

## DEALING WITH THE SELF

Now we come to see the matter of **dealing with self**. This experience is very closely related to dealing with the flesh. If we wish to pursue **the experience of the cross**, we should know the definition and differentiation of these **seven items** very clearly, because these are the objects of the dealing of the cross:

The **old man** refers to our very being, **the created and fallen man**. “**I**” is **the title** which the old man calls himself. The old man is the “**I**,” and the “**I**” is the old man. The **soul life** is **the life** of the old man [possesses]... These three are one. The old man is the man of the old creation which is in Adam, the soul life is the life of this old man, and “**I**” is the title which the old man calls himself.

The **flesh** is **the living out** of the old man, or **the living** of the old man... The **temper** is man’s... **bad temperament**. **Self**, as we have seen, is **the soul life as expressed in the human idea and opinion**. The **natural constitution** is our natural **ability, capability, and wit**. If we join these seven items together, we may state the following: **There is a created, fallen man whose name is the old man. He calls himself “I.” The life within him is the soul life, which when being lived out is the flesh. In this flesh there is a part which is bad, the irritability and anger of which is called the temper... In the flesh there is also a good part, the opinion and idea of which is called the self, and the ability and capability of which is called the natural constitution.**

### Experience of the Cross

These seven items are the objects of the dealing of the cross. Yet these dealings differ. When we see this fact and acknowledge that the Lord has done away with the old man **on the cross**, then we can say, “I am crucified with Christ”... After this acknowledgement, we need to experience this cross in dealing with these last five items: our soul life, our flesh, our temper, our self, and our natural constitution.

Therefore, the whole experience of the cross lies in the following three steps: **first**, the crucifying of our old man, which is an objective fact accomplished by Christ; **second**, when we acknowledge and receive this fact, it becomes “I am crucified with Christ”; **third**, when we go on to experience this fact subjectively, there are **five different points**, which are due to the five different aspects of the old man. **First**, the old man has a soul life, which when being lived out is expressed in the flesh, temper, self, and the natural constitution. As we apply in our experience the crucifixion with Christ through the Holy Spirit to our soul life, **that is dealing with the soul life**. **Second**, when we apply the death of the cross

to whatever is lived out from our soul life, whether it be good or bad, **that is dealing with the flesh**. **Third**, dealing with the flesh includes also **dealing with the temper**. **Fourth**, when we apply the death of the cross to our opinions and ideas, **that is dealing with self**, or bearing the cross. **Fifth**, when we apply the death of the cross to our maneuvering, capability, ability, methods, wisdom, and knowledge, that is **dealing with the natural constitution**, or the breaking of the cross.

### **Dealing with Self – The Objective Fact**

The objective fact in dealing with self, just as in dealing with the flesh, rests in Christ; that is, our old man has been crucified with Him... With God, the problem of the old man has already been solved; thus self, which is of the old man, has also been solved. **Therefore, on the objective side, the only fact is that our old man has been crucified; but on the subjective side, there is more to it.** *It is like having a chicken dinner: what we have killed is a chicken, but when it is being served on the table, there are many different parts—the breast, the legs, the wings, etc.* Similarly, when the Lord was crucified, He solved the problem of our old man, but since the old man has various facets, there are likewise various aspects of dealings in our experience. One aspect is the dealing with the soul life; other aspects are the dealings with flesh, temper, self, and the breaking of the natural constitution. These are our experience of the cross.

### **Dealing with Self -- The Subjective Experience**

The subjective experience in dealing with the self, just as in dealing with the flesh, is **through the Holy Spirit**. If we have seen the fact that our old man has been crucified, then in our daily living, whenever we discover the expressing of our own ideas or opinions, we must let the Holy Spirit work the death of the cross upon these ideas and opinions to put them to death. This is our subjective experience in dealing with self.

### **The Process of Dealing with the Self**

The process in dealing with self is quite similar to that of dealing with the flesh. The **first** requirement is to see the fact that our old man has been crucified. This means that we must receive revelation from God that we may see that our old man has been crucified with Christ. [**Secondly**], If one only sees that the old man has been crucified and yet does not **recognize the manners or ways in which the old man is being expressed**, he cannot have the subjective experience. Therefore, the first step in our dealing with self subjectively is to see that our opinions are one of the **expressions of the old man**.

Once we know that our old man has been crucified and done away with in Christ, and once we realize that opinions and ideas are the expression of the old man, we naturally **will not allow** the old man to express itself again in opinions. Therefore, we will apply the crucifixion of Christ through the Holy Spirit to our opinions. This is our subjective experience in dealing with self. This is also what the Lord refers to in Matthew 16 as the denying of self and the bearing of the cross.

The bearing of the cross differs from the crucifixion. The accomplished fact of Christ on the cross is called the crucifixion, while our **daily experience of the cross is called the bearing of the cross**. Hence, the crucifixion is accomplished by the Lord, and the bearing of the cross is our responsibility in experiencing it. The crucifixion on Calvary has been accomplished by the Lord once for all, and when we receive what the Lord has accomplished on the cross, we receive it once for all. But when we go on to experience this cross, we bear it continuously...

### **Dealing with the Self -- Applying the Experience**

The applying of the experience of dealing with self is firstly **in the fellowship in the Holy Spirit**. Though we understand the crucifying of the old man and know that our opinions are the expression of self, yet if we do not live in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, it is but an empty doctrine and does not afford any practical experience.

If we live in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and touch the Holy Spirit, then we must allow the Holy Spirit to **execute the crucifixion of Christ upon all our living and actions**. This allowing is our cooperation with the Holy Spirit. When we allow the Holy Spirit to perform His work in us, it means that we are cooperating with Him. In this way it is on one hand that we apply the crucifixion of Christ through the Holy Spirit, and on the other hand that we let the Holy Spirit execute **Christ's crucifixion** in us. On one hand it is our doing, and on the other hand it is the working of the Holy Spirit—it is impossible to separate one from the other in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

### **The Relationship to Satan**

Hidden in the self of man is Satan. Not only is Satan the sin in our body, but he is also the **good** opinions in our self. When speaking of sin, many people are aware of its corruption; therefore, they hate sin and condemn it. But when mention is made of opinions, many people think of them as **good**...

A brother once testified that whenever he encountered a situation and within him there was an opinion he desired to express, if he did not express it, he would feel very “itchy” inside. This is really true... Whenever an opium-addict is confronted with opium, he feels itchy; whenever a gambler sees the gambling devices, he feels itchy. In the same manner, when Satan works in man’s mind and gives man an opinion, man becomes itchy within and cannot help but express it. Therefore, just as sin is the result of the desires of man’s flesh, so also is **our opinion the result of the desires of man’s mind**. Both are the result of the working of Satan within man.

We deeply need to ask the Lord to give us a full turn in our concept in the light of these words. We must see that if sin is horrible, much more so is our opinion. If to resist the enemy we need to resist sin, much more do we need to deny our opinions. We need to put to death all our opinions through the cross. Thus, we deny ourselves in a practical way, we deny thoroughly the place of Satan in us, and we overthrow Satan’s stronghold in us.