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**NO.207** 

# CONFORMABLE TO HIS DEATH

## **GROWING UP IN THE LORD**

When I was a little girl, I thrilled at the story that my mother told me over and over again about how I was born. She said that her heart desired so much to have a little girl. "So she went to this huge farm where they grew cabbages where boy babies grew and roses where little baby girls came from. She was walking down the middle aisle with the cabbages on one side and the roses on the other when she heard this little cry. At first she ignored it but it grew louder and stronger as if to say, "Take me, do not pass me by!" So she went to the rose bush and picked this most beautiful little baby girl and it was me!"

Of course this is a cute little story that really thrilled my heart as I heard it over and over again. But beloved, it illustrates so well what happens to us as babies or immature Christians in the church. We have thrilled at stories of our salvation and how when we die we will join this great picnic in heaven with all of our loved ones. We have felt secure when we heard that if things get too tough down here we would be swept up into a "rapture" in the sky.

The little girl who believed that she was born in a rosebush did not find that her life was a rose garden after all. She had to grow up and become a woman. She had to know abuse, rejection and betrayal, and she also had to know how to love and be loved. Above all she had to quit believing that she came out of a rosebush. Babies and toddlers are only required to drink their milk, wash their hands and obey their parents who are responsible to teach and

discipline them. So it is in our born-again experience. But the day must come when we become spiritual teenagers and begin to feel God's Spirit stirring within. We begin to feel restless and our thoughts turn toward what we will do as adults. Our toys no longer satisfy our innermost needs and we begin to seek something deeper and more interesting than what we have so far. It is then that the Spirit begins to lead us to a higher and better way of worshiping God

The Pharisees thought that they knew it all, that they were whole (complete) and had need of no more. This is why Jesus would not help them, and He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick..For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Matt.9: 12, 13b) Those who are satisfied with their lives can never improve on it. Those who believe they have all they need of Jesus, can never find more of Him. When we think that we have heard the best and highest word there is, He sends a word even greater.

## **GROWING IN THE FAITH**

If we are asked, "What is faith?" most of us will turn to a well known answer in the book of Hebrews. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb.11:1) Then we read that those who have gone before us and pleased God did it all by faith. Whatever God asked of them, they followed. They believed that

God is and that He really spoke to them privately. Note that even though they belonged to tribes or assemblies, the word lists only individuals; it was their individual faith and obedience that mattered with God

From Abraham on, each who was called and followed, was building the foundation upon which we stand. Most of them did not really know what God was requiring of them but they followed day by day anyway. When they passed to the other side of the veil, they were still waiting for the promise.

"And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, **received not the promise**: God having provided (foreseen) some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." (Heb.11: 39-40)

Further more the writer explains that these all suffered cruel mockings and scourgings. They were stoned and even sawn asunder. They were tormented, afflicted and destitute so that they might obtain a better resurrection. (See vs.35-38)

They literally endured all these terrible abuses because they had faith in the vision that God had deposited down deep within their souls. Beloved, it is one thing to believe God for our daily needs and healings, but it is another to hold on to our faith in the vision that He has placed in us. This is the kind of faith that Jesus is looking for. Whether we assemble by two or two hundred or more, we do it to encourage one another in the faith, yet each has to walk alone before the Lord.

After the Lord delivers us from the Egypt of this world, we walk with Him as the King's kids for a while, but we cannot remain kids. Through Israel's wilderness journey, they were not allowed to build cities; they lived in tents and picked up the stakes to move on when they saw the glory cloud. During that time, God provided all their needs and kept them from harm yet when they saw the giants in the land of promise, they lost their faith and multitudes of them died in the desert. It was a new generation who followed Joshua and Caleb in the land.

Believing that the Lord has delivered us from the

Egypt or darkness of the world is good, but we cannot stop there. Believing that God provides all our daily needs and heals our diseases is great, but it is not the end of the matter. All the trials of faith that we endure through our journey in this wilderness, are only to exercise us in the faith that we need to enter our land of promise.

#### FROM FAITH TO FAITH

God reveals His righteousness from faith to faith. If we have faith to believe what He shows us, He will show us more. Revelation is all by faith.

"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.' For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." (Rom.1: 17-18)

Paul knew the law and he was desperately trying to keep them from falling into its clutches. When he spoke of those who "hold the truth in unrighteousness, he was speaking of those who were teachers of the law but walked not according to the gospel of Christ, therefore they were unrighteous and wide open to the wrath of God.

