2020 08 30 Taking up the Cross.

Exodus 3:1-15. Psalm 105;1-6,23-26,45b.

Romans 12:9-21. Matthew 16:21-28.

There is a song with words that express the wonder and beauty of faith and trust and the certainty of the coming to Jesus, of cleansing and forgiveness and being free – yet – I cannot sing one specific word in that song and have tried for years to find a substitute word.

“At the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light  
And the burden of my heart rolled away  
It was there by faith I received my sight  
And now I am happy all the day.”

You will readily see the word – “happy”.

Happy is a superficial word – happy day,

A transient word – are you happy?

And so on.

? Can anyone suggest another word to express the eternal feeling, thought, gratefulness of knowing that “God loved me so much that He sent His only begotten Son into the world that I individually might not perish but have everlasting life!”[[1]](#footnote-1)?

Here are the rest of the words of the song – ‘song’ is to weak a word – ‘cry of the heart’ – ‘exultation of wonder’?

“Alas! and did my Saviour bleed  
And did my Sovereign die?  
Would He devote that sacred head  
For such a worm as I?

At the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light  
And the burden of my heart rolled away  
It was there by faith I received my sight  
And now I am happy all the day

Thy body slain, sweet Jesus, Thine  
And bathed in its own blood  
While the firm mark of wrath divine  
His soul in anguish stood

Was it for crimes that I had done  
He groaned upon the tree?  
Amazing pity! grace unknown!  
And love beyond degree!

Well might the sun in darkness hide  
And shut his glories in  
When Christ, the mighty Maker died  
For man the creature's sin

Thus might I hide my blushing face  
While His dear cross appears  
Dissolve my heart in thankfulness  
And melt my eyes to tears

But drops of grief can ne'er repay  
The debt of love I owe  
Here, Lord, I give myself away  
'Tis all that I can do

Songwriters: Ralph E. Hudson / George S. Schuler / Isaac Watts

Maybe the words are too much for us in the modern world, yet they express the wonder of Gods love.

The second part of a verse that fills it out is “Jesus became sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him”[[2]](#footnote-2)

It is not only the horror of the cross but the righteousness of God that fills us, that is attributed to us, that expands and flows out of us.

“Do not put new wine in old wine skins”[[3]](#footnote-3), our soul and spirits are renued, are new wine skins, “you are new creation in Jesus”[[4]](#footnote-4) but our physical bodies are the same and they will wear out – they are old wine skins. Paul wrote about this dilemma[[5]](#footnote-5)

# Romans 7:14-8:1

### The Conflict of Two Natures

**14**For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+7%3A14-8%3A1&version=NASB#fen-NASB-28106a)]into bondage to sin. **15**For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I *would* like to *do*, but I am doing the very thing I hate. **16**But if I do the very thing I do not want *to do*, I agree with the Law, *confessing* that the Law is good. **17**So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. **18**For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good *is* not. **19**For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. **20**But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

**21**I find then the [[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+7%3A14-8%3A1&version=NASB#fen-NASB-28113b)]principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. **22**For I joyfully concur with the law of God [[**c**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+7%3A14-8%3A1&version=NASB#fen-NASB-28114c)**]in the inner man**, **23**but I see a different law in [[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+7%3A14-8%3A1&version=NASB#fen-NASB-28115d)]**the members of my body**, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner [[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+7%3A14-8%3A1&version=NASB#fen-NASB-28115e)]of the law of sin which is in my members. **24**Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from [[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+7%3A14-8%3A1&version=NASB#fen-NASB-28116f)]the body of this death? **25*Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!*** So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

**The two natures the old and the new – whatever happens the old body will perish and the new spirit born in us at our coming to Jesus in repentance will live for eternity.**

**Take up your cross and follow me.**

**Paul goes on:**

**8**Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

**2**For the law of the Spirit of life [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A2-8&version=NASB#fen-NASB-28119a)]in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. **3**For what the Law could not do, [[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A2-8&version=NASB#fen-NASB-28120b)]weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of [[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A2-8&version=NASB#fen-NASB-28120c)]sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, **4**so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. **5**For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. **6**For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, **7**because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*, **8**and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

“Take **My** **yoke** **upon** **you** and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and **you** will find rest for **you**r souls.”[[6]](#footnote-6) There is rest, peace for our souls in following Jesus.

