

# What If Deliverance Never Comes?

By Fred Pruitt

(Someone wrote about a family member, who has known and believed, "Not I but Christ," for some time, but has had a continuing serious bout with alcoholism at the same time. The question, paraphrased, was, "How can Christ be his life and Gal 2:20 be true for him and yet he cannot quit drinking and is bound by sin?")

Thank you for writing and sharing your life a little with me. I think we're all touched one way or another by alcoholism, drug addictions, etc. So I understand and am very familiar with your heart in this matter. Let's just say it is close to me.

Interestingly, (just from my perspective), you are the second person in the immediate past who has written me about not being able to overcome something habitual, even though they had been to the Lord with it, believed, etc., but still could not escape. It is a very very common problem.

And I see by your history that you've run the gamut of "solutions." Medical world, psych world, rehab world, Christian world, it looks like you've left no stone unturned. I'm not mentioning these past attempts at treatment of the problem as if they are wrong. People are helped medically, psychologically, and through rehab programs all the time. You mentioned the many times he's been "prayed over" and "anointed with oil," words of faith, etc., among believers, and we do not discount that in any way. There are numerous testimonies of people being "instantly delivered" from things like that, and I have seen it myself. It is a fact that through all those ways, people are helped to escape substance abuse problems and many other things. But when you run down the list of the things tried during these years, it almost reminds me of the woman with the issue of blood, who had spent all her living on physicians but none had been able to heal her. Jesus was not slamming doctors (though they were pretty primitive back in those days!), but just noting her situation. She'd tried everything and nothing had worked. So without slamming any of those methods, we just note that none of them had "worked" for him.

And then after all that, you ask, "if Christ lives in and through him, why can't he stop drinking?" And then your final comment, "but I don't understand how we as Christians who believe Gal. 2:20 with all their hearts can be bound by sin."

Fair question! Especially since it is the Lord Who has made the promises! It seems to me, since we "have believed" His Word -- that whatever we ask we shall have, said in various ways throughout the gospels -- then as the Promise-receivers, we have something of a "right," (maybe that's part of coming "boldly" before the Throne of Grace), to question these things and desire to know "why" it seems like the opposite, that we do NOT have that for which we have asked, even though He has promised over and over that we would. Does God not keep His Promises?

It is easiest to take the low road, that it is something about us. After all, the normal thinking goes, if Christ truly were living this life, then we could do \_\_\_\_\_, or we would NOT do \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank). So we "let God off the hook" regarding unfulfilled promises (as it appears to us), by taking any failure on ourselves, that it's me, not He. We admit to things like, "I must not have enough faith," or, "I don't want it enough," or, "I must want it for selfish reasons," and a whole host of other excuses for "God not coming through."

First, let's start here with this statement/question of yours: "I don't understand how we as Christians who believe Gal. 2:20 with all their hearts can be bound by sin."

The immediate answer to that is that Christ cannot be bound by sin. And since He has come into the temple of our selves, and He and we have declared Him Lord of Lords and King of

Kings in whatever way that has happened – since he grafted us into God’s Vine and we as branches on that True Vine – since in His death and burial He fulfilled the law of sacrifice as the “Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29) – since in His death and deliverance from the accumulated sins of all mankind from the beginning to the end, we also died to sin/Satan and died to the law (Rom 6 & 7) – since when He rose by the Spirit of the Father, we rose with Him into newness of Life by the same Spirit (Rom 6:4) – since we know that the “*law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set ME free from the law of sin and death*” (Rom 8:2) – since we know that in Jesus Christ we are made one “person” with God (1 Cor 6:17) – since we know all that is true, then how can we say he is bound by sin? Christ has taken sin (Satan) out of him, and replaced sin with Himself, Who is righteousness, and he is the vessel of Christ Whose light shines out of darkness.

*“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” (2 Cor 5:21).*

Also,

*By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;*

*but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD,*

*waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET.*

*For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.*

*And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying,*

*"THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM*

*AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD:*

*I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART,*

*AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM,"*

*He then says,*

*"AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS*

*I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE."*

*Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.*

*(Heb 10:10-18 NASB).*

So then we toss out the issue of “bound by sin,” because it is not the truth. He is NOT bound by sin, because the Lamb of God has taken it away. But then, what about the evidence of our eyes, ears and mind, when he binges and gets into trouble on all fronts? What IS the truth? Do we bow to the devil who is teasing us and him with his taunts: “See, you’re not really dead to sin. Look at you. You are not committed to Christ. I’ve still got control over you!”?

