

Formed or Conformed

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Introduction

Contrasting Romans 8:29 & Gal. 4:19

There are many, many scriptures all throughout the bible defining the fullness of the reality of Christ as our Life. Examining the scriptures in the light of the Holy Spirit is like looking at a diamond with different sides and different beauties. In this study I would like to look at some scriptures a little more closely and see some particular aspects. In this way we can discover some of the diverse aspects of exactly what these scriptures bring out to us. I would like to do is with Romans 8:29 and Galatians 4:19. Instead of using these two scriptures together and viewing them in the sense that they are both saying the exact same thing, I would like to contrast these scriptures.

To begin with let us look at Romans chapter eight and verse twenty-nine, "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, the He might be the firstborn among many brethren." Keeping that in mind, turn with me to Galatians, chapter four, verse nineteen, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you." These are two very familiar verses to those of us who preach Christ as the Life of the believer; Christ in you, the hope of glory. They both relate to Christ being in you. There are many other scriptures such as Colossians 1:27, "Christ in you, the hope of glory" and Galatians 2:20, "I've been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me."

The First Contrast

To Conform To His image or Christ Formed In You

A very obvious difference can be found in Romans where it says that we are to conform to the image of His Son while Galatians says, "Christ be formed in you." Some of us may have noticed a difference and knew that there was a difference in those scriptures. It may bother some of us that the scriptures tell us to conform to the image of Christ when Christ is already our life. This can become a dilemma in your brain, for some may wonder why they are conforming to an image if the very Person is already their life? If anyone has ever had those kind of thoughts they may wonder what exactly is being communicated to them. There can be the tendency to just clump all these scriptures together with all the other scriptures. In a basic and general sense that can be true, yet we are searching out the specific differences that these scriptures are trying to point out. The truth is that we need Jesus formed in us as life, but I believe that these scriptures are trying to bring out some very special and specific angels that can more clearly open these things to us.

The Second Contrast The Difference Between An Image And A Person

The other contrast that we will look at is the difference between an image and a person. Galatians 4:19 is not talking about some image being formed in us, it is talking about the very person of Christ being formed in us. That is more than getting a hold of this thing and acting like it. It is literally the person of Christ being formed in us. And yet Romans 8:29 is telling us to conform to an image. In other words, there is something we are supposed to conform to. And then again in my mind, I am always going, "But if Christ is my life, I don't have to try to conform to something, I just need to let Him be." Just let Him come out and He will do the stuff.

3rd Contrast – Christ or the Son

One of the other contrasts that I see here is the contrast of the Son. That we are to conform to the image of His Son, whereas over here it is Christ formed in you. And there is a difference when the scriptures are relating different angles. It will say Christ, or it will say the Son. And so we see from both of these scriptures there is a clear-cut designation for Christ. Interestingly enough it did not tell us to conform to the image of the Savior, or the healer, or in ministry to be just like Jesus as the healer, or just like Jesus as the deliverer. It did not even say just like Jesus as God in that sense. And in that sense I do not know that it is saying, "Conform to the son of God." I think it is saying exactly what it means, to conform to the Son. Which is different than conforming to the Son of God. One being a designation strictly for God's Son, and the other being a Son.

4th Contrast – Motivations of the Father or Life

And that is why my next contrast is Father or Life. These two designations are very important. Father or life, because these two represent the motivation behind each of the scriptures that we are giving here. Behind Romans 8:29 the motivation is the Father, behind Galatians 4:19 the motivation is life, which is Christ in us. You see as life, He just produces through us automatically, like a vine would produce through a branch – fruit – that is after His nature. He produces that, which is life. The good thing about life, if we contrasted life and religion, you would really get it. Because you know the difference between you going out and trying to produce something, and it coming out as life. But interestingly enough here, this contrast, and this motivation behind the Son is the Father.

5th Contrast - Intimacy or Holy Living

There are scriptures that call us the Sons of light, but under Gal. 4:19 there are places in the scripture that say we have the light of life. It is two different relationships, two different kinds of light, based on two different kinds of relationship. That relationship being with the Father is one of intimacy, the relationship with Christ as life is one of holy living. Meaning, when I say that I do not say religious fulfillments of the law, or actions that fulfill religion. I am talking about the life that really does not sin, does not get off into stuff, by His nature He does right things. He does the right things. You find that by walking after His nature, you are having fulfilled in you the righteousness of the law, and

the right deeds of the law, but by life. But Jesus had an intense intimacy with His Father. And do not scriptures come to your mind even now, of motivations that came from Jesus directly related to the Father?

