

GOD'S MANDATE FOR THE CHURCH

to lead believers into victory and abundant life, free from sin, pain, and heartache

A Statement from Life Awakening

It Is Finished

"It is finished". Let that sink in! Those are not wishy-washy words. They are a bold declaration of the status of a matter: Finished! When "It is finished" was spoken by Jesus on the cross, what did He really mean? We understand that in a supernatural way sin (and the pain and heartache it brings) was put away forever through that divine act of love on the cross. And that we, the human race, were put back in right standing, reconciled to, and restored, to God through His resurrection. Yet "reality" on earth has not, even in 2000 years since the "finish", caught up to that divine reality. We still have rampant sin, sickness, and heartache, even inside the Church, in the lives of many believers.

It is frankly a bit bewildering that God proclaims, "It is finished", and yet we (and the world) clearly see the "mess" we are in. Imagine if the first runner in a relay race ran his lap across the finish line, handed you the baton, and shouted "It is finished" as he plopped to the ground and grabbed a lemonade. Might you feel confused, unsure what to do, wondering if the race is already over and if you need to even run at all? Would you feel assured of the victory if you, too, now rested and joined him for a lemonade?

Some of the gap between the "it is finished" declaration and "the mess" down here has to do with the fact that for God there is no time. Something can be finished in eternity but caught in the lag of time on earth, where striving, groaning, and conflict abound. But can we the church perhaps take a closer look at just what our part is in our partnership with God to make this "it is finished" a reality in our lives on earth?

Before Jesus even finished the work of the cross, God gave us the picture, in Isaiah 66:1, of just how confident He is about the victory He supplies: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool". Take that, Satan, the god of this world. Life Awakening's ministry is specifically called to help people learn to live the abundant life here on earth, a life free from sin and the pain and heartache it brings. We would propose, however, that God's meaning in saying "It is finished", is not to say that there is nothing left for us to do. But, rather, that God **has provided everything needed** such that the effects of the curse are annulled and we can experience victory. Does he not tell us that we will have to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling"?

Running the race and winning the trophy

Let's further the race analogy. Is the race over? No! Even Paul talks about running the race set before him and fighting the battle using spiritual versus earthly weapons. Picture Jesus crossing the finish line and holding the "trophy". After the victory, Jesus sends Holy Spirit to the start line to help you and I to run the race. At times Holy Spirit runs beside us, at times He drags us along, at times He calls other people to help, and at times He outright carries us so that we, as members of God's winning team, can join Jesus at the finish line and hold the trophy with Him! The trophy we are talking about is the trophy of abundant life for believers, a life not spoiled by sin, pain, and heartache... **after** which comes eternal life. With the analogy perhaps we can see that while it is a "*finished*" work it is also "being finished" as each believer runs his race and works out his salvation in order to hold the trophy of abundant life and eventually eternal life.

**The missing link:
putting off and
then putting on**

As we discussed at the beginning of this paper, the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ put away the power of sin (and the heartache it brings) for everyone who believes. So we can know, based on the Word, that the Gospel **IS** enough to give us the victory. So what is the missing link?

We at Life Awakening have learned that to “resist the devil and he will flee” takes work, tenacity, skill, and an understanding of our authority in Christ. We call that skill and authority the “*Gospel Process*”. The part of the finished work that the *Gospel Process* distinctly reveals is that the “putting off” of the old is every bit as critically important as “putting on” the new. Putting off is not a once and done event at salvation. We believe at Life Awakening that “putting off” is the **missing link** between the Church’s proclamation of victory over sin and heartache, and the manifestation of that victory in believers’ lives. In a nutshell, our teaching and practice is that one must take the time and effort to “put off” before the “putting on”, and that we, the saints, each have the authority in Christ to do that “putting off”, and to teach our fellow believers how to do it. Just as often as we “put on”, we need to “put off”!

