



OUR DELIVERANCE

HOW JESUS UNTANGLED US



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INTRODUCTION TO LIFE UNTANGLED

Did you know God cares about all the big stuff and the little stuff in your life, because He cares about YOU? He knows your struggles. Your hurts. Your wounds.

He wants to show you the source of your mess (because we ALL have mess). And then, He wants you to trust Him to lead you to a place of healing and hope. He is eager to help you learn to depend on Him for ALL things!

Welcome to Life Untangled, where God's love meets our chaos!

We know that most people, even Christians, can feel bogged down and tangled up with the circumstances of life. The writer of Hebrews talks about how sin and emotional wounds have tangled us up so much that we're not able to run this race we call life:

“Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1-2).

That first verse says to lay aside, or let go. You might be thinking, “I tried to let go, and I can't”!

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Letting go happens when we more fully understand the amazing gifts God gave us in Jesus, and the wonderful changes He made in us when we got saved.

In this new e-book series, you will see how we were not only designed to become His children through salvation, but to depend on Him as our actual source of life. We will discover our true selves, and we will see how doing life God's way is the best way!

No matter where you are, He loves you, mess and all, and He's on your side.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM THIS E-BOOK?

In this e-book, the fourth in our “Life Untangled” series, we will focus on our untangling — that is, our deliverance through the cross of Christ.

“For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:13-14).

In the beginning, we were created in His image, and designed to have fellowship with Him. Adam and Eve were with God every day in the Garden of Eden. There was nothing separating them. Then, Adam and Eve sinned, resulting in separation and spiritual death (meaning their spirits died, and ours too).

But that wasn’t the end of the story.

Paul tells us in Romans, “For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous” (Romans 5:19). **God makes us righteous through Jesus’ death on the cross**, and gives us His life so that we are no longer spiritually dead and no longer slaves to sin!

We often refer to this as the Exchanged Life. You see, at salvation, your life was exchanged for Christ’s life--you and I now have Christ living in us! That doesn’t mean we never sin or mess up though. We have a choice to walk after the flesh, or walk in the Spirit: **“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts” (Romans 13:14).**

In this e-book, we're going to take a closer look at deliverance. What exactly did Jesus' work on the Cross accomplish for those of us who place our trust in Him? What does it mean to be saved? If someone asked you right now, what would you say to them?

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

WHAT IS SALVATION? AND WHAT IT ISN'T

Let's start with what salvation is NOT.

Salvation is not something you can earn by doing 'good' things, trying harder, or trying not to sin. It's literally impossible.

Do you remember what Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us? *“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”*

Did you catch the “not of yourselves” part? Salvation is a free gift. It is received, not earned. It is something Jesus has already accomplished for us. It is not a reward for good behavior.

Salvation is also not just a ‘get out of hell’ card.

Salvation is our deliverance from the penalty and power of sin. We have been forgiven and made new. We have been brought back to God, back into the family, and back into relationship with Him.

Although we are still in the presence of sin, we can now live from the indwelling, empowering presence of Christ! Jesus' life is our new life. We can trust Christ as our source for love, joy, peace, wisdom, hope and adequacy. He has enough to fill us up!

Salvation also doesn't mean that we'll never sin again. Remember, each day and in fact every moment, we can walk according to the Spirit, or to the Flesh. The good news is that when we do sin, we haven't erased or nullified Jesus' work. We are still saved, righteous, saints, forgiven, new creations — you get the point.

Do you ever feel like when you've messed up, you have to earn your way back to God instead of resting on what Jesus has already done? Why do you think we can struggle with this?

Salvation also isn't something that only some people need. We ALL need Jesus! Do you remember why the entirety of the human race needs to get saved in the first place?

After Adam and Eve sinned, everyone that came after them was born *into* Adam, and therefore into sin.

People find this hard to believe, or even unfair.

But let me ask you: have you ever studied the behavior of babies and little children? Yes, they are sweet and precious and small, and we love them so — but they can also be quite fierce! When that baby doesn't get what they want, or doesn't get their needs met, they sure can throw a fit, can't they? Right from the get-go, we are born selfish, living to get our own needs met, and willing to do whatever it takes to make that happen.

You see, Adam chose to do life his way, resulting in spiritual death and separation from God — for him, and for all of his descendants.

