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Sylvia D. Pearce
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The Life of an Intercessor CO-SAVIORS (Apostles) (I Cor. 4:9-15; Obadiah 17:21)

- **Ezek.22:30** I sought for a man among them to stand in the gap
- **Isa.53:4** Bore our grief, carried our sorrows
- **Col.1:24** Fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ
- **Phil.3:10-11** The fellowship of His suffering, being made conformable unto His death
- **Rom.8:32** He spared not his own son, how shall He spare us
- **Rom.8:36** We are killed all the day long-sheep to the slaughter, yet more than conquerors
- **2Cor.4:10** Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus
- **2 Cor.4:12** So then death works in us, but life in you
- **Ex.32:32** Blot me out of thy book which thy has written
- **Rom.9:1** I wish that myself were accursed for my brethren sake
- **Rom.12:2** Present your bodies a living sacrifice
- **Rom.15:2** Bear the infirmities of the weak
- **Rom.15:3** The reproaches of them fell on me
- **Gal.6:2** Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ
- **Ezek.4:5** I have laid on you the years of their iniquity
- **Gal.2:20** We are crucified with Him, this justifies us
- **Col.1:27** We are raised with Him,, this sanctifies us
- **Eph.2:6** We are ascended with him, inheriting His throne rights for co-savoir- hood This glorifies us
- **Gal.4:19** Paul travailed until Christ be formed in the Galatians

The Sacrificial Lamb is Now the Enthroned Christ, and We with Him!

I think that most of us Christians never consider what the life of an Apostle/Co-Savior is about. Among his churches, Paul's authority as an Apostle was so often misunderstood, and discredited. I believe that the two Corinthians letters are the highest presentations in the New Testament on this most misunderstood ministry. Let us examine what the scriptures say concerning Apostles.

I Corinthians 4:8-15 gives the amazing credentials of an apostle. Paul was addressing the Corinthian church. They had the power gifts, although they lacked Spiritual Wisdom which would rightly balance them out. Paul considered them "yet carnal" in their understanding. Frequent manifestation of these power gifts would make the carnal Corinthians think that Paul's Apostleship should manifest itself the same way. It was true Paul wasn't lacking in any of the Spiritual gifts, and there were powerful and frequent demonstrations of the Spirit by him (II Cor.12:12). However Paul did not major or glory in the powerful demonstrations of the Holy Spirit manifested through him. He gloried in his trials; in his infirmities; his pressures; and in his human weaknesses. Paul surely had

something much deeper and greater to show the Corinthians. He begins in verse 8 of chapter 4, "Now you are full, now you are rich, you have reigned as kings without us; and I would to God you did reign that we also might reign with you." This verse tells me that Paul was reminding the haughty Corinthians that they appeared rich and full and appeared to reign as kings, but Paul is very doubtful that was really true.

Next Paul describes the life and sufferings of an Apostle. He says, "I think that God has set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are honorable, but we are despised, Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; and labor working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless, being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the off-scouring of all things unto this day. I write not these things to shame, but as my beloved sons **I warn you**, for though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have you not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel."

Evidently the Corinthians had the appearance of greatness, strength, and wisdom, yet their immaturity left them with no understanding of what real greatness, strength, or wisdom was or even looked like.

Next, let us go to 2nd Corinthians 11-13. The attack on Paul's Apostleship was further threatened in 2nd Corinthians by false Apostles transforming themselves into "ministers of righteousness." When in truth, they were disguised devils. So, not by choice, but by necessity, Paul had to defend himself. His credentials as an Apostle are startling:

(A Paraphrased short synopsis in first person)

"I am a Jew by birth, a Hebrew, an Israelite, seed of Abraham. Am I a minister of Christ? I am speaking facetiously, put truly." This is what true apostleship looks like: "Imprisonments, often near death, five times I suffered 39 strips, 40 would have been my death. I was stoned, I experienced shipwreck, a day and night in the water, I suffered perils in waters, with robbers, from heathen, from known people, in wilderness, by false brethren, often hungry, thirsty, and naked in cold and often fasting. And these are only the outer trials that I suffered. I am inwardly pressed daily for the care of all the churches. False teachers try to pervert the gospel and sometimes succeed which causes me great grief.