Jesus put off sin (and its heartache) in His death and burial, and only put on the glory of His resurrection “after” the putting off. The putting off was the difficult, agonizing part. And we too experience much strain and agony to embrace, part company with, and put off sin and heartache. But we can learn to do it and walk in the authority needed to do it by joining what Jesus already did, through our *union with Him*. In fact, we have seen that believers cannot put on glory and victory until we have put off the works of the flesh and the works of the enemy. There is no life without death. There is no celebration without joining Jesus in the remission of our sin and heartache!

We the Church have embraced the need to surrender, but we can struggle to know the nitty gritty of what needs to be surrendered. We can say and sing, “I surrender all” but with Satan being a legalist we sometimes need to dredge up “old junk” hiding in the depths and crevices of our soul and surrender it (give it up). Not “putting off” the old before “putting on” the new is like getting dressed for a special night out and not realizing that first you have to peel off your dirty clothes, and probably take a shower. Peeling off sticky, stinky socks, removing dirt-stained jeans, swiping off a sweaty hat, and then showering to remove the grime and sweat, are essential and effortful (the hard and yucky part) before the pleasure of getting dressed in clean, attractive clothes (the easy part). Only after removing the old outfit and cleaning up would you even think to begin the glorious work of putting on the lovely new outfit!

**Nitty gritty of
“putting off”**

We at Life Awakening are excited to teach the Church how to identify sin and heartache that is lurking or entrenched inside each and every believer and then to die and bury it in order to attain our glorious resurrection to abundant life! At salvation, God sometimes makes a quick work of removing some of the old and clothing us in the new. An old addiction may be miraculously removed. And old propensity to sin might miraculously disappear. But rarely is our transformation complete. There is a working out of our salvation (takes work and dependence on Him!). Sometimes we must consciously and laboriously learn to put off sin and heartache before glory and joy can be put on. This can include all of the various expressions of temptation, depression, oppression, heaviness, anxiety, addiction, and many other expressions of the enemy’s work. The enemy weaves a tangled web outside and inside each and every one of us and we must learn to unravel his mess before we can surrender the power of sin and pain that it brings.

The *Gospel Process*, as practiced and taught at Life Awakening, uses this God-given solution to destroy the complex works of the enemy. The four steps of the *Gospel Process* as we see them are *Embrace, Die, Bury, and Rise*. Jesus’ took on our sin, died, was buried, and then resurrected, providing the model to use to shed our sin and pain. There is a secular

expression, “It takes as much time to walk out of the woods as it does to walk into the woods”. There is a skill to learn and a diligence to apply in getting “out of the woods”, in digging deep down into the roots of temptation, sin, and pain and to extract it roots and all, to die to and then bury it! We have experienced that this is the missing link that enables people to realize those wonderful declarations of victory which are the final “*Rise*” step of the *Gospel Process*.

The solution

Life Awakening sees a two-pronged approach: the **how** and the **who**. The “How” is to learn the tools for abundant life, including the *Gospel Process*. The “Who” is the Church becoming equipped and responsible for the victory, rather than the world. The paradigm below outlines what we see as the Gospel Solution (both how and who) versus the Secular Solution (both how and who). The paradigm is not meant to divide but, rather, to stimulate thought. Please take an honest look. Where do you stand personally, as a church, as a ministry, as a community? Is there anything you might want to change?

Gospel Solution

- Saints/believers are responsible and qualified to lead us to victory
- Anointing and commissioning denote competency
- Holy Spirit and Godly wisdom are best tools
- The Gospel and Jesus’ blood take away sin and pain
- All sin and pain are works of the enemy and were destroyed on the cross
- Believers can “put off” or rule over sin and pain
- Freedom and healing can be quick, simple, miraculous, and complete

Secular Solution

- Professionals are the most responsible and qualified to lead us to ,victory
- Degrees/certifications denote competency
- Higher education and research are best tools
- Psychology models (behavior modification, coping skills, anger management) help sin and pain
- Some sin and pain are “natural” and incurable
- The hurting must cope with/manage sin and pain
- Healing is a process that is long, complex, and ongoing