In summary, the Fall created two big problems for all of mankind:

- Right from birth, we are born sinners, separated from God.
- We are without life in our spirit. Instead of being spiritually alive to God, we are alive to sin. We strive to meet our needs independent of God, dependent on what we can achieve.

Before we delve into exploring what salvation is, and how it solved these two problems, let's pause for a second and reflect on God's love. His love is why we're here. His love is why there was a Garden in the first place, and why He sent Jesus, and why you and I can live

in hope and freedom.

*“Beloved, let us love one another, **for love is from God**; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:7-10).*

Now go ahead and circle or underline every instance of the word ‘love’ in that passage. Wow! How many times was it used? Take a few minutes to reflect on God’s love, inviting Him to give you a revelation of how deep, and wide and unconditional His love is for YOU!

Okay, now let’s look at what salvation actually is.

Ephesians 1:7-8 tells us, “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us.”

Salvation, therefore, deals with these two fundamental problems on the Cross.

“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the

ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them” (Ephesians 2:1-10).

Ephesians 2:1-10 explains the human condition, without Jesus, in this way:

- We are dead in our trespasses and sins
- We live in the lusts of our flesh (we rely on ourselves to meet our needs)
- We are children of wrath...

...But, God! As some would say, the two most important words in the English language. *But God.*

But God, in His great mercy and love, provided a solution.

And because of HIS WORK, we’re no longer spiritually dead, and no longer separated from God by our sins! Those of us who are Christians can rejoice in the truth that:

•We are made alive in Christ

- We are raised up with Him
- We are seated with Jesus in heavenly places
- We have been saved by grace through faith — which is a free gift, no strings attached!
- We are His workmanship, made to do good works

In the following sections, we’re going to take a deeper look into God’s great rescue plan.

Before we do, take some time to reflect and journal. What is YOUR salvation story? What was life like before and after Jesus?

CO-CRUCIFIXION, BURIAL & RESURRECTION

Do you know that we are co-crucified with Christ? Do you know why that needed to happen? Do you know what that means?

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Galatians 2:20).

When you identify with Jesus’ death on the Cross, it means that you are dying to the old system (Old Covenant) of trying to please God with your good behavior, sacrifices, and rule-following. If you’ve read the Old Testament, you know that no human was able to live up to God’s law.

And because Jesus died and then rose again, it means we too died to our old selves, and were raised from the dead — but this time, we came alive to God, made new. Whole. Perfect. Righteous. Spiritually alive. Sons and daughters of God. No longer children of wrath.

The old man is dead! All of your baggage, all of your failures, all of your hurts, all of your pain, all of your shortcomings — everything. It’s all gone. You are made new!

“Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ... knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin” (Romans 6:3, 6).

Let's take the example of having cancer.

If your doctor wants to treat the symptoms of cancer (fatigue, unexpected weight loss, organ failure), what's going to happen? Well, the cancer is still in you, so it's going to keep spreading and causing more health problems.

What you want your doctor to do instead is to remove the cancer itself.

You see, in the New Covenant, God doesn't just provide a way for our sins to be covered (like in the Old Testament, where they had to keep offering sacrifices over and over).

In the New Covenant, we are co-crucified with Jesus, meaning that God took out the part of us that made us sinners, effectively solving the sin problem, once and for all: "As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12).

He took out that dead spirit, and He gave us a new spirit, His Spirit, living inside of us and doing life with us. Before, we relied on our own efforts, abilities and experiences to live life; but now, we have a new source of life to rely on.

The Bible tells us:

"Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:8-11).

We received God Himself in us to guide us through life!

We are dead to sin, and alive to righteousness, and in every waking moment, we have a choice to live from our old habits, or live out of God's Spirit.

Your old self is dead. You are not who you were. This is our co-burial with Christ. Romans 6:4-5 explains:

“Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection.”

So if the old you is dead, that means you identify with Jesus' resurrection too. These two scriptures in Colossians and Ephesians tell us the good news that we have been raised up from the dead with Christ:

“Therefore if (since) you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God” (Colossians 3:1), and

“...even when we were dead in our transgressions, (God) made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:5-6).

Is this 'co' idea new to you? Is it the first time you've read these Scriptures and contemplated that you have been co-crucified, co-buried, and co-resurrected with Jesus? How does that make you feel? Why did we need to identify with Jesus in his crucifixion, burial, and resurrection in order to be born again?

