



CHAPTER 3

IF GOD WROTE YOUR BIOGRAPHY

We open this chapter by making an incredible statement: *If God were to write your biography, it would be Jesus Christ.*

Before you are tempted to throw this book through a window, bear with us a bit and read on.

The Christian life properly conceived and experienced is simply a reproduction and a reliving of the life of Jesus. Your Christian life begins with Christ, continues with Christ, and ends with Christ. Simply put, the history of Jesus is both the experience and the destiny of every believer.¹

In other words, if God were to write your biography, it would be a fifth Gospel, so to speak. How did Paul put it? You are “living letters,” or “epistle[s] of Christ . . . written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.”²

On the heels of that statement, consider this question: *How would your biography read if God were to write it?*

Today, many Christians are inviting God into their stories. But God is inviting us into His. And that story is Jesus Christ. So, with a little sanctified imagination combined with the biblical text, the following is how your biography might read if God the Father were to write it. Note that it will read as if it were coming directly from the Father. We hope that as you read your story from God's perspective, you will hear your Father speaking to you in a personal way.

Your Real Birth

Your origins preceded your physical birth—just as the origins of My Son preceded His physical birth—and your beginnings reach back farther than antiquity.

You were chosen in My Son before the foundation of the world.³ That's your starting point. Somewhere in the dateless past, before I said, "Let there be," I selected you—I "marked you out"—in My Son.⁴ The origin of your existence, therefore, is found in Christ—the one who is "before all things."⁵

Your spiritual life in space-time finds its origins in Jesus also. When you received My Son, you were born a second time and from a different realm. You were "born from above."⁶

Don't be surprised when I say that you must be born from above.⁷

Birth is the impartation of life. When you were begotten again, an incorruptible seed of My life was placed into you by My Spirit. That seed was Christ. Within the DNA of that incorruptible

seed is the nature and character of My Son. I have told you this several times in My Word:

[You have been] born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.⁸

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child.⁹

The life that you received at your new birth is known as “eternal life” and “everlasting life.” Eternal life does not only point to longevity. It also points to the *kind* of life I have offered. It is, in fact, divine life—My own, uncreated life.

In other words, eternal life is My Son.

Jesus said . . . “I am the resurrection and the life.”¹⁰

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.¹¹

When you were born anew, My Son was dispensed into you, and you became a partaker of My very nature.

His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness . . . that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature.¹²

But that's not all.

Your physical birth furnished you with a set of physical senses. In the same way, your new birth in Christ has furnished you with a set of senses. These are spiritual senses, the counterpart of your physical senses. The first of these is *spiritual sight*. It allows you to "see" with spiritual eyes.

*We do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*¹³

*But we see Jesus . . .*¹⁴

Your new birth also furnished you with spiritual hearing.

*Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.*¹⁵

*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*¹⁶

With your new birth also came the sense of spiritual taste.

*[You] have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit.*¹⁷

*You have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*¹⁸

Your new birth furnished you with new senses of spiritual touch and smell.

. . . holding fast to the Head.¹⁹

Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.²⁰

Once you were in darkness, and you could not see. You were lost, and your spiritual senses were dead.²¹ But I brought you to life and carried you into the light, where you could see. Your spiritual senses were awakened, and you became part of a new creation in My Son.²²

New birth also means you were given a new consciousness. You are now conscious of another realm outside the physical one wherein you stand. You are also conscious of another life within you. That life contains a new nature, new desires, new interests, new instincts, new inclinations, new tendencies, a new intelligence, and a new motivation. *That life is Christ Himself.*

So what you see, hear, taste, touch, and smell with your new senses is My Son. He is the object of your spiritual senses. And it is through those senses that you come to know Me, who is Spirit and not flesh.

Your Growth and Development

Spiritual growth and development mean having My Son formed in you.

My little children, . . . I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you.²³

Thus your growth as a disciple also comes back to Jesus. My goal is to have My Son wrought into your character so that He will be your all in all. To develop spiritually, then, is to *learn* My Son.