Do we take that? Or do we declare that snake a liar because he speaks lies? He is the ultimate “spin doctor.” The “facts” of his problems are in plain evidence. There is no disputation of that. As the defense attorneys say in TV courtrooms, “We’ll stipulate to that, your Honor. Yes, those events occurred, and yes, it was my client who was a perpetrator, and he really did binge for a month and he really did drink all that alcohol, and the problems his behaviors have created are serious and real.”

Where do we go from there? I think first we have to see through the veil to who he really is.

Who is he? Since we know he is in Christ, then he is the righteousness of God in bodily form. He is a temple of the Holy Spirit by Whom he has fellowship with the Father and the Son. He is a chosen vessel of mercy. He is "His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Eph 2:10). He is the "elect" of God, as the Lord has declared. (Col 3:12; Is 42:1; Rom 8:33; 1 Thes 1:4; 1 Pet 1:1,2). That is the truth about him.

Or do we agree with those who observe and judge others' lives, when beholding others on their crosses, or in dire circumstances which to their minds must be the result of sin (as Job's three friends took so much time to tell Job), and say, "*There is no help for him in God.*" (Ps 3:2)? (That is not just saying God will not help him. It is denying who he is in Christ, as the continual "accuser of the brethren," he never lets up. "*If he's the son of God, let's see him come down from the cross!*" (Matt 27:40).

The accusing and condemning voices seem to proliferate day by day. "You are a sinner. You have no self-control, you don't care what God says, if you really were who you say you are you could overcome this problem."

On and on the voices accuse.

But as we referred to above, Romans 8:33, "*Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?*" And also Romans 14:4, "*Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.*"

So that is where we MUST\* plant our feet. There is only one battle, and only one victory. It is the battle of faith. And the battle of faith is an inner struggle, in which the outcome has nothing to do with the outer appearances even though instigated by them, and yet it may drastically affect or change those appearances. No matter what some may say, the "appearances" are not the point or ultimate goal.

The victory is inner, because true reality is inner, what we call "the invisible." We who are in Christ are well-schooled in living after the "invisible," for who of us has ever seen the Object of our deepest affection, the Ultimate Hope and Anchor of our souls? And yet we believe and stake our whole lives on something we have never seen, nor have we any clear empirical evidence by which we may prove our "belief," and thus we "appear" as fools in the world. Still, not seeing, we believe!

And that is what you are left with, and in truth all you have ever had from the beginning until now. The "invisible." But of course I do not mean an invisible "nothing," but rather the Living God Who is over all, "*above all, through all and in you all.*" There is no place where He is not, "*above all, through all and in you all.*" (Eph 4:6).

Here is the work and end of the Accuser:

*"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."* (Rev 12:10,11).

Now when he says, "I heard a loud voice ... in heaven," it is we, we who have been transported into the inner sanctuary, the throne of All Power, the Throne that decrees the only decrees that are decreed; it is we who hear this voice in that place. The voice announces that NOW IS come salvation, strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ. It is here, now, in the inmost place of all, so says the "loud voice." Let's understand what it means by "loud voice."

It is a voice that demands to be HEARD! "Listen up," it is saying. This is true in you! But that is not all.

How did they overcome him, who had continuously accused them before God day and night? Was it by great feats and demonstrations of greater power? Were they able to point to themselves and claim any right of defense? Were they able to point to themselves and contend with the accuser line upon line, precept upon precept, debating him while trying to justify themselves by the law? No, they cannot, because he is a skilled solicitor, knowing every twist, turn and loophole in the law, and he uses the Holy Law of God as his weapon, and daily he brings railing accusations against them out of the law.

But the accusations are cast out with him into outer darkness, because that *"handwriting of ordinances which was against us,"* (Col 2:14), was nailed to His Cross, and the reply to any and all of his lying accusations are answered, nullified and cast out by the Blood of the Lamb, through which none of his lies can penetrate.

