminar on Romans chapters 4-8 ; on our identification with Christ. It was a very powerful time, and many lives were changed. One comment that I made was "My death with Christ is just as sure a fact as was His for me." Another one was, "If you ever have the opportunity to go to Jerusalem, pass by and visit my grave site. It's the same one Jesus was buried in. " As I was behind the platform the Lord reminded me of this fact and said "What are you going to do about it ?" Finally I said in a very loud voice, "Dead people don't get sick, dead people don't have any pain, dead people don't feel bad ; because they're dead. Dead people don't wrestle with feelings. And if I'm dead with Christ, then all of these symptoms and pain are nothing more than a lie." Then I said, "In the name of Jesus, I consider myself dead to myself and alive to Christ. I'm dead because the Bible says that I have died with Him. It's no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me ; the life that I now live is by faith in the Son of God." Immediately all of the symptoms and pain disappeared and I went out totally healed, and we had a revival service !

It's easy to quote Bible verses, but it must become what we actually believe as absolute truth ; no matter what seems to be the case. In Romans chapter 6, there is much positional truth, but if we don't believe it as the only truth, our lives will never move on. Romans 6 is only something we can believe ; not something we can do. If we try to do Romans 6, we'll end up frustrated. It is only something that we can believe. A firm belief in it will totally transform our lives. An understanding of it is not enough. It has to be a truth we live by.

The term, "dead men walking", is a term used for people on death row. Their judgement has been passed. They are condemned people with no chance of escape. They are just awaiting their execution. They are in a sense "dead men" because what has been declared on them is defi



nite, yet they are still walking because the day of the manifestation of the order (their execution) has not yet been carried out.

You and I are "dead men walking" because our flesh has been declared dead to it's sin but alive to Christ. We are still walking around in this world but we must remember the irrevocable order about our flesh. It's been crucified with Christ. If the fact is that it's been crucified, I must believe the fact. The truth is what sets us free. Then why the constant struggle with sin ? It's a refusal to believe the declaration of it's true state.

The devil will try to keep this truth from us, but if he can't he will at least try to distract us from it and keep our minds occupied with other things, (where the battle rages). We try to heal the flesh, patch it up, struggle to fix what God has crucified with Christ.

That's why all things have to become new. (II Cor. 5 :17)

The Emancipation Proclamation was a document Abraham Lincoln signed to set the slaves free, and it did just that. Those who believed it rejoiced in their new found freedom, those who refused to believe it stayed slaves. Even worse were those who were lied to by their owners to keep them as slaves. All three of these

types existed in that day even though the proclamation was issued. Some rejoiced, some disbelieved, and some were lied to, thus staying captive. In the church we see the same tactic used by the devil. Some believe the report and are free indeed.

However there are others that cannot believe because their feelings or situations don't allow for this truth, still worst of all are those who are being lied to, thus remaining captive, while liberty has been and is being proclaimed. Abraham Lincoln did all in his power to set the captives free. The rest was up to those who it applied to, to actually walk it out.

For you and I the proclamation has been issued in the Word of God. Romans 8 :9 says "You, however, are not controlled by the flesh but by the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God is at home in you." And again, "So then, brethren, we are debtors, but not to the flesh, we are not obligated to our carnal nature, to live a life ruled by the standards set up by the dictates of the flesh." Romans 8 :12 Amp.

We are not obligated, (and many times the devil tries to make us feel that we are) to obey any of the lusts and desires that wage war in us. We overcome by believing the truth as declared in the Word more so than any temptation we confront. Many times the reality of sin may seem more real than the presence of God in our lives, but that is part of Satan's deception. When we believe his lie as present reality more than God's presence in our lives, bondage cannot be far away.

We must continue to remind ourselves that we are just "dead men" (because we have been crucified with Christ Gal. 2 :20) that are "walking". The more we yield our lives to Christ, the more like Him we'll be. You may say what's the fun of being a dead

man ? I ask what's the fun of bondage ?

Take the moon for example. The moon has no light in it of it's own. It can only reflect the light of the sun, but to shine independantly on it's own, it is unable. All the light that we see from the moon is reflected light. As long as the moon stays in the sun's path, it will produce light. There is a dark side to the moon because that side never is exposed to the light of the sun. We too, do not have any light of our own (although we'd like to think so). The best we can do is reflect the light of Jesus. He is the Light. We shine as lights. How do we reflect that light ? Like the moon, staying in the path of the Son, we'll reflect Him. When the earth comes between the moon there is an eclipse and the moon is darkened because an obstacle is in the way. Likewise we are darkened when we allow things to come between us in our relationship with God. We



must keep the path clean. One way to keep the path clean is to understand our position : DEAD and under no obligation to the world, walking now in the fullness of Christ because my obligation is no longer with the world.

Let's suppose we are all at a funeral. The man in the casket was a wicked man. He left behind a poor wife with five children and drank his life away. Never had time for his children or family. At the funeral, the Pastor says to the family that they can pass forward to give their last respects. The wife passes but instead of paying her respect, says "You were my biggest mistake in life ; I hope you get what's coming." The children also blame the father through bitter tears for how they turned out and how he was never there for them ; accusing him vehemently. Last of all, the man's mother comes up to the casket and says, "Son, I don't believe a word that they're saying ; I know you and I still think you're the sweetest thing." The dead man who is in the casket has just been accused of being everything you can imagine, yet, because he is dead, there was no reaction from him to the thunderous accusations. Likewise when his mother came forward to praise him, there was no reaction towards the praise either. The accusations and the praise have no effect on him because he is dead. When we consider ourselves as actually dead, accusations will not hurt us and praise will not inflate us. Why ? Because we're dead and neither one has an effect on us. We understand where the light came from.

Many men on death row seek one thing before they die, because nothing else matters anymore : to get right with God before they go into eternity. May this also be our ambition ; to live our lives right before God while we continue to walk on this earth ; dead to self and sin, but alive in Christ.

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