But you have not so learned Christ.²⁴

But, speaking the truth in love . . . grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ.²⁵

Your growth as a Christian is growth in My Son, that is, development of that spiritual seed that I planted in you at your new birth. Growth in the Spirit takes place when more of your old nature dies and Christ gains more ground to live out His life in you. The stages of your spiritual life in My Son correspond to the stages of your physical life. You pass from babyhood,²⁶ to childhood,²⁷ to sonship—which is full spiritual stature.²⁸

As you develop your spiritual senses, you are weaned from milk to meat. Yet “meat” is not just a tougher, more complex set of doctrines on which to masticate and ruminate. Meat is a greater apprehension and revelation of My Son, who embodies all truth and righteousness.²⁹ To put a finer point on it, spiritual growth is repeating the journey of Jesus while He was on earth. My Son is the inclusive human, the Last Adam. Whatever happened to Him happens to every one of My children. This is because I put you in My Son.

But of Him you are in Christ Jesus.³⁰

As a result, you share in My Son's incarnation. While you do not share in His deity, you partake of His divine nature.³¹ Because of this indwelling nature, you can confidently say, "I can't, but Christ can." As you allow Him to live out His divine life through you, I am being expressed in your humanity. By this, you are a participant in the incarnation of Jesus, and you will begin to think like Him.

*But we have the mind of Christ.*³²

When My Son was crucified, you were in Him, so you also died with Him. The person you used to be in fallen Adam was annihilated. Your flesh, your old nature, your *self*-nature, was done away with by the cross of Christ. In My records, you are already dead, because you died with My Son. Furthermore, all of your sins died with you. They no longer exist, according to My bookkeeping. And I'm the only one whose calculations count.

*I have been crucified with Christ.*³³

*Our old self was crucified with Him.*³⁴

*Therefore . . . you died with Christ . . .*³⁵

In addition, when you voluntarily lose, lay down your life, die to yourself, and mortify the deeds of your flesh on a daily basis, you are further participating in your co-crucifixion with My Son.

. . . that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.³⁶

Your joint death with Christ was the gateway to life.³⁷ Everything new comes out of death—seeds, flowers, etc. The natural is a picture of the spiritual. So in dying with Him, you were on the road to new life.

But first, the dead had to be buried, and when My Son was buried, you were in Him then too. Therefore, you were buried *with* Him.

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death³⁸ . . . buried with Him in baptism.³⁹

Your baptism in water reenacted your burial with My Son. As you live your life free from the entanglements and entrapments of the world system, you are daily participating in your burial with Christ.⁴⁰ But you were not destined to stay buried.

When I raised My Son from the dead, I also raised you from the dead, for you were in Him, and He in you.

You were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.⁴¹ If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.⁴²

Every time you allow the indwelling presence of My Son to triumph over the forces of sin and death, you are living out the dying and rising of Jesus in your mortal body.

When Christ ascended, you were in Him. Therefore, you

ascended with Him too, and are now seated in heavenly realms with Him.

[He] has raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.⁴³

Whenever you enforce My Son's authority over My enemy by faith, you are participating in the ascendancy of Jesus, and you exercise all My authority over the powers of darkness.⁴⁴

So concisely, the history of My Son, Jesus Christ, is *your* experience. Consequently, you are living both in the presence of the past (His incarnation, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension), and the future (His glorification and the fullness of His coming kingdom). There are only two things in His experience that you will not repeat. One is His being fully God. Although you are a partaker of the divine nature, you will never become divine. The other is His atoning work. You do not share in that. The work of atonement was uniquely His. But all of these other things have happened to and for you. Therefore, accept them as facts, take your place in My Son, and walk out your life from that high place. In Christ, there is no condemnation. Never forget that. You are *in* My Son, and you are a new creation.⁴⁵

Your Glorious Destiny

This brings us to your final end—glorification. Glory is the highest expression of a life. The glory of a flower is reached when it is in full bloom. The glory of a human being is reached when women and men bear My image infinitely and at its full capacity.

I created humanity to share My glory—to exhibit My life in the highest possible way.