Sonship

So I am going to give you two more designations under Romans 8:29, is what we call "Sonship". Under the other one, we will just call it Christ as Life. Interestingly enough, there are some people who preach Christ in us, the hope of glory, who are part of what is called the "Sonship movement". That also falls under the category of the "Kingdom movement". And it is this whole thing of God wanting Sons. Does God want sons? Absolutely. In fact, the scriptures over in Romans 8:19, "For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the Sons of God." And there is this understanding of, just like Jesus wants a Bride, the Father wants sons in the image of Christ. Now there are a lot of people who have had a lot of Bride teaching, because there is a whole group of people who do not teach "Sonship", but teach that we are the Bride of Christ. It is all in the bible, but we just lean heavy in certain areas and talk about being the Bride of Christ. Which is important, it is incredibly important. And to be honest with you, I taught Sonship for years and years, and years and did not know anything about the Bride of Christ. Long before I saw that reality, the spirit of God showed me that the Father wanted Sons in the image of Christ. So it is Sons of God by Christ. You could almost say it better by saying, "Sons of God, by the Son." And relating to the Father in Sonship.

Son or Christ

The next contrast I am going to give you in Romans 8:28, and Galatians 4:19 is the character of the Son as opposed to the nature of Christ. In one sense, you may not see a difference. But I will tie it into the next, the next contrast I am going to give, the Father is greater would be a relationship of understanding as a Son, or as the Son. Whereas the other contrast is we are dead so Christ lives. Now there is a tremendous contrast right here because one is an honor that the Son has for the Father. It is an honor. It is built in honor that He honors the Father, and He honors the Father as greater, not just by virtue of the Godhead, "The Father is greater, the Son is next, the Holy Spirit is next in order." Not like that at all, it is an honor of His heart, one thing, whereas the other is you are just dead so Christ lives in you, no honor at all it is just fact. Anybody ever just like a Mac truck run into Romans seven, "Reckon yourself dead, so that Christ might live in you." I mean you just saw it and you said, "This has nothing to do with nothing, I am dead, I might as well let Jesus live because that is the way it is supposed to be." But this thing where the Son says, and here is the degree He honors the Father, even as equally we should be honoring the Son, when we say, "Greater is He that is in me" then if Jesus is so great, then we would not be relying on any other source. Because it is talking about, "Greater is He that is in you." It is not just talking about a King over there and you are bowing to His greatness. It is saying, "Greater is He that is in me." I can overcome the anti-Christ spirit in the world, or I can overcome the world, I can overcome anything because of the greatness of one who is in me. And so He is great as my source, my life, and this is where

you get Jesus saying things like, “The Father is greater than I.” Let us examine that statement theologically. If there is a trinity, and if the three are one, then there is not one greater than the other. Theologically examining the trinity, you must say, according to the truth of the trinity – three are one. The three are one and therefore none could be greater than the other because they are all one. But you see, Jesus said, “The Father is greater, the works that I do are not mine. The words that I speak are not mine.” Not because He is dead, this is a whole different ballgame, this Sonship thing comes from a whole different place. This conforming to the Son comes from a whole different place than Christ as God, or the nature of god, or the divine nature being formed in you. That is a whole different thing than you conforming to the image of the Son. You have in the honor; you have in the relationship and the intimacy of Sonship, of the Son. When I say, “Sonship”, I am not talking about a whole lot of little guys running around being special sons, I am talking about all of us being members of that one Son, and from that drawing from and understanding and bowing to His heart in us. One is Christ Himself is formed, Christ the person, is formed in you. The other one is the image of that Son and the way that He views His Father; you begin to conform to that. You do not have to.