If we are realistic, we might agree that much of the secular view has crept into the Church and even into Christian counseling. When people are struggling, we send them to professionals, and put much stock in degrees and certifications, perhaps more than anointing. The notion of serious “lay” counseling is a thing of the past. We might try to help, as friends, but often don’t seem to feel equipped. And while most Christian counselors have deep faith and biblical wisdom, their certifications are often in secular models rather than in the power of the Gospel to put off works of the enemy. The direct and complete power of the Gospel to “put off” sin and heartache is mingled with and diluted by secular methods of behavior modification, goal-setting, anger management, and the like. These can be somewhat effective but could we be more effective using the power of confession, repentance, and renouncing?

God’s Word tells us that His ways are different and higher than man’s ways. God sent Jesus to shed His blood as a finished work to eliminate sin and heartache! Do we not know how to apply the power of the blood to every work of the enemy? Are we putting our faith in secular models for lack of knowledge? Are we preaching, teaching, and counseling believers to put on the new when the old is festering and bubbling up through destructive thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors? Surely this discrepancy leads to conflict and even shame and discouragement, in the believer.

Life Awakening responds

We at Life Awakening feel a special calling to meet God’s Mandate for victorious living and we want to inspire the Church to adhere to, depend on, rely on, and trust God’s solution –

**“Here I Am”
to God’s mandate**

the Gospel! -- to do so, as laid out in the paradigm. We want to see the CHURCH take back the **Mandate** and responsibility to live in victory over sin, pain, and heartache.

Our ministry is simply to help the Church unpack the true power of the Gospel to free and heal. For over 20 years, we have helped people in their courageous journeys to dig deep into the roots of their sin and heartache (usually formed in childhood) and to then simply use their God-given authority to join the Gospel and die to and bury that “junk”, just as Jesus did on the cross and in the grave. Once freedom from the junk is achieved, we see how Holy Spirit cleanses, heals, and fills people with His goodness and truth. Out of the “death” of the sin and pain comes victorious “life”, the resurrection! Many individuals have found freedom and healing with this simple, God-given gift of the *Gospel Process*

Jesus commanded us to wash one another’s feet at the Last Supper. Please consider that foot washing is not only a command to general humility and service to one another, but, specifically, to help wash one another of sin and pain through joining the Gospel. What a beautiful picture for us, the saints, to follow! We believe many within the Church can become “washers of one another’s feet” by learning to do the *Gospel Process* with and on one another! The world’s ways are NOT above God’s ways. The world’s people are not above God’s people! Let’s believe and act on the power of the Gospel and not the solutions of the world. Life Awakening is here for the equipping of the Church to meet the Mandate and to help the Church become the perfect bride, without spot or wrinkle!

Conclusion

Let’s come full circle back to our original analogy of Jesus having finished the race, holding the trophy, and then sending Holy Spirit back to give assistance to each and every believer to run his race and partake in the trophy. It is a finished work and yet being finished by each person running the race. We see ourselves at Life Awakening as part of the ground crew God has assembled to help believers run their race. Some are doing well but facing temptation; others are lightly or even heavily wounded and in need of recovery. All need to learn to run the race well. We can help directly, by working with individuals in *Gospel Process* sessions. But our greatest impact can be in training others with the Life Awakening *Toolkit* which includes the *Gospel Process*. Believers, clergy, pastors, ministry folks, and others can learn to first put off the old and to then put on the new and thereby live in personal victory over sin and heartache, and to help others in their sphere to do the same.

If you are a part of a church (or body of churches), a ministry, a business, or a community, and want to see your people as part of this God-mandated vision, we say, “Let’s do it!” Instead of the “Church” looking just like the world, let’s help one another up and out of the pews, putting off the old and putting on the new, experiencing victory! With the power of the Holy Spirit and the power of the Gospel, together we can do it!