

Come Alive!

Joe Slater

I grew up in the 1960s, so I remember Joanie Sommers singing the Pepsi jingle, "Come alive! You're in the Pepsi generation!" Whether you drink Pepsi, Coke, etc., concerns me not in the least. But God, through His word, exhorts us to Come Alive!

Sin makes us spiritually dead – not just sick, but **dead!** *"And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked"* (Ephesians 2:1, ESV). Being dead **in** sins made us fit subjects for burial. And, as God designed it, as we are buried with Christ in baptism, we die **to** sin (Romans 6:2-4). Sin is no longer our master.

Jesus' death was a "death so sin" (Romans 6:10). Certainly Jesus never sinned, but He was subject to physical death, even as we are. His death at Calvary ended that relationship. *"Death no longer has dominion over Him"* (6:9). We remain subject to physical death until Jesus returns, but our own death to sin ends sin's control over us. We came forth from baptism to live a new life (6:4). In sin we were dead, but now we are *"alive to God"* (6:11).

Since God has transformed us from death to life, should our service be lethargic? Ought we not to liven up? *"Awake, you who sleep! Arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light"* (Ephesians 5:14). May it never be that we would be like the church at Sardis: *"You have a name (reputation) that you are alive, but you are dead"* (Revelation 3:1). Evidently those brethren had once worked zealously, making a good name for themselves. When did their enthusiasm cool, and why? Your guess is as good as mine.

More to the point, what would Jesus say about us? Pepsi won't help you come alive; you must choose to use with zeal the life God has given to you.

Do You Care?

"But when Jesus heard this, He said, 'It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: "I desire compassion, and not sacrifice," for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners'" (Matthew 9:12-13 NASB).

My late wife, Susan who became a Christian after we were married, wrote the following:

"My life was pain. You cannot know the lonely nights when I begged God (whoever He was) to let me die, and where were you then? You had the truth I needed and God was your best friend! You should have introduced us.

"Someone had compassion and took my hand and led the way to God.

"Somewhere - there is a life of Pain and someone crying out to God to let them die.

"We ought to lead them to our God. But Christian fellowship is so sweet, much more than holding sinner's hands.

"I wonder Why? God didn't let me die."

Jesus found and rescued not just Susan but each and every one of us. He says to us, "Show compassion and love like I have shown you. Seek those in pain, who are lost in sin, and who want to die." We are here to introduce those who need Jesus to Him.

--Ed Wittlif (Denver, CO)

TWO SEVERED FINGERS

My grandfather owned a table saw. It was not a Delta, or a Craftsman, or DeWalt. It was a home-made table saw. Now I can highly recommend home-made bread, home-made peanut butter, and even home-made soap; but I have never seen a home-made table saw that I trusted. That saw was an accident waiting to happen.

A really nice table saw may cost between \$500 and \$2000. I do not know what my grandfather originally paid for his saw, but about 1967 it almost cost him two fingers. He was trying to rip a board when something slipped and he sliced the first two fingers of his left hand – severing them almost completely. [That much is true; the rest is parable.]

For years people had been telling him that they could keep the slightest of connections to the body of Christ and still manage to remain spiritually alive. So, my grandfather decided to test the claim. He asked the doctor to just stem the bleeding, but not to bother reconnecting the fingers to his hand. After all, if members can remain spiritually healthy while barely participating in the life of Christ's body, why couldn't two of the members of his physical body remain healthy while disconnected almost completely from his body?

His fingers died, of course. His body suffered for the loss of those fingers, of course. But it was a noble experiment and it proved what everyone should have known, that the health of a member always depends on the close connection of that member to the body.

"Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it" (1 Corinthians 12:27, ESV).

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned (John 15:4-6, ESV).

--Thayer Salisbury (Toledo, OH)