Here is what I want you to consider. If Jesus is the Son of God, and He said, “I do always those things that please the Father.” But you see that was the Son speaking. That was not the nature of Christ standing there and saying, “I am God, the second person of the trinity, and I have come with the right nature and will do exactly what God wants, because it is my nature, it is my life, it is who I am.” And it is exterior to any desires, in a certain sense. If it is your nature, you do not applaud a dog for acting like a dog, it is just your nature, and you can not help but be it. I would applaud him if he acted like a cat, or maybe not. But the point is, we have to see these things because these relate to us. This is not theological teaching, this is how we are supposed to relate, Jesus came, and interestingly enough in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said, “Not my will, but thine be done.” Well, the Father’s will was perfect and Jesus had a will that was slanderous. He probably wanted to run out of Gethsemane and hit the local pub, find him some women on his last night in Jerusalem, no! His will is exactly the same of the Father’s will. But He said, “Not my will.” When He got ready to do something, He said, “Not my works.” “Oh, that is right Jesus.” That will work for us, because we will do selfish things, we will go down to the pub, but He will not. We understand that applied to us, but apply that to Him, if He had done the works, it would have been just like the Father’s, it would have been the exact same thing, it would have produced healing and help and blessing if it was just Him, if the Father was not there at all in Him. That is Christ that is the person of Christ. But He did not just come as the person of Christ, He came as the son of God and He honored the Father in greatness, not by virtue of swelling things that He said and did, the true honor that He had for the Father was, “You are my source from within.” You are my source from within.

Think about this, in terms of motivation being intimacy or holy living, Son or Christ, the motivation of a nature is to fulfill itself. It will just do what it does. It does not require anything exterior to itself. When it comes to Christ being formed in you, it does not require another outside of you. It does not even have to take anything outside of itself into consideration. But interestingly enough, even though it has the power, the nature of

Christ, even though it has the power to do that, it violates God to do it. Even though He has all the power to deliver Himself, He did not deliver Himself. He sought the Father to deliver Himself, to raise Him from the dead, He said, "I could have call ten thousand angels." Even though He had the power and ability within Himself to live the right kind of life, He said, "The works I do and the words I speak are not my own. I have all of that an nothing but pure God is going to come out of me if I do it, but it is a violation of the way the Father and the son and the Holy Spirit operate to do that, because it is based on: the Son does not declare Himself, He speaks of the Father, the Holy Spirit comes and He will not speak of Himself, He declares the Son, the Spirit will not come in His own name, but the Father will send Him. Every ounce of this relationship that is bound up in God constantly depends on one another though it is not necessary.

Because again, if you have got the perfect nature you do not need anything external to yourself, however that can be one of the biggest dangers to somebody like us outside of God. God can not go anywhere but to one another, but we will do what Lucifer did, we will say, "I will exalt myself." We will find all the power, beauty, sufficiency within ourselves by just simply if we had that nature that satisfied God, simply as a nature, simply as Christ formed in us, we could have the ability to center in on ourselves, but as a Son of God, and particularly Christ being the image to which we are conforming, we can not depend on ourselves, we do not look to ourselves. And of course, this works out better for us, because we see the fallacy of the whole thing, but Jesus had His own nature, He could have been sufficient totally in Himself. He could be totally sufficient in terms of Holiness, of fulfilling or keeping the law, He could have been an entity in Himself, and yet He would not do it. He would not do it. Isn't it strange that a lot of Christians are trying to become an entity within themselves, they are trying to become sufficient in themselves? They are seeking God to make themselves sufficient from anything external. Which in one sense we teach, but in another sense we don't. In another sense you could never do that and be joined to God, be joined as Son, or be joined as a Bride because you would begin to see the absolute necessity of something outside of yourself, that is actually inside of yourself, but if you see what I mean. The difference being one of, if you had that nature and the other one being God having the same nature, but it being Him who gets the glory, Him that you honor as greater, Him who you depend on, Him who you look to. Not far away, not as a far away source, but as a whole other love. Because we will love ourselves and love no one else, but Jesus will never do that.

He is our sufficiency – by love, not need

There is given to us in a certain sense, because of the uniqueness of the way we are coming into this, instead of just coming into the Godhead, there is this ability of finding the nature of Christ and at the same time depending on the nature of Christ, but in love. I was reading in Jeremiah where God was rebuking Solomon because he had married wives that had foreign gods. And it said, "Not that you have gone after foreign gods, not that you are worshiping idols, but you have done it in love." That is a big deal. That is a big deal to the bridegroom, this thing of love, this thing of honor. It is not just doing your duty because of the nature of Christ. That would be real nice, if God just put the nature of Christ in us and we just did what we were supposed to do because we were run by a

