



World Christian Fellowship

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Galatians

Lesson 14 Crucified yet Living

Galatians 2:19-21, *For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. ²¹ I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."*

Backfire

A duck hunter was with a friend in a wide-open far away space he noticed a cloud of smoke. He realized that a bushfire was advancing so fast they couldn't outrun it. Going through his pockets, he found the matches. He lit a small fire around them and they fanned the little flames outward, extinguishing them as soon as they had burnt the bush.

Soon they found themselves standing in a circle of blackened earth, waiting for the raging bushfire to come. When they raging fire came towards them they just covered their mouths and noses with handkerchiefs and braced themselves. The fire roared near and swept over them.

But they were completely unhurt, untouched. Fire would not pass where fire had already been.

This, indeed, is the heart of Christianity, the firm foundation of faith in Christ. Until this becomes true in a person's life, he will suffer continual defeat and failure.

As long as we live for ourselves, misery will be result. Because in our flesh no good thing dwells in it. (Romans 7:18)

No one can manage to do on his own strength to follow in the steps of Christ, do the will of God, and keep His commandments.

Everyone's flesh is

- totally depraved,
- irreparable,
- helpless, and
- impossible.

The more we try to do good, the more we discover that it is hopeless.

What are we to do with a man who is thoroughly corrupt and incorrigible?

When we recognize and acknowledge that this is our state, it brings us into need and causes us sorrow. Thus, God is able to

open our eyes to see that we were crucified with Christ, not only was our certificate of debt nailed to the cross but also the debtor himself!

This was included in the work of Christ!

The Law

The law is like a bushfire, we cannot escape it. But if we stand in the burned over place, not a hair of our heads will be singed.

The Cross of Calvary is that burned-over place. There we huddle, safe from the power of the law.

In order to understand what Paul writes here, we need to understand the context!

The Galatians were being troubled by false teachers, a group of guys known as the Judaizers, these guys taught that while we are saved by grace through faith in Christ. We then go on to perfection by a life of works.

These Judaizers taught that works were essential for maintaining one's salvation and that the entire law of Moses not just the moral dimension of the law but the ritual parts as well.

- ✓ Circumcision,
- ✓ observing of the Sabbath, and
- ✓ all the feasts and festivals

Paul, who was the Galatians' spiritual father and mentor, knew there could be no blending of grace and works.

So, in his most strongly worded letter, he sternly rebuked the Galatians for their error in so quickly turning away from the gospel they had originally so joyously received.

The last 3 verses of chapter 2 define for us some of the most important truths of the Christian life!

You see, despite Paul's clear denunciation of the Judaizers and their teaching in Galatians, their error is alive and well in the Church today. Where ever you hear the message that your religion and relationship with God is based on what you do, rather than what He has done, you have the error of the Judaizers!

- where ever you find rules and regulations about such things as dress or dancing, or going to this place or that, you have the message of the Judaizers.
- where ever the issue is make-up, or hemlines, or something as harmless as chewing gum, we're back to Galatia.
- when it's communicated that real Christians are the ones who spend so much time every day in bible study and prayer, or who tithe, or who are involved in ministry, or who are present at 3 meetings a week then the Judaizers are at work.

Our relationship with God is not based on what we do but it's based on what He has done!

Does it matter what we do?

Of course!

But not to the issue of our standing before and the relationship with God

Contrary to what the Judaizers were saying,

- ✓ we are not saved by grace - and then go on by works
- ✓ we do not start with faith and then move on to effort
- ✓ what began in grace, received by faith, goes on and is brought to completion by grace through faith

V 19, For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God.

For the follower of Christ, there are two periods in our lives!

BC and AD

Before Christ & After His Dominion

Our lives BC were marked by sin and rebellion against God, both overt and subtle

The Law of God as revealed in the Law given to Moses showed the true nature of our sin and the corruption of our inner being

- we realized the law was right and good

- but we found we were unable to keep that law
- and the just penalty was death!