It is a human need to feel safe. Today, when we buy any appliance we are asked to purchase an extended warranty. Business people bank on the people's need for security in order to make some extra easy money. The law makes us feel more secure; if we abide by the law, we are in control of the result. If we do well, we feel we are safe and if we do not, we run to make amends. But when it comes to the gospel and walking by faith, we cannot rely on ourselves, we have to fully rely on One that we cannot see and perhaps not hear.

I remember the first time I flew on a commercial airliner. I had flown in small private planes and I knew the pilot well. He was a brother in the Lord and I trusted him fully. But now, it was Christmas eve and I was flying to Texas on this DC10 and I did not know nor could I see the pilot. I had sweaty palms...At one point, because it was Christmas Eve, the attendant came and offered a free cocktail. I did

not drink but I took it anyway because I figured that if I did not, the pilot would drink it. All these thoughts crossed my mind and I was convincing myself that we were going to crash. It was then that I opened the little Bible in my purse, and fell upon this Scripture in Job, "For the thing which I greatly fear is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me." (Job 3: 25)

When I read that, my mind made a complete turn around and I knew that I had better take hold of the Spirit of the Lord "For God had not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (IITim.1: 7) Trusting the Lord in all things overcomes fears, weaknesses and will open the power of love and of a sound mind in our lives.

We may think that since we are in Christ we have been delivered from the law. We may not walk in the law of Moses but is it possible to take the written words of the New Testament and make laws out of them? Instead of confirming what we hear from the Holy Spirit within, the written word has become law in our lives. The law is for children.

In Jewish traditions, parents are responsible for their children's actions and for keeping them in obedience to Jewish law and traditions. But when the boys are thirteen years old for boys and the girls twelve, they become responsible for their own actions and adherence to the Jewish law. This time is celebrated as "Bar Mitzvah" for the boys and "Bat Mitzvah" for the girls.

Paul was making this spiritual application when he wrote, "Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all: but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world." (Gal.4: 1-3) As long as one is a child, one has to be under the law with tutors and governors to enforce it.

And so, when we first came into the truth of the gospel of Christ, it was fitting that we should be tutored and discipled and learned what is the letter of the Word. But no one should remain there. They should be let loose by their parents or tutors and

start walking by the faith that has been planted in his heart. Tutors and governors must let go...This is not any easier to do than it is for mother and father to let their children begin to take responsibility for their own actions. Today, churches and groups are populated by adults who are as crippled children who have never been let loose to their own faith.

When we become spiritual adults, we are still under law, but now it is the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. This means that we are wholly ruled by the Holy Spirit from within and we follow Him. When we are fully come into the image of the Son of God, the law will be fulfilled and we will submit all to God the Father that He may be all things in all of us.

### A FAITH JOURNEY

"But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (II Cor.3: 18)

From the time that we heard the call to repentance, we have been beholding the glory of the Lord. However, we have been as the blind man whose sight was restored. At first he saw men as trees, then he could see a little clearer until he was totally healed.

The Amplified version says it this way, "And all of us, as with unveiled face, (because we) continue to behold and to reflect like mirrors the glory of the Lord, are constantly being transformed into (His very own) image in ever increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another; (for this comes) from the Lord (Who is the) Spirit.

This is truly glorious! As we walk with the Lord, and behold Him, He reveals Himself to us first as Savior and Lord, then we find Him as Provider and Healer. As we continue we find Him as our Deliverer and Helper, our Comforter and then as our elder Brother. When He separates us, we find Him as Husband and Lover of our soul. It is as we behold Him in all these many faces of glory that we are transformed into the same image and we take on the attributes of the One that we behold.

When we came into Pentecost and beheld His glory in the gifts, we rejoiced immensely and we did not think it could get any better yet this is comparable to our teen years. Then we heard words that were different and strange from the teachings we had heard so far but they witnessed so much to our spirits that we were compelled to follow after them.

The day came when we heard about sons of God and we read in the Bible that the creation is yearning and travailing for their manifestation! We no longer bore any resemblance to the Methodist crowd or the Baptist crowd or any of the other crowds; now we resembled the "sons of God' crowd. We were transformed into a new image. This was the Lord for us and it was good.