nature. Like a computer that is programmed to do exactly that and it is the nature of the program and it does not require anything, much less dependence, much less a love of dependence. A love of it. To love the Lord thy God is the first commandment. Why do you do what you do? "Well, it is just Christ in me. I have no feeling at all. Yes, I will lay down my life for those that are perishing." "For God so LOVED the world that He gave." There is this whole other thing that has to be worked in us, that is not just the nature of it. But it is the image of the Son that is at work in us, who honors the Father that always honors the Father. Again that scripture, "I do always those things that please my Father." But it is not a pagan satisfying of the gods, by any stretch of the imagination. Because that is based on fear, not love. "Well, if I don't give him what he wants he will kill me. If I don't give him what he wants, there is going to be bad karma." We are worried about what goes around comes around, so I have to be good. "I do always those things that please my Father." The Father side, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-please." He had not even started his ministry yet. He did not say, "Man, He has already whooped you all when it comes to ministry and works and doing and kindness and sweetness, that's the one, my beloved." That is not what He is talking about, He loves the Son. You have been delivered from the power of darkness. I have been delivered from the power of darkness by death so that Christ can live in me, that is one way of looking at it. I died now Christ lives in me. Interestingly enough the scripture I just quoted does not say it that way, it emphasizes this side over here in Romans 8:29, "For we have been delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the Kingdom" and here is the actual Greek there, "Into the Kingdom of His dear Son." Or, also translated, "the Son of His love." Kingdom can represent government. And government can represent nature, but He did not just put us into a nature and government that was correct, He put us into the kingdom of the Son of His love. It is a whole different spirit, it is a whole different conformity, it is not ruled by winds and tides and things that control the nature of the thing. It is ruled by the heart that says, "I do this for my Father and I could not do anything else, not because my nature forces me to, but because my heart tells me I love Him too much. I love the Father." That is Jesus. "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither has entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those who come into a revelation of Christ and get the stuff by nature." That is not what it says, it says, "For those who love Him."

Maybe you wondered why last year I started a new trend here locally called the Passion for Christ, because I believe it is possible by the nature of Christ to be about, not the Father's business, but god's business by virtue of "separated living", living according to God's principle and God's way, giving up houses and this and that and coming and laying down our lives because it is the nature of the Christ to do that, so I do that. I believe it is possible to do that for so long, and eventually just get in the habit of doing it. We do it because it is who we are, which is a good thing on one hand, the Gal. 4:19 hand, I would say it is better than not having any of this up here. I would say it is a lot better. But I believe that God would draw out of us, the image of the Son that says, "Greater is He that is me." And again, if He is so great, then why are we living by other sources? The greatness to Jesus is how much He honors Him and to what degree, which is to the degree of living by Him, speaking only His words, ministering only by Him. That is greatness, that is great honor. We say great honor is an incredible worship service. That would be the height of the greatest honor we could ever do, is put on the biggest, star-spangled

worship service that you could have. And everybody just flopping around, but I tell you that I believe that the greatest honor is when He is greater in you. But that is not just going to happen by Christ being formed in you, that is going to happen by being conformed to the image of the Son. It is two different things, two different works, actions upon us.

His joy was not in himself

You say, "But if Christ is formed in won't He be the Son?" I think it will be to some degree, but I don't think so on another degree, I think that most people when they are thinking about conforming to the Son, they are honing in on getting Him to live by a nature through them to fulfill certain requirements. So God through the Holy Spirit is working on us to conform our minds, to bring our hearts and our minds to a conformity to the Son that is in us. And to honor the Son and let the Son honor the Father, instead of honoring the Son as, "I am only worthy of death, and since He is life, He gets the brass ring. He wins the prize." That has nothing to do with love, or honor or greatness, it has nothing to do with anything. It just happens to fall to Him to be that. It could have been anybody, He just happened to be the one with the right nature. But the Son constantly walked in this earth honoring the Father. Always looking to the Father, His joy was not in himself. "I do always the holy living thing, I do always the right thing." He never said that. "I do the right thing every time." It would just violate Him to say that, He would have to say, "I do always those things that please my Father, not based on law works, but based on a heart, that has incredible love for the Father."