When Jesus carried the cross , when he died upon it he carried our sins, when we take up our cross and follow Him we are people forgiven and do not carry any sins –taking up our cross it is not a statement / command that is a sad burden, it is not a ‘durrg’ that we are commanded to live – it is freedom -Jesus’ cross brings us freedom.

We are made the rightness of God because Jesus became sin itself for us – and yet because he himself was without sin he defeated death which is the end result of sin – he descended into hell but on the third day he rose again – clean – free – God the Son our brother who brings us to God, who asked the Father to send Holy Spirit – Gods very essence to live in us and be our guide and friend and confidant.

“With the wings of love I have drawn you.”[[7]](#footnote-7)

We still live in this body and we are still tempted and we still have an enemy who hates us with an utter intensity yet we are free to choose who we are and the Romans reading brings some of the practicalities of this to us:

**Romans 12:9-21 NASB**

**9***Let* love *be* without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. **10***Be* devoted to one another in brotherly love; [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%2012:9-21&version=NASB#fen-NASB-28256a)]give preference to one another in honour; **11**not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; **12**rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, **13**contributing to the needs of the [[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%2012:9-21&version=NASB#fen-NASB-28259b)]saints, [[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%2012:9-21&version=NASB#fen-NASB-28259c)]practicing hospitality.

**14**Bless those who persecute [[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%2012:9-21&version=NASB#fen-NASB-28260d)]you; bless and do not curse. **15**Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. **16**Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but [[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%2012:9-21&version=NASB#fen-NASB-28262e)]associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. **17**Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. [[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%2012:9-21&version=NASB#fen-NASB-28263f)]Respect what is right in the sight of all men. **18**If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. **19**Never take your own revenge, beloved, but [[g](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%2012:9-21&version=NASB#fen-NASB-28265g)]leave room for the wrath *of God*, for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. **20**“But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will reap burning coals on his head.” **21**Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

May seem hard but two things: two irreversible promises by God:

1) “I will not let you be tempted more than you can bear, but will with the temptation make a way to escape that you may be able to endure it”[[8]](#footnote-8)

2) “Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholds *him with* his hand. “[[9]](#footnote-9)

Some people say things like “such and such is the cross I have to bear”’ nonsense – this is not the cross of Jesus: Jesus “said my yoke is light”, Even Paul himself had a “thorn in the flesh” which he had ask God to take away but after three requests his God said “No, My strength is made perfect in your weakness.”[[10]](#footnote-10) And Paul was content.

“Jesus was anointed with the oil of gladness more than any man”[[11]](#footnote-11) – “for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross – despising the shame and sat down at the right hand of God.”[[12]](#footnote-12) and our attitude to living must be like his – yes there are hard times and dull times and flying times – yet Gods Presence is always with us[[13]](#footnote-13) – not such a hard cross to bear is it?

Additional verses:

Jesus was tempted in every manner that we can be – yet without sin and resisting sin is a heavy burden –

He learned obedience by the things that he suffered. Hebrew 5:8

If our Lord had to face temptation to learn to resist and to choose Gods ways – how can we think to be different.

Romans 8:32 since he did not spare his own son

1. John 3:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 2 Corinthians 5:21 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Matthew 9:17. Mark 2:22 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 2 Corinthians 5:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Romans 7.& 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Matthew 11:29 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Isaiah 40:31. Exodus 19:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. 1 Corinthians 10:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Psalm 37:24 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. 2 Corinthians 12:8-10 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Hebrews 1:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Hebrews 12:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” Hebrews 13:5. Joshua 1:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)