We know that all that has life changes in the earth; it does not remain the same. If the image that we bear spiritually remains the same, it has died. Now, we know in part and we speak that which we know in part, "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." (I Cor. 13:10)

So there is **that which is perfect** to come. Until that time, all that we speak and all that we represent is only in part. But our faith is looking to that which is perfect or totally mature and entire.

Every generation who moved in the truth. from the time of Jesus Christ has had the hope of being made perfect. "Be sober be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour; whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who had called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." (I Pet.5: 8-10)

In his letter, Peter is calling the saints to be vigilant and stedfast in the faith through all their sufferings. He explains that the saints are not exempt from the same sufferings that our brethren in the world suffer, but if we keep the faith, we have the grace of God who causes our sufferings to work toward making us perfect.

Our enemy, the devil, roams around the recesses of our minds, looking for a weak spot, ready to devour us and to destroy our faith. This devil is the one we need to resist steadfastly in the faith. It is in our sufferings that we become vulnerable to his attacks and it is at that time that our faith is sorely tested. But when we pass the test, we find that we are stronger, more stable and settled.

And so the faith that was planted in us as a grain of mustard seed has found the power to grow into a strong tree with roots that reach down deep into the ground. We speak according to our faith and we find that we are a tree of life in the midst of the river of life that flows from deep within.

And now we not only believe that God is and that He sent Jesus Christ to redeem us and save our souls, but we begin to see who we are in Him. Now we have not only believed but we have seen Him by faith and He is substance, He is real and we have the evidence. Through our faith, we understand spiritual invisible realities and we are at home with them.

Our faith journey continues and we begin to hear things that seem impossible to believe. As the Son reveals more of Himself in us, it is like digging up a treasure in our backyard. First we see a little of the cover, then we see that it is the cover of a golden chest...then as we keep digging, we find that indeed, we have found a treasure chest and with the chest we find a map! The chest is the Christ within and the map is the Holy Spirit who shows us the way.

I once had a dream that "I was at an airport hurrying to get to my plane. I was holding on tightly to a large rolled document under my arm. I knew that this was a set of very important blueprints depicting what I was going to witness, but I could not unfold it and look at it until I was aboard the plane and up in the air." (End of dream)

Indeed we have been given the way and we have the blueprints of the building, but we cannot read them until we are up in the Spirit (the air). These truths are only spiritually discerned. When we try to understand them with our carnal understanding, we remain in the realm of death.

## **OPENING OUR TREASURE CHEST**

"Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of our soul." (Heb.10: 38-39) As we open our treasure chest we may find things that seem "illegal" according to what we have learned in church. We may look and draw back! Or we may just twist the words that we hear and give them a more acceptable interpretation.

After writing these words, the writer lists all those who have died in the faith. They believed the impossible, yet they died and now they are still waiting to receive the promise that they had been given. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." (Heb.11:13)

What was it that kept them holding on to the faith? What was it that they saw afar off? "Women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection." (Heb.11: 35) They saw the better resurrection and they gave their lives down to attain it. They had a greater vision.

Abraham was looking for a city whose builder and maker is God. "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles (tents) with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundation, whose builder and maker is God." (Heb.11: 9-10)

These did not believe God only for their earthly needs, they had faith to believe in the promise of a better resurrection. They knew that there was a place prepared by God where they could dwell in peace. That city has often been interpreted as a literal city in the sky with literal streets paved with gold. This is the image of the carnal mind, but the

real city is much more glorious than that. The reason the city is described with material things is because this is the only way our minds can understand, but when the Spirit unfolds the spiritual realities of that city, we marvel at God's wisdom!

This city is a people, clothed in the righteousness of God and walking in His nature. Remember there is only one street in the city and it is of pure gold depicting the nature of God. (See Rev.22:21) This city, as John wrote, is also of pure gold. She is the Bride, the Church who has been changed into His image. She is descending into the earth. She has been hid in the Spirit and is soon to be known in the earth.

We thought for a long time that the church was made of all who call themselves by His name. But we find that He does not know them all! When we left our denominations, we thought that she was made up of those with whom we re-grouped, but we soon found that we were called to more.

It is in a lonely place that He reveals Himself to us in a greater way. It is there that we discover that He had been calling and preparing His true church all along and that as we obeyed Him He was joining us to Himself and to one another. When we see her by the Spirit, we know that this is the city that we had been looking for. This city will not disappoint for its Builder and Maker is God; she has not been touched by man. Now we truly rejoice!