Motivated by Father of Life

Can you imagine the Godhead, before time if you will, and they are sitting around three in one and they are talking about it. "Well, the only hope for mankind is death, the only hope is that one of us is going to have to go down there and do that." And the Son goes, "I will do that for you if that's what you want, if that's what you desire. I will do it for you." "Well, just know that once we start this thing, everybody is going to fail, because everybody else loves themselves more, whether Godly or ungodly, but the Son – Father things, even if I give them all the good things within, they will ach for something outside of themselves and love will be the motivation." It is tricky. It kind of catches us all right where we are at. Conformed or formed, image or person, son to the Father outside Himself, or nature within, motivated by Father or life. Don't you think that He was motivated by both? I think He was, I think both of these scriptures are valid. I think if you have searched diligently Gal. 4:19 and found the truth of it, I say glory to God. But I say if you have never seen the contrast of being conformed to the image of the Son, and you have spent all of your time by the nature of Christ, there is more. There is more! It becomes not just an issue of Holy living, but of intimacy toward the Father, toward the Bridegroom, it becomes an issue, because if the nature will do it, what is the point of desire? (flip tape) Your desire, every time you go in a store to buy some clothes, it is your desire, not just your nature. Look at a dog, look at a cat, they just do what they do by nature. Why do the swallows always return to Capistrano? Because they love it. They do not even know it is named Capistrano, it is their nature to do it. And that is wonderful that God could make the whole world do what it is supposed to do by nature, but He does not want to make you and I do it alone, by nature, He wants us to do it by love. "Stand fast

therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. But by love serve ye one another. By this perceive we the love of God because He laid down His life for us and we ought to..." No, no, no. When we say "ought" we immediately go to the nature and not to the heart of the thing. "By this perceive we the love of God because He laid down His life for us and we ought to love our brethren." But you see we can go in and do the dishes by duty of nature, we can leave the duty of religion and fall into the duty of nature. I see it so clearly, "Well, it's just the nature of Jesus to do these dishes." And somebody walks in that left them there, "but I'm not doing it because it's my nature to do it. I could not walk past these dishes and not do it because Christ is my life, I must be about my Father's business. And you little jerks are giving me stuff to do for God. I thank God for you." I would say something is missing. I would say that Christ is being formed in you, but you are not being conformed to the image of the Son. There is a big difference, two different things altogether. Sons of light or light of life. There is the incredible dawning that breaks forth for those that sat in darkness, when they have realized that "I am dead, everything I do is dead works." And you see the light of life. It is liberating from the darkest, lowest cell, but it is still not being the sons of light. One is joy of your liberation and the other one is joy to the Father as a Son of light. Two different things altogether.

The Revelation of Christ is crying "Abba Father"

As I said, the difference between Sonship and Christ as life, you say we should change our name, well how about we just understand the truth, the whole counsel of God. Because we are the Sons of God by faith. And this whole creation is groaning and travailing and not really producing anything, until the sons have acknowledged their Father by Christ, by the Son. The spirit of His Son, comes into your heart crying, "I have come to an revelation of Christ." Crying, "I am free from dead works." No, crying, "Abba Father." That is the revelation of Christ, in relationship to Sonship. If you haven't had that aspect let God stir a passion in you. And now maybe we will understand a little more what it is that the spirit of God is trying to draw out of us, not just our duty unto the risen Christ, not just our duty to the New Man. "Well it is the truth, I must live according to it." There is a place for that. Remember what Jesus said to the Ephesians in the book of Revelation, think of what the Ephesians knew, they knew what it meant to be in Christ. It did not require any intimacy. They knew of the mysteries, they knew of so much and yet Jesus' words to them, "You have left your first love." That God would get a hold of our hearts, and not just our spirits or nature, that we would fall back in love with Jesus. You know you will go through a whole lot of stuff when you're in love. You really can. Some of you say, "Well, I wouldn't know." Well why not? You've met Jesus. Oh, you're thinking of the earth. I'm telling you, you can go through an awful lot of stuff when you are in love.

Conclusion

And when I said up here, the character of the Son versus the nature of Christ. His character is the Father is greater than Him, the Father is just everything to Him. He says, "I could do this, but I don't want to do it. The Father is so great to me, I want it to be the Father in me." That is not just a nature, that is not just a need thing, it is the character of the Son towards the Father. It is something we need to be conformed to. It is something

we need to be awakened to by the Holy Spirit. Yes, we are dead and Christ is our life. It is a wonderful, wonderful truth, but there is this whole other side that does not have to be worthy of death, it is the heart of a Son, or the heart of the Bride. But we are emphasizing the Son because it said, "To be conformed to the image of the Son." Because God ordained that all glory be given to the Son. Yeah, but if you're outside of Him, you better give the Son glory, but if you're one with Him, you're going to give the Father glory. It's just so strange. He says, "I have ordained that in all things He has pre-eminence." So everything outside of Him goes, "Yes, yes, the Son." But once you are joined to Him all of the sudden you are part of the Son and all you want to do is honor the Father. This is why many prayers go up, "Oh, Father". Instead of "Oh, Jesus", because Jesus does not pray to Himself.