So, the law doesn't inspire us much to pursue righteousness as it does provoke us to act out the rebellion that already lives inside!

Story of young boy going to a theme park.

There were "Wet Paint" signs all over the fence rails. The boy had been standing in lines for a good part of the day, and never felt the urge to touch the fences! Though he had been leaning against them and putting his hands on them all day, but he never even thought about touching the paint.

Standing in line, and seeing the signs, he noticed how shiny and smooth the paint was it glistened and sparkled. As soon he read the sign Do not touch, it beckoned him to touch me! Of course, he did!

He was a good boy, an obedient lad, at least in comparison to many of his peers.

The standard by which all of us are measured and measured equally is the Law of God. And all of us know, that deep down inside, we are rebels!

Once provoked, we are judged and found guilty. The punishment is death!

So, Paul says that under the dominion of law, we die. But after we have died to the law, we can live to God.

How?

How can we pass from under the law's autocratic provocation of sin?

V 20, *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

Here's how we can die to the law and live toward God by faith in Christ!

This verse, packed as it is with paradoxes, stands as one of the defining passages of the Christian faith!

I have been crucified with Christ.

What does Paul mean?

How has he been crucified with Christ?

In what way?

The tense Paul uses here indicates that he sees himself as having died with Christ on the cross in the past so that the life he is now living is fundamentally different than the life he lived before the Cross.

In other words, the moment Paul came to faith in Jesus, the moment he realized and repented of his sin and placed his personal trust in Christ, it was like Paul was on that Cross!

Jesus was his genuine substitute, but in a way that actually ended something for Paul.

What it ended was a law governed and condemned life?

What it killed was the inner rebellion!

So, Paul says, " I have been crucified with Christ"

- ✓ when Jesus died, the old Paul died
- ✓ so that the new Paul is different and the life he now lives is a different life

"Death in Christ" is a crucial revelation that must be understood if we are ever to be free.

In order to start understanding our death in Christ, let us read some of the Scriptures from Paul!

Romans 6:5-11, *For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,⁶ knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.⁷ For he who has died has been freed from sin.⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,⁹ knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.¹⁰ For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.¹¹ Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Philippians 1:21, *For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

Crucified with Christ- Reckoning you to be Dead

What is the greatest hindrance for us to being free to serve God?

SIN.

The Bible tells us we are all sinners, that there is none righteous, and that all have fallen short of the glory of God.

Romans 3:9 & 23, *What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.*

²³ *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

Yet most of us do not like to admit our struggles with sin.
But this issue must be faced with the help of God, then only we will conquer and will be able to live freely.

For our crucifixion with Christ to become experiential, there is the need of cooperation from two sides. It is impossible to experience this crucifixion if there is cooperation on only one side.

Our inner eyes must be opened.

- ✓ When Christ was crucified on the cross, God put our sins on Christ and crucified them on the cross. This is God's side of the work. Christ died for us and took our sins away. This occurred more than 2,000 years ago, and we believe it.

- ✓ Similarly, when Christ was crucified, God put us into Christ. Just as our sins were settled more than 2,000 years ago, our person was also dealt with at the same time.

When God laid our sins on Christ, He also put our person in Christ.

- On the cross our sins were removed.
- On the cross our person was also dealt with.

Romans 6:6, *knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.*

- ✓ We do not have to hope to be crucified with Christ.
- ✓ We have been crucified with Him, forever and unchangeably crucified with Him. God has put us into Christ.
- ✓ When Christ died on the cross, we died on the cross as well.

If you take a piece of paper, write a few letters on it, and then tear the paper apart, you tear the letters apart as well. You are tearing the paper,

- but as the paper is torn,
- the letters are torn.

From the Old Testament we can understand that the veil of the temple blocked us from the presence of God. The Cherubim were guarding it and their image was embraided on the veil. **Exodus 26:1**, *“Moreover you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine woven linen and blue, purple, and scarlet thread; with artistic designs of cherubim you shall weave them.*

When the Lord Jesus Christ died, the veil was torn open **Matthew 27:51**, *Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn*

in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split,

The veil refers to the body of Christ.