All this negative doesn't mean that I don't have great revelations, I do, so great that they are unspeakable, yet to keep me safe and not puffed up, God has given me my own personal demon to buffet me, lest I get exalted in myself, and forget where all these revelations come from."

Bear with me and let me count the many ways the Apostle Paul suffered:

- 1. *Outer* trials that were so frequent and hard they almost killed him.
- 2. *Inner* pressures and concerns for the churches which were being invaded by false apostles; wolves full of perversions leading the sheep astray; legalistic teachers that discredited Paul's gospel of grace.
- 3. A personal "thorn in the flesh" given to him by a devil, so that he would not be exalted by the many revelations given to him by God. What a minister of God! There are not many like that today.

Yet, the most wonderful miracle is that he, unlike the carnal Corinthians, did not glory in all his positive experiences, instead he gloried in his sufferings, his weaknesses, and in his negative circumstances.

He knew that all of these trials and tribulations were being filtered through the sovereign hand and will of his Father, God. How can that be? Big insight, "All things work after the council of His own will." (Eph. 1:11). Otherwise how could he praise God for all his sufferings and weaknesses? How, but by the Wisdom of God could he know that all his sufferings and weaknesses were only perfect negative opportunities and sacrificial vessels for Christ's own strength, and glory to be manifested through? It is all amazingly true. Can we praise God for the life of this great Apostle and Co-Savior? His fruits and "works still following him" even into this century as well as many centuries to come.

How is it that we too can call ourselves "CO-SAVIORS" and "FATHERS" even in this day? Obadiah says that "Saviors will come up on Mount Zion to judge." The word "Saviors" is plural. Jesus Christ, the Savior, has come back inside of us to "fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ" (Colossians 1:24).

Didn't Jesus do enough on the Cross when he cried, "It is finished," or wasn't it enough that he died, was buried, resurrected, and ascended on High? I can in no way answer nothing but, a resounding, "YES." Jesus did do it all. Then what is left behind to be done? Romans 8:19 gives us the answer "For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the *manifestation or (unveiling)* of the sons of God." Jesus Christ has provided it all, but that all has not yet been manifested in the sons. Paul says of the Galatians that he travail until Christ be formed in them. All is done, but all has not been fully realized or manifested in the sons of God.

It struck me just recently that there are two intercessors in Romans chapter 8. One Intercessor is present in us, He is the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:27) and the other Intercessor is the ascended Christ, Himself in the heavenlies (Rom. 8:34). I am not saying they are separate, but distinct in their function. The third person of the Trinity, The Holy Spirit is on earth and in agony; "The Spirit makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." While the second person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ is interceding for us in victorious ascended glory. Agony and glory in the same Godhead. And both are in us.

Why is the third person of the Trinity in agony? Doesn't He know that Jesus has done it all? Of course He does, then why the agony? The third person of the Trinity is in agony because the sons of God have not "possessed their possessions," and moved in by faith to receive their full inheritance as liberated safe sons. Therefore, He is the intercessor on earth until that is accomplished. That is why the Scriptures says that "Jesus is at the right hand of the Father, until his enemies are made his footstool" (Heb. 10:12-13).

How does the Holy Spirit intercede? He does it through the Saints. He, the Spirit needs a vessel to lay his burdens on; one who can be trusted to bear the burdens of others and fulfill the law of Christ, which is unconditional love. (Galatians 6:2). Romans 15:1-3 says, "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not please ourselves. For even Christ pleased not himself; but as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me." Moses' intercession for the children of Israel was so burdensome that he asked God for others to help him bear the burden, God sent him 70 elders (Num. 11:11-25). We too as co-saviors will bear the burdens for others.