EVERYTHING CHANGED (AND SO DID WE)

Jesus, once and for all, defeated death. In that moment when death was defeated, everything changed. Sinners were freed. Children were brought into God's Kingdom. A New Covenant was established.

So how exactly did you and I change?

At salvation, your life was exchanged for Christ's life. We now have Christ living in us, just as we are in Him. We have a choice to walk after the flesh, or walk in the Spirit. We often call this the 'Exchanged Life'.

The Cross of Christ exchanged our OLD life for a NEW life. At the moment of your salvation, your life was exchanged for Christ's life. You and I now have Christ living in us, and we are in Him. Victorious living is Christ living His life through us, by faith.

That means it's not about your performance. It's about yielding, surrendering, listening and letting Jesus live in and through you!

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me" (Galatians 2:20).

This may not always feel like it's true, but it is. And if you've ever wondered: **is Jesus really living inside me?** Even when I'm messing up, is He still here? The answer is yes and **yes!** Remember, He did all of this because He loves you.

Do you ever struggle to ‘feel’ or experience this as truth? If so, why do you think that is?

Much of this comes down to the choices we make. We can strive to meet our needs by the flesh (our own efforts and abilities, independent of God), or we can trust Jesus and walk in the Spirit. Galatians 5 gives us some key insights into walking by the Spirit:

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. *For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control;** against such things there is no law.”*

As we yield to Jesus and abide in Him, we enjoy His presence, and we experience the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians. This is experiencing victorious Christian living.

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing” (John 15:4-5).

But sometimes, Christians experience death, don’t we?

We're not talking about physical death or spiritual death here. We're talking about experiencing the consequences of living according to the flesh, trying to meet our needs independent of God, and relying on other things or people (instead of Jesus). For instance, when we are confronted about a mistake or failure, we might react by defending, justifying, or blaming. This results in a lot of frustration and failure — the opposite of what God has for us.

Walking in the Spirit means living from our true identity.

- God crucified our identity in Adam and gave us a new one, in Christ:
- We are saints
- We are righteous and holy
- We are children of God
- We are free from the bondage of sin
- We have the mind of Christ
- We are loved, forgiven, redeemed, accepted, worthy, secure and significant!

Do you believe this is your true identity? Why or why not? Re-write the points above, write out “I am a saint...” and so forth. If it would help, write these reminders about who you are in Christ on sticky notes and put them around your house!

This new identity that Jesus has given us is unshakeable.

Can't be lost. It is who you are at the core. Of course, you may be thinking “I don't always act like this. In fact, I know a lot of Christians who don't act like this either!” And it's true.

You see, this is WHO we are, but it is not always HOW we act. How we act is a matter of choice. The amazing thing is that, even when we do mess up, our identity is still the same. And Jesus is still here, living inside us, waiting for us to trust Him and do life with Him.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Do you see that God's plan, and Jesus' work on the Cross is complete and perfect? That salvation is received, not earned? That it's a free gift?

The day you got saved, you got so much more than a 'get out of hell' card. You got a new life and a new beginning in Christ. The day you got saved, your life was exchanged for Christ's life. Jesus is living in you, and you are in Him!

Even on your worst day, your 'status' with God remains the same.

You are loved! You are saved. You are a new creation. You have a new identity. You have a new destiny. You are His child — and oh how He adores you!

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10).

I want you to take a moment and let this sink in. Then, ask yourself this: Do I believe that sin is off the table? Do I really and truly believe that I'm not defined by my sin? Do I believe that God loves me unconditionally?

If you didn't answer with a big, emphatic YES, that's okay. But sit down and reflect on that. Identify what's getting in your way. What's stopping you from saying yes with your whole heart?

Do you need to go back to our first ebook in this series, *The Designer: Untangling Our Concept of God*, and be reminded that God

is not mad at you? Rest in the fact that He loves you, and is pursuing you, because that's who He is - a good, good Father!

Are you hung up on the times when you do mess up? If so, why?

Remember, we are all born into Adam. By default. Sinners, right from the get-go.

But that's why, from the very beginning, God knew, and He had a rescue plan. A perfect plan.

Let this truth cascade over you, and let it give you hope! Who you are in Christ doesn't change, even on your worst day. Salvation is the union of you and God, establishing a never-ending and unbreakable relationship with Christ.

In our next ebook, *Our Destiny: How to Live Untangled*, we look at the life we can have as children of God. What does God have for us? How do we live out this new life we have in Christ?