Hebrews 10:20, *by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh,*

The cherubim had the face of a man, the face of a lion, the face of an ox, and the face of an eagle. This signifies all created beings.

Ezekiel 1:10, *As for the likeness of their faces, each had the face of a man; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an eagle.*

Ezekiel 10:20, *This is the living creature I saw under the God of Israel by the River Chebar, and I knew they were cherubim.*

When the body of the Lord Jesus was split, all the creation in Him was split as well. He died that He might taste death on behalf of everything.

Hebrews 2:9, *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.*

- ✓ The whole old creation passed away with Him, includes you as well.
- ✓ All your life you have been trying do good and to be a successful Christian for years but resulted in vain.

- ✓ Now God has crucified you with Christ.
- ✓ When Christ was crucified, the whole old creation was split, and you were split as well.

You must believe in this truth.

Let your spiritual eyes need to be open to see that your sins were upon Christ and your person was also upon Christ.

- ❖ Your sins were on the cross, and your person was also on the cross.
- ❖ Your sins were taken away, and your person was also crucified.
- ❖ You look at the cross, see Christ has accomplished, and God placed me in Christ.
- ❖ When Christ died, I also died!

1. We Must Die to Self.

Consider some other passages that help us understand the meaning of Galatians 2:20.

Matthew 16:24-27, *Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. ²⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. ²⁶ For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his*

soul?²⁷ *For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.*²⁸ *Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."*

V 24, To come after Jesus, we must deny self, take up our cross, and follow Him.

What does it mean to "take up your cross"?

Some interpret it this way that we must be willing to bear a burden.

Bad health is my cross I, or my husband is my cross etc., Jesus said to take up your cross and follow Him.

Was Jesus' cross just a burden for Him to bear?

A cross is a place to die! Jesus' cross is where He was crucified.

V 21, *From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.*

Where was Jesus going?

He was going to die.

Jesus said that He was going to die on the cross.

Then He said, if we want to be his disciples, we must deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him. Jesus gave his life for us. Now we must give our life for him!

V 25,

If we refuse to give up our life now and if we are determined to keep it for ourselves, then we will lose it later. If we lose it now, we will gain it later. The subject being discussed is not bearing burdens but losing life. To live, we must die!

V 26-27,

If we live so we gain the whole world, we may lose our soul at the judgment. Jesus is talking about what it takes to receive eternal life. Many people would be willing to bear a few burdens or make a few changes for the Lord. But not many will give their lives!

Total devotion and dedication to serving God. Give up what you want and live your life to please God. Take up your cross and follow Jesus means to deny self and be crucified with Him. Give your life for Him just as surely as He gave His life for you.

Galatians 5:24-25, *And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*

Those who belong to Christ must crucify the flesh, with its passions and lusts, and walk in the Spirit.

We all have natural desires that are not necessarily wrong. But sometimes they lead us to disobey what the Spirit teaches in the word. To walk according to the Spirit, we must put to death these desires that is to crucify the flesh.

It is not always wrong to do as we desire, but we must not let our desires control what we do.

Are your fleshly lusts crucified, or do they still control your life?

Now consider again the verse where we started.

Galatians 2:20,

Self must be slain, because the desire to please self is what hinders us from dedicating ourselves to serve Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:15, *and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.*

Most people prefer to please themselves.

"I don't want anybody telling me what to do!"

"I want to be in charge of my life."

This attitude must be killed. We must let God be in charge of our lives and tell us what to do. We must live for Him, not for self.

2 Corinthians 8:5, *And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.*

To crucify self means to give oneself as a sacrifice to God. When Jesus was crucified, He gave His life as a sacrifice to do us service. When we are crucified with Him, then we give our lives as a sacrifice to serve Him.