The New Testament declares in Philippians 3:10, "That I might know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformed to His death." Every one of us want to know the power of His resurrection, and rightly so. We must know that Christ's resurrection life is in us and operates as us. **But few see the powerful purpose of His suffering in us accomplishing redemption for others.** See what this verse says, "His sufferings," not my sufferings. Although, that doesn't mean that we don't co-suffer with Him (Romans 8:17), we do, but if the suffering is put on Him it is a "light affliction." And then the verse ends by saying, "being made conformable to His death."

We Christians are so use to thinking that salvation is all about "us," which of course it is, although, we are so "me-minded" that we never think that our sufferings are not for us, or about us, but are for others. Justification is for us, sanctification is for us, but the third stage, the Fatherhood level (I John 2:12-14) is not for us, or even about us. The third level spoken of in I John 2:12, referring to "Fathers," and is for the sheer purpose of reproducing Christ in others. "Fathers have known Him that is from the beginning" this means that we fathers know God's eternal purposes and enter into them whatever the cost. However, we are so "me" minded, the Spirit has to conform us to His ways, and to "His Death." God will put us through many frustrations, trials, and perplexities to show us that these trials are not about us, but about the Holy Spirit using our bodies as living sacrifices for other.

Now the Holy Spirit is calling us to be "*Fathers*" (Ones who reproduce Christ in others). Jesus was his disciple's "father;" He taught them and trained them, He rebuked them for having little faith, He was hardly understood by them, He amazed them, He served them, He washed their feet, He confused them, He made them question Him, He believed more for them, than they believed for themselves. He prayed for them, He identified with them as brothers, He died for them, He was raised for them, and He was ascended for them and redeemed them back to glory, and finally He sent the Holy Spirit to come into them so they themselves could be saviors in their world.

II Cor.5:18 says that God has now given us the "ministry of reconciliation." Didn't Christ do all the reconciling work at the Cross? Yes, but now we have the same ministry as Co-Saviors with Christ. Does that mean that we also go to the Old Rugged Cross and die for others? Well, yes, we do, but not in the physical sense. However, we do die that others might live. II Corinthians 4:10-12 says, that we always bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus might be manifested in us. For death works in us, but life works in others."

II Corinthians 5:19b also says, He "hath given us the *word* of reconciliation," seeing that we are "ambassadors for Christ." Isn't that a interesting way of saying it, "WORD" of reconciliation. There is a reconciling word in every hard place in your life. As long as you see it as just a hard place and something you have to solve or just endure, you will never have a word from God to reconcile it. But if you dare see through the mountain and call it a plain, you will have the *word* from God that will reconcile the situation back to God, and bring harmony and peace into being where disharmony and discord exits.

My good friend Barry Burton from Birmingham, Alabama once wrote: "I love what Jesus told the people about the blind man, They said, "Did he sin or did his parents sin," Jesus said, "Neither, but that the glory of God might be manifest." What an answer. It wasn't, "yes he sinned," or he was wrong, nor did he say his parents were wrong. He profoundly took it to another dimension. This problem is there because the glory of God is about to be manifested. It is for the Glory of God to have opportunity to be revealed. I think that this answer blew their minds. It crosses all fleshly wisdom, and sky rockets to a higher plan. It goes to the realm of the wisdom of God where the rights and wrongs are transformed into seeing God Only and to His solution, which is the manifestation of the glory of God.

Intercession is like that in the body of Christ. In the body of Christ all are declared righteous through Christ. So you can't have a right or a wrong, because you only have Christ. Then what to do with the tensions? The same answer again, they are there to give opportunity for the manifestation of the glory of God. Let us see, like Jesus, God's manifested glory in every situation, in every person. We all have to die to do that. There is not any natural understanding that can withstand that kind of answer. All natural seeing, all natural hearing, all natural understanding has to die. And a leap of faith has to birth into being. A leap which transcends all appearances, all rational, and all hope of being right while the other person is wrong."