My Son lived, died, was buried, rose again, and ascended into the heavens to sit at My right hand, where He is now glorified. Because I placed you in Christ, you, too, have been glorified, even though you have not yet experienced it. It's already happened, however, for I see the end from the beginning and the beginning from the end and am in both places at the same moment. I hold time within My bosom.

*Whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*⁴⁶

What's more, I wrapped it all up before I even began.

*His work has been finished since the creation of the world.*⁴⁷

I am the very meaning of the words "It is finished."⁴⁸ But now *you* have to finish what you've started. You can't start out as a baby and end as a baby. You must grow, mature, develop in My Spirit. Part of your spiritual development is service, which is simply allowing My Son to manifest His life through you as you serve others. The task of all ministry is to increase My Son, both in this world and in the church. It is to bring others into an increasing knowledge and apprehension of the significance of Christ. In other words, your goal in ministry should be to reveal the fullness of My Son. You do this by serving. It's one of the ways you grow into My Son's image.⁴⁹

But know this: Your spiritual growth and development will

not occur as an individual. It will occur as a body. For My Son is not just Savior and Lord; He is the head of His body as well. The members of that body are connected. You will never grow into the fullness of My Son, therefore, as a separate, isolated individual, just as no part of your physical body can grow if it is detached from the other parts. The human body is a reflection of the body of Christ. Healthy spiritual growth occurs in the body as you are related to the other members. On your own, you will never reach the full measure of the stature of Christ. This is attained by the body as a whole.

In other words, it takes a church to raise a Christian.⁵⁰ And I designed it that way. Life in My Son has always been a corporate affair. My Word knows nothing of an independent, individualistic, insulated disciple.

For this reason, the master stroke of My enemy is division. If he can get you to divide from your sisters and brothers in Christ and be on your own—separate and isolated—you will not grow into the fullness of My Son.

So don't pull away from the body. Get connected to other believers who are pursuing My Son. Worship and serve as one part of the whole. You can only know My Son in His fullness in conjunction with the other members of His body, the church.

The End of All Things

What is the final object of your Christian life? What is the grand end and goal?

It is seeing the fullness of My Son. My object from beginning to end is Christ as all and in all. My desire is for My Son to fill the universe with His elegance.

He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things⁵¹ . . . that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.⁵²

If you are to reach My goal for you, you must steadily move toward the ultimate fullness that is in Him.

It is My good pleasure to fill the cosmos with My Son's glorious imprint and to sum up all things in Him. I created the universe by Him, through Him, to Him, and for Him. I was so in love with My Son that I wanted to share and increase Him. I wanted My creation to be full of His wonder and His radiance. Thus every time I painted the panorama of nature, I beheld My beloved Son. He was the template I used to craft the cosmos.

But creation fell from Me and became distorted, tarnished, and marred. My image was damaged in the earth. My glory was lost. Yet My Son willingly surrendered Himself to restore My passion. He came into My creation as a creature to redeem and reconcile a fallen universe to Himself. And He did it by a horrendous death, the crucifixion in which you were a part.

Since that time, the entire creation has been put back on course. It's now headed straight into My Son, where He shall fill all things with all of Himself. And that filling includes you.

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.⁵³

For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory.⁵⁴

When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.⁵⁵

But note that what will happen in the entire creation must first be manifested in My people.

Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.⁵⁶

For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.⁵⁷

My Son will bring His church—My people—into complete conformity with His glorious person. When He was on earth, My Son grew in stature.⁵⁸ Now, through Him, the church will also grow in stature until that day when we, the body of Christ, reach full maturity in glory.

. . . till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.⁵⁹

The church will one day become the fullness of Christ and the instrument through which He shall fill all things. In fact, I have chosen the church to be the vessel through which My Son will be revealed, fully presented, and known.

Consequently, the *ekklesia* is the only hope this world has

to see My Son physically before He returns. Why? Because His body is the living, breathing, moving, functioning image of Jesus. Therefore, the only address where anyone can find Him is . . . *you*.

. . . the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.⁶⁰

My object and the object of My Spirit is to make My beloved Son everything, just as He made me everything. It is to give Him room so He can be displayed and expressed in all things—including your life. When He walked this earth, I dwelled in Him. When people saw Him in action, they were seeing Me in action. Now *He* dwells in you, and when people see you, they are seeing Him. And the more space you make for Him in your life, the more clearly the world will see Him.