## WE HAVE THE BLUEPRINTS

As my dream announced, we have the blueprints, but we cannot know them until we are up in the Spirit. So we have begun to read them and to be amazed. At first we have read them at a low altitude, but soon the plane has risen higher and we have begun to see things that, as Paul said, "are not lawful or possible for a man to utter." (IICor.12: 4)

Before we look at the blueprints, let us remind ourselves of what the Lord God said when He gave them the pattern to the portable building that Israel erected in the wilderness. "And let them make me a sanctuary; THAT I MAY DWELL AMONG THEM." (Ex. 25: 8)

From the beginning, this was the burning purpose in the heart of God. His desire has always been to dwell in the sanctuary of man's heart.

So He chose Moses and a very select crew to build Him a Tabernacle. It was made of curtains that they could easily fold up and carry on their journey through the wilderness. His presence was made known to them as He led them by a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day. It was awesome; it was the habitation of God Almighty among His people.

Later, Solomon built the first temple, according to the same pattern. Then came the true tabernacle of God not made with hands, the Lord Jesus who categorically declared that the Father dwelt within Him. He proved this as He healed the sick, opened the eyes of the blind, raised the dead and quieted the stormy sea. Jesus was the true temple of God among men and He is our blueprint.

When He announced that the temple that they saw at Jerusalem would be destroyed and replaced by the temple of His body, He was laying Himself down as the foundation for the glorious church that He would build upon the Rock of revelation.

All this can be read in the blueprints as Jesus reveals Himself to us. But we can only see Him and understand what we see by the Spirit. God has not changed His plan nor has He given up on His desire to dwell within His people. When we see Jesus, we see the true habitation of God. We see the first of the Christ creation in the earth.

Jesus is the foundation of this building not made with hands. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (ICor. 3:11) Jesus is also the foundation that was laid in the first tabernacle that was erected in the wilderness. This is why God insisted to Moses, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount." (Heb.8: 5b)

Many, including myself, have made wonderful studies of the tabernacle of Moses in the wilderness. We have rolled out the blueprints and seen the spiritual significance and the glory of each room and each piece of furniture in the rooms, so I will not repeat it here. But we want to look at Jesus and the glory of His temple which is His body. This is most important to those who have been given the vision of overcoming death in these bodies, for this is what Jesus shows us in His "resurrection."

First, it is good to establish, that resurrection is not a day or time as we think of a calendar day. Jesus Christ IS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE. His appearing is the resurrection. He has been appearing to each of us in part. As we behold Him in part, we are changed from glory to glory. When we behold Him fully, we will be completely changed into His image. "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." (I Cor. 13: 10) This is the day that we are yearning for.

This is what this creature and all creation is groaning and travailing for. He is the power that overcomes death. The power of the cross overcomes death. By the Spirit, He has planted the power of His cross within us. This power is what we reach for every time we need to overcome the death that works in our carnal minds. Each time that some of our death is swallowed up of life, more of Him appears and less of us remains. This is what has been working in the midst of our inner man.

When one of His own is taken by physical death, he or she goes into "paradise." Those who have suffered in the faith have paved the way for us but they did not receive the promise so that they without us could not be made perfect or completed.

We know that the apostle Paul was eager to inherit this promise as well. He was pressing toward that goal when he wrote, "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, BEING MADE CONFORMABLE UNTO HIS DEATH." (Phil.3: 10)

This is the key, Paul wanted to go through the very death that Jesus experienced. He was looking for the same resurrection power. Therefore he desired the same death.

#### WHAT IS THE DEATH OF JESUS?

Paul was earnestly praying that he would be made conformable to the death of Jesus. There is a huge difference between the death of Jesus and the death of any other man. First and foremost, JESUS DID NOT SEE CORRUPTION.

It was in the synagogue in Antioch that Paul explained how God raised Jesus from the dead. "But God raised him from the dead; and he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people." (Acts 13:30-31)

Then Paul explains the words that David spoke in the Psalms, "Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, "Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. For David after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption. But he, whom God raised again SAW NO CORRUPTION." (Acts 13: 35-37)

The body of Jesus did not see corruption. When Thomas declared, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." (Jn.20: 25b) Jesus told him, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." (Vs.27)

Thomas did us a great service, because his experience proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that Jesus did not see corruption and the body that He took to the cross was indeed the very same body that He showed in resurrection. This is the difference between the death of Jesus and the death of all others who died and saw corruption. They will show their new bodies of glory, fashioned as unto the body that they had, but the body that they once possessed was eaten by worms in the grave.