Romans 12:1-2, *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Luke 9:23, *Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.*

The parallel to Matthew 16:24 adds to take up your cross daily. Many people will submit to Jesus once in a while or even most of the time. Crucifying self means denying your desires every day. It is a continual struggle to achieve total devotion to the Lord.

Most people understand that giving one's life for a cause would be an act of supreme devotion. When a parent dies saving a

child, or a fireman dies saving someone trapped in a burning building, we understand those people paid the supreme sacrifice.

That is what Jesus wants of us! The supreme sacrifice.

We may need to die physically for His cause, but if not, we still must give our lives in His service.

When **Galatians 2:20** says, "*It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me,*" it means we must live our lives as He would live if He were in our place. He died to save me; now I must let Him live through me.

Now consider again the question.

"Have the nails pierced your hands and your feet?"

2. We must Die to the will of men.

Many people fail to serve God because they are doing what they want. Others fail because they are doing what other people want.

Consider two areas where this applies.

We Must Follow Divine Law over Human Law.

Colossians 2:20, *Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations—*

We die with Christ from the basic principles of the world. This refers to submitting to human laws (verse 22).

Colossians 2:8, *Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.*

Christians must submit instead to Christ.

Matthew 15:9, *And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ ”*

Worship based on human commands is vain.

This does not mean we never submit to human rules in any realm of life.

Jesus tells

- ✓ citizens to obey civil law,
- ✓ children to obey parents, and
- ✓ wives to submit to husbands.

But we must never violate the will of God to follow human rules. God has made His rules and revealed them in the Bible. We must do nothing except what He has authorized.

- ❖ Why should we not bow to the Pope or to Mary?
- ❖ Why we should not follow man-made creeds?
- ❖ Why we should not accept sprinkle of water on babies for baptism?
- ❖ Why we should not use instruments of music in worship to sensualise the worship?

- ❖ Why we should not call preachers "Reverend," or many designations?
- ❖ Why the church should not send its contributions to man-made institutions?
- ❖ Why the church should not involve in entertainment or recreation?

These are all man-made religious practices.

God's word never tells us to do any of these things.

We should not submit because we died with Christ!

The men who made these laws did not die for us, but Christ died for us. So, we should give our lives, not to do the will of men, but to do the will of Christ who died for us.

Death often refers to separation. We separate ourselves from man-made laws, refusing to obey them. Instead we follow Jesus the head (Colossians 2:19).

So, have we been participating in man-made religious practices or fellowshiping those who do practice them? If so, we need to learn to be crucified with Christ.

We Must Please God Rather than People.

Galatians 6:14, *But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*

Because Jesus died for me, the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. The context shows this means that I do not give into the pressures of the world that would influence me to disobey Christ!

Friends or relatives may want us to participate in sin. They may ridicule us or even persecute us when we refuse to go along with error. We tend to want to go along with the crowd. We must be crucified to such pressures, so they don't lead us to disobey God.

John 12:42- 43, *Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.*

Jewish rulers believed in Jesus but would not confess Him, because they loved the praises of men more than the praises of God.

It is not always wrong to do what pleases people. But we are wrong when our desire to please people leads us to displease God or refuse to stand up for the truth.

Matthew 10:34-39, *“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-*

law';³⁶ and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.'³⁷ He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.³⁸ And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.³⁹ He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

- ✓ Losing our life,
- ✓ taking our cross, and
- ✓ following Jesus

are all discussed again here. We are required to serve Jesus even when this alienates us from our dearest loved ones. If we are not willing to make this sacrifice, we are not worthy of Jesus.

One of the biggest problems in the church is spineless people who will not resist peer pressure. They will not stand up to those who are in sin but allow loved ones to influence them away from the truth.

We must obey God rather than men!

Acts 5:29, *But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men."*

- We must refuse to practice sin,
- we must refuse to fellowship sin, and
- we must speak out against it.

This requires us to die to the will of men, including our dearest loved ones.

So, consider again the question: "Have the nails pierced your hands and your feet?"