So give Him room. Let Him gain all of you so He can be seen again, to My glory and pleasure. I created the visible universe so that eyes would behold the beauty of My Son and fall in love with Him. This is the mission to which you have been called.

THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF OUR FAITH

So that's how God might have written your biography.

As we said in the opening of this chapter, your biography begins, continues, and ends with Jesus Christ. He chose you before time, you were born into Him in due time, Christ is being formed in you in the present time, and you will be matured and perfected

in Christ at a future time. In the words of Scripture, Jesus is “the author *and* finisher of our faith.”⁶¹

With the exception of Christ’s deity and atoning work, the spiritual biography of every child of God is a repetition of *His* life. As you yield to the Holy Spirit, He will take the history of Jesus and duplicate it in you.

It is Christ from beginning to end. He is the object of the Christian life, and the forerunner of our experience.

The forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus.⁶²

So why do we preach and teach all sorts of other things?

As we write these words, there’s a lot of talk about being “missional.” But to be truly missional means constructing one’s life and ministry on Christ. He is both the heart and bloodstream of God’s plan. To miss this is to miss the plot. Indeed, it is to miss everything.

God’s grand mission is what the New Testament calls “the eternal purpose.”⁶³ And in the dead center of that purpose is the living Christ. Christ is God’s dream, and His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus is vastly encompassing; it answers every particular. Nothing that God wants is omitted from it. The Father’s

Your mother is a
cause of wonder:
the Lord entered into
her and became a
servant; he who is the
Word entered—and
became silent within
her; Thunder entered
her and made no
sounds; there entered
The Shepherd of all,
and in her He became
the Lamb . . .

—Ephrem the Syrian (Fourth century)⁶⁴

timeless intention reaches from one end of Himself to another, forever. And the focus of His eternal purpose was, is, and always has been *Christ in you*—the divine secret hidden in the counsels of God from before time.⁶⁵

If Christ is in you, then the Christian life is not about striving to be something you are not. It is about becoming what you *already* are.

For to me, to live is Christ.⁶⁶

As He is, so are we in this world.⁶⁷

You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.
Walk as children of light.⁶⁸

Christ Jesus . . . you
inspired generations
of pilgrims in the
way of love and
hope. Enfold your
Church in the
mystery of your life,
that we, in our own
pilgrimage, may be
apostles of your
wounded and
risen glory.
The Edmund Prayer⁶⁹

So why do we preach rules, regulations, and laws instead of Christ? And why such an emphasis on “works”? Good works are simply fruit falling off a tree. If you will sink your roots deep in Christ, who is your life, you will not be able to stop the fruit from coming forth.

Heaven has chosen this Jesus to be before all, through all, in all, and to all, until He is all in all.

Everything else is postscript.

The engine of being “missional,” therefore, ought never to be religious duty. Neither should it be guilt,

condemnation, or ambition. The engine should be blindly and singularly a revelation of Jesus Christ.

No matter how long we live, how much ministry we engage in, how much Scripture we learn, how much theology we study, and how many hours we spend praying, we will never get beyond God's eternal purpose. Or to put it another way, it doesn't get any better than Christ.

But perhaps the most arresting fact of all is that this wonderful Christ is in love with you. And His love never fails, gives up, or disappears. The knowledge-surpassing love of Christ is perfect love, and He's committed to completing in you what He has started.

We love Him because He first loved us.⁷⁰

He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.⁷¹

When, in the Middle Ages, Jesus was referred to as "our kinde Lord," this did not mean just that He was gentle, but that we were bound to Christ by the bonds of kinship. His kindness is the love of a brother.

—Timothy Radcliffe⁷²

True Christianity is the life that Jesus lived in the past, lived out in you in the present. And it is in Him that we find our true humanity. For this reason, it takes God to be a human.

To put it all in a sentence: *From the viewpoint of God, your biography is Jesus Christ.*

Clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God.⁷³