I wrote back and said, "The real work is to free the captivities from this world's understanding by our creative word of faith. The whole point of our troubles, disease, problems are to give opportunity for God's glory to be manifest. That truly is a wisdom not of this world. Jesus wouldn't take sides in the tug of war of right and wrongs in this scripture. He went to another dimension where all distorted things and situations are really the chariot of fire which delivers and manifests God's eternal glory.

You say, "The hope of a different reality, into the heart, is to demote or even overthrow the heretofore life-directing premises of understanding." Yes, yes, a new understanding a new knowledge, a new wisdom. The mind of the new creation has a new understanding, a new knowledge, and a new wisdom. Aren't we all tired of the mind of the flesh, thought patterns—where rights and wrongs, good and evils vacillating in torment trying to solve themselves without avail? What a simple, but profound statement Jesus made, "that the *glory of God might be manifest.*" His actual words were not just a narrative, as you say, but were the healing agent to the whole situation. They were creative reconciling words, "Let there be," that transforms the sin and blindness of heart into the dimension of Spirit where all things are designed to reveal the glory of God.

"Love Never Fails"

"God is wholly outgoing through all eternity. We have begun that life for eternity, for He lives in us. What a vista! And God specializes in giving Himself for those who are most unpleasant to Him, sinners and enemies; and now He specializes in doing it through us. That puts meaning and content into every possible situation a human can be in.

Love is unstoppable. This is "the life also of Jesus manifest in our body," which Paul says always replaces the death. In the death we accept conditions we would naturally reject, and in doing so we "die" to our reactions. A quality of life is manifest in us, though we may not know it.

Faith and love in a person cannot be hidden. Once we have taken the place of death in daily situations, accepting them as sent of God, there arises in us spontaneously the realization of Him in His outgoing love. So every situation is a situation for faith and love. It may not at all be a matter of a great crisis. It may be just the repetition of daily living.

Faith is always a necessity, for all life is a series of appearances. Things and people seem to be what our outward eye sees them to be—the ordinary, the same, maybe the wearisome, the tiresome, the boring, the irritating, the carnal. But faith sees differently. Faith sees Jesus in them, either seeking the door of entry into their hearts or growing up in them. Faith sees Jesus resolving problems or providing needs that are beyond man.

And love means that God has put me just in that place to love through,—not to pester, not to judge, not to drive, but freely to give myself as patience, meekness, service, and sometimes faithfulness. And always, in the secret of my spirit, I call "the things that be not as though they were."¹

THE SECRET OF THE CROSS!

"Life only flows out of from the Cross. But the Cross is where Jesus died for me, the Just for the unjust, and where He now united me with Himself, in His death, over and over again for others. "I," the sensitive, earnest, serving, sacrificing "I", must die, that He may live in and through me. People try me, fail me, drain me, spoil my work with their carelessness, frustrate me with their stubbornness, hurt me

¹ Love never Fails by Norman P. Grubb

with their thanklessness, misrepresent me in their blindness, and my only answer is to be the Cross—to die, to die, to die.

I kick against such a spineless way, a thousands times, but a thousand times I have to come back to it; it is the only way. It is the meekness that inherits the earth. It is the weakness in which strength is made perfect. It is the nothingness that possess all things, the poverty that make many rich. It is the foolishness of God which is wiser than men. For what it does is simple. It puts my little "I", out, crucified with Him; it gives His mighty "I", all-wise, all meek all-loving, right of way through me; for the reverse side of the Cross in action is always the resurrection in equal action. Blessed Cross, where I die daily. Blessed resurrection, by which Christ the Conqueror goes out through me to His inevitable conquests over Satan in others lives. All the strain goes out of life, as I learn the daily secret of this brokenness in Calvary, for no longer do I put my wits, my energies, my impotent striving against the contradictions and frustrations of life; I have learned where little "I" belongs, even in the tomb of Christ, that His big "I" multiply His grace through me, as the five loaves to the five thousand. What a revelation and release. But the discovery can only be made in the valley of humiliation, the place of self-revelation, and self-despair."²

² The Secret of the Cross by Norman Grubb