That is the heavenly reality, the inner truth in this current moment for all who are His. And let it sink in, that this "inner truth, is "The Truth." It is not just some mind-game we play with ourselves and comfort ourselves with as a way to cope with distressing circumstances. It is THE TRUTH. All his accusations fall to the ground at the Blood of the Lamb and have no worth, but are just puffs of smoke.

And that "overcoming" is enacted in us by "the word of [our] testimony," that is, our word of agreement, of faith, of receiving, that we have no answer to the accuser except the blood of the Lamb, by which we are forever cleansed and delivered. And that word of our testimony becomes our "overcoming," as John also says, *"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"* (1 Jn 5: 4,5).

And then it says, *"and they loved not their lives unto the death,"* which means they have freely recognized their position as "lambs of God," that God might demonstrate His process of death and resurrection by *"accounting us as sheep for the slaughter."* (Rom 8:36). That means that for those lambs, they recognize that they do not own themselves, but are bought with a price, and no longer serve themselves, but place their lives willingly on the altar of sacrifice for the benefit of the saints and the Lord's purposes, wherever that may lead.

As it is also true for us: *"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you."* (2 Cor 4:10-12).

And that is what I am telling you, that, instead of seeing all the problems and the failures as evidence of his bondage to sin, which is Satan's lie, let us see and stand on the truth, that He is Christ in his human form, and testify from that place, both you and he, that you and he and Christ are one, and that even though it appears as if sin still reigns, it is instead the mighty power of intercession, whereby our lives are expended for the benefit of others in any way the Lord pleases.

Now of course, people are going to object with, "The Lord would not 'please' to manifest anyone as an alcoholic. The Lord would never do that." But He put His own Son to death, and it says *"it pleased the Lord to bruise Him,"* (Isa 53:10), and He was made a curse and was *"numbered among the transgressors."*

"Yes," they may counter, "but the Lord went without sin, and certainly you cannot say that your 'intercession' is without sin!"

Show me the sin! Who here, with his will and heart, has turned against God and refuses to do His will?

Have they been acknowledged, the sins of the past? Of course they have!

Have they been provided for perfectly forever, so that there IS NO MORE NECCESITY for any further sacrifice for sin? If sin were still the issue, then what of this: *“Having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, He SAT down ...waiting until His enemies were made His footstool ... For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified”?* (Ref above). “One sacrifice for sins for all time?” YES!!

What about “willingness” as it regards “sin?” Has he said, “I want to sin.”? Of course not, he is in that place where he delights in the law of God after the inward man, though for a time he seems overcome and cannot escape. But all that is, is God’s timing, nothing more, nothing less. *“My times are in thy hand,”* said the Psalmist! (Ps 31:15).

This is the part where Christ is seated in the place of authority over the entire universe, knowing, *“All power in heaven and earth is given unto me,”* (Matt 28:18), as established fact and truth which cannot be undone or resisted, and in that restful authority, He sits, “waiting” as the enemies, one by one, fall before Him and declare Him Lord of all – *“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”* (Phil 2:10).

It's all done, and we can testify that it is. The enemy is defeated. The Lord has delivered!

Now, what of the problem with alcohol? Am I saying to go on and just accept the fact that he is an alcoholic, and always will be? Exactly the opposite! It is not permanent, but is instead the means to God's end, which is of course means “God” to him, as we need not restate Rom 8:28.

God's “end” for him is something he may confess for himself: *“I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD. The LORD hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.”* (Ps 118:17-18). And we know this “chastening” is not something punitive, but rather how Jacob became Israel, and Joseph the dreamer became Joseph, Regent of Egypt, and deliverer of Israel.

And all of these, from start to finish, are the works of the only One Who says that *“all things are worked after the counsel of His own will.”* (Eph 1:11).

So let's see this new man, who is only the “new man,” despite the challenges and appearances of the flesh, trusting God to keep him as only God can do, and that whether the alcohol ever goes or does not go, nevertheless God will glorify Himself in, through, and as him, and he has that glory in himself even now!

Be not afraid, only believe!

(\*If anyone who does not understand the difference between my usage of “the divine MUST,” and the “you should” of the law, it is simply the difference between our self-effort to “try” to do something to add to ourselves, and the inner unction of the Spirit which comes out as, “we MUST do this,” because we cannot help it. It is the “love drive” of the Spirit moving us.)