The firstfruits of His resurrection will not see corruption; mortality will put on immortality without going to the grave. This is the victory that Paul was speaking about when he said, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have

put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY. O DEATH WHERE IS THY STING? O GRAVE WHERE IS THY VICTORY? (I Cor.15: 53-55)

The death of Jesus was the victory over corruption and the grave. This is the death that Paul desired to experience. When God reveals something to someone, He wants them to press toward that goal. Paul knew that he was born out of due time and that all that he saw by the Spirit was out of his reach. Yet he pressed toward the goal and toward this high calling. It is with travail that he said, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil.15: 14) All who had the vision pressed toward it and thus paved the way for the next ones to come closer to it.

Christ is the One who attains to the prize. It is when we are fully in Him that we get the prize for He is the prize. He died on the cross to save our souls. Since that time, by the power of His Holy Spirit, He is bringing those who believe in Him and follow Him into union with Himself.

When our life is fully hid in Christ in God and there is no more "us" to be seen, this corruption will put on incorruption and this mortal will put on immortality. This is why it is vital that we pass our daily tests of faith. It is no longer a question of how much we pray and whether of not we read our Bibles every day; it is a question of beholding Him in Spirit and in truth, and of being changed into His image.

It is truly not a matter of what we know, but a matter of who we have become. We may have a lot of revelation but revelation of itself cannot change us. It is when we receive the new name that "No man knows safe He who receives it," that we know who we are and that we will bear the full image. It is then that these old bodies will put on their robes of immortality.

At the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and

whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? (Jn.11: 25-26)

After Lazarus was resurrected from the dead, he believed in Jesus, so did he die again? When Lazarus died physically the second time, he was a believer and Jesus said, "He that believeth in me shall never die." Lazarus has joined those who are waiting for the better resurrection. They are waiting for the Christ to appear in those who are ordained to break through the bonds of physical death.

## FROM GLORY TO GLORY

Every time the Lord releases a new revelation of Himself, those who behold Him in that truth are changed into that same glory. Paul explains this to the church as he speaks of the glory of the law of Moses. "But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance..." (II Cor.3:7a)

"For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of right-eousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth." (Vs.9-10) When the Lord brings out a new revelation of Himself, that which was glorious previously, fades by reason of the glory that excels.

It is after explaining all this that Paul declares that "We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (Vs.18)

As we walk with the Lord, we are presented with new truth. He reveals Himself more and more to us as He really is. We have seen Him as our Savior and we believed and went on with Him. We have seen Him as the One who baptized us in the Holy Ghost and we believed and received some of that glory. We moved from glory to glory as we beheld Him and saw Him reflected to us in that image. But when Jesus spoke to Martha at the tomb of Lazarus, His question was direct, "He that believeth in Me (As the resurrection) will never die, do you believe

this?"

Today, the revelation is fresher and more real than ever. The last trump is sounding louder and clearer. We see Him as He is appearing in the "cloud" of His spiritual people. Do we believe this? Do we believe what Paul wrote about and that which he so eagerly desired? Have we seen the mystery?

"Behold I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible MUST PUT ON INCORRUPTION, and this mortal MUST PUT ON IMMORTALITY." (I Cor.15: 51-52)

Believest thou this? Do we really believe that we are hearing the sound of the last trump? If so we must believe that we are at the door of this happening to those who have moved from glory to glory and are prepared for this last change.

Beloved, this is no pie in the sky promise. This is the word of God. The glory cloud has moved on...the song we sang long ago is more real now than ever, *The cloud of glory is moving...move with the cloud, move with the cloud!* This cloud is made up of all those who are awaiting eagerly this better resurrection.

Why is it called a "better resurrection?" It is because He appears as He is and He appears in us and we have been swallowed up into Him. Before He appeared to us in part, but this time He is appearing as He is, THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE. It is Himself and we are in Him forever. This is why we cannot die...we are as He is.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (I Jn.3:2) This truly is our hope and now it is about to come to pass. Hallelujah! He lives and we live!!

Because of His love, Jackie Caporaso