

ETHAN TEMPLE MINISTRIES TOOLS FOR LIFE

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SIN'S POWER BROKEN

There are many aspects to the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. One is that at the cross the power of the sinful nature was broken for all who accept Christ and believe:

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Rom. 6:6). “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (v 11).

When Jesus died on the cross, the power of the sinful nature in every believer's life was broken. This is an historical fact. However, it becomes a reality in the Christian's life only if he believes it.

This means that the unloving you, the unforgiving you, the angry you, the lustful you, the anxious you – the list could go on and on – died at the cross. That is wonderful news! It means that you do not have to be controlled by your unloving attitudes, your unforgiveness, anger, lustful thoughts and desires, etc. The power of these sinful desires, attitudes, and behaviors is broken.

The problem most Christians encounter when they read these Bible verses is that they conclude that they should then be able to obey God with His help. For example, consider the Christian who has a struggle with anger. He reasons that if the power of his sinful anger was broken at the cross he can now stop being angry when someone happens to cause him to become angry. He feels great relief, confident that now he will finally have the victory. Soon something happens to cause him to feel anger. Perhaps someone cuts him off while driving, or someone says something very unkind to him. Immediately his anger arises. He puts forth efforts to subdue it, but he finds that it keeps lingering. He doesn't want these feelings, but seems helpless to get rid of them. He begins questioning himself about why anger is still arising in his feelings. He concludes that he must not have asked God

or received from God enough of His power to assist him in his efforts to overcome the anger. So he pleads with God to remove the anger to give him the power needed, to give him the victory. Even so, he continues to experience the same pattern of being overcome by his besetting sins. More confusion and feelings of defeat set in. Again he questions his sincerity and has no peace in his walk with the Lord.

It is very true that the power of our sinful nature was broken at the cross. However, this does not mean that if we now believe this we can begin obeying God by putting forth efforts to do so. Remember, we have no ability in and of ourselves to obey God, even though the overwhelming influence of our sinful nature was broken at the cross. Simply knowing and believing that truth is not enough. No. There is only one way we will have the victory we long for. The victory over temptation and sin will take place in our lives only as we believe the truth of the crucifixion of our sinful nature and also allow Christ to give us His victory. We must understand that we will be victorious over sin and temptation only as we allow Him to live out His life of victory in us:

“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” (Rom 10:3, 4).

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21).

Personal Reflection and Discussion

What happened to the power of the Christian's sinful nature at the cross?

If one knows and believes this truth, does it mean he/she can now begin obeying God consistently? Why, or why not?

What must the Christian also believe in order to overcome sin consistently?

Have you ever been tempted to believe that you are not really a Christian because of the sin problem in your life?

Have you ever asked God to remove a particular sin in your life, but He didn't seem to hear or answer you, and your struggle with it continued?

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