

The Place of Immunity

by David Orton

<http://lifemessenger.org/the-place-of-immunity/>

... *hidden with Christ in God.*

Colossians 3:3

Just as the outer man is subject to the attack of infection and various toxins, so also, the inner man.

According to the Oxford Reference Dictionary to be *immune* is to be, "resistant to a particular infection, toxin etc., owing to the presence of specific antibodies..."

There is a place of immunity where our inner life is safe from the toxins of the old life—from its lusts and affections; a place where we are "*hidden with Christ in God*", where earthly things no longer hold sway; a place where worldly values, the betrayals of men, and the vagaries of life no longer control.

It is a place, in the words of the old hymn, of "*perfect rest near to the heart of God where sin cannot molest*". No matter what comes, no matter what storm assails, no matter what man can do, within there is perfect rest. Why? Because I am near to the heart of God – but more than *near* – I am *with Christ in God*. My rampart against the enemy of my soul is doubly sure. I am secure not only with Christ, but also hidden in the citadel of God himself.

Immunity to failure, success, friend, or foe

I am immune to either failure or success; and therefore, to the opinions of men. Something has so transacted within that I am dead to what others may think; and therefore, willing to live unto God. I am willing to risk all as a fool for Christ.

I am immune to either friend or foe. Friends may fail, forget, or betray; but there is one closer than a brother. Enemies may scheme and plot, but nothing can separate me from the love of God. Nothing can come through the defences of the all-wise, all-powerful, all-loving God in whom I am safe; unless he has allowed it for my good.

What a place of freedom and rest! No longer defending myself. No longer fighting for my own rights—perfect abandonment to the One whom I love. I am absorbed in him – in fact, *hidden* with him – *I* am finally dealt with.

Wounds, resentments, unforgiveness, and deep insecurities lose their hold. I am free to enjoy the higher life, hidden in God.

But how does this work? How do I find this *place of immunity*?

Immunity through the death of self

The place of immunity is entered through the death of self. The antibodies of the cross have once-and-for-all fought and destroyed the infection of the self-life. Paul explained this in the previous chapter of Colossians:

In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its

joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.

If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

Colossians 2:11–23 ESV

No self-effort, no attempt at the ascetic life, or any kind of religious performance will lift us into a higher place with Christ. Our death *in* Christ is a revelatory faith-fact, that cannot be changed by what we do, or don't do. All we do is count on it as done (Rom 6:11). And as we do the principalities and powers that have already been disarmed lose their present control over us. The written code with its regulations has been cancelled, taken away by the cross. Consequently, there is no principle of this world: no protocol of the church, success ethic, leadership formula, or worldly value that can lift us one inch higher in God.

The realisation that I can do nothing – that it has all been done – is the ultimate death to self.

Therefore, not only is the cross death to self-effort, it is, at a deeper and more profound level, death to self-realisation. This is what Jesus meant when he said:

23 And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.
24 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

Luke 9:23–24 ESV

And so, the cross deals a deathblow to me finding myself—to self-realisation through self-effort. No amount of self-help, self-justification, self-defence, self-promotion, or self-seeking, will ever bring me to fulfilment, let alone into the destiny-purpose of God for my life.

Death to self is, therefore, the first side of the equation that brings us into the *place of immunity*.

Immunity through the life of God

Now, the counterpoint of dying to self is living unto God. We have not only been baptised into his death, but also, raised into his life. We arise from the waters of baptism actuated not by self, but by the power of an age to come—by the life of God.

This being so, Paul exhorts us to “*set our hearts*” and “*our minds*”, not on “*earthly things*”, but “*on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God*” (Col 3:1-2).

With the death of self, we are now free to focus all on Christ alone. Through obedience to the law of the spirit of life the poise of our soul is turned Godward.

First, we are drawn *out* after him. As the psalmist so eloquently states: “*As the deer pants after the waterbrooks, so my soul pants for you, O God*” (Ps 42:1). Our emotions and affections, our inner person, thirsts for his touch—for his presence.

Second, we are drawn *upward*. Again as the psalmist declares: “*I have set the Lord always before me*” (Ps 16:8). We focus on him, filling our vision with his awesomeness, seeing him exalted, sitting at the right hand of the majesty on high. And as we do, the things of the world grow increasingly dim. Compared to the beauty and majesty of the ascended Christ worldly

affections, priorities, values, and even offences pale into insignificance. We begin to cry out with the psalmist: "*In God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?*" (Ps 56:11).

And with Paul we declare:

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:31–39 ESV

And so, through the death of the cross we enter the *place of immunity*. Because we have died to self and are alive unto God we can let go of offences. Persecutions and multifarious difficulties may come but they shall also go—they shall not overcome us:

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.

Isaiah 43:2 ESV

While the outer man may perish, we set our hearts on things above where Christ is, for we are hidden with him in God, and we are made more than conquerors. In this place of *hiddenness* we find an invisible resource, a deep spring that makes glad the city of God (Ps 46:4). We are refreshed and sustained in what – to the natural man – looks like impossible circumstances.

And because you have passed through death into *the place of immunity*:

When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Colossians 3:4 ESV

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