

On Being Crucified With Christ

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READ - *Romans 6:1-13*

TEXT - *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)*

THEME - When we died with Christ, EVERYTHING about our lives changed, and we now live for Him in every area of our lives.

Introduction

We read *Romans 6*, and we will come back to it throughout this study, but let's concentrate for a few minutes on our text, *Galatians 2:20*. I came across this verse in my daily Bible reading yesterday, and felt that we should take a break from our current series, and discuss this concept of being "crucified with Christ."

By way of introduction, let's notice a couple of thoughts about the phrase, "*I am crucified.*"

First, a little exegesis. In the Greek, this phrase is in the perfect tense, indicative mood, passive voice. Perfect tense, means that this describes an action that was completed in the past, but has continuing results. Indicative mood simply means that it is an assertion of fact, and passive voice means that the subject receives the action of the verb.

QUESTION - What do you think it means, then, when Paul writes "*I am crucified with Christ?*"

QUESTION - Certainly there is the concept of death involved. We died with Christ. We will discuss this concept more fully in this lesson, but are there other things involved in crucifixion besides death? When I was crucified with Christ, did anything happen to me besides death?

Crucifixion does describe a means of death, of course. But there is also an element of humiliation in the word. To be crucified was to die a humiliating and shameful death.

ILLUS - At one point early in Julius Caesar's political career, feelings ran so high against him that he thought it best to leave Rome. He sailed for the Aegean island of Rhodes, but en route the ship was attacked by pirates and Caesar was captured. The pirates demanded a ransom of 12,000 gold pieces, and Caesar's staff was sent away to arrange the payment. Caesar spent almost 40 days with his captors, jokingly telling the pirates on several occasions that he would someday capture and crucify them to a man. The kidnappers were greatly amused, but when the ransom was paid and Caesar was freed, the first thing he did was gather a fleet and pursue the pirates. They were captured and crucified... to a man! Such was the Romans' attitude toward crucifixion. It was to be reserved for the worst of criminals, a means of showing extreme contempt for the condemned. The suffering and humiliation of a Roman crucifixion were unequalled. (Today in the Word, November 23, 1992)

QUESTION - And so, we understand that we partake in the death of Christ, but do we also partake in the humiliation of Christ? How?

Well, let's consider this verse a little further.

I am crucified...

I am crucified to the whole concept of "works salvation."

Let's take this verse in context first. The Galatians were having a problem understanding the concepts of law and grace. They had drifted back into a doctrine which required they obey the law, and this, Paul said, was contrary to the gospel of grace. It is in that context that our text is found.

READ - *Galatians 2:16, 19-21*

QUESTION - When we read about "the law" in our Bibles, what are we reading about?

QUESTION - How much of the law must we obey if we are to be saved? In other words, must we obey the 10 commandments in order to be saved?

QUESTION - Are there some, even today, who believe that a person needs to perform some sort of works in order to be saved?

The concept of grace is mutually exclusive with the concept of works. If you allow even the smallest amount of works to enter the equation, then you've done away with grace.

And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. (Romans 11:6)

READ - *Colossians 2:20-22 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?*

QUESTION - In those 3 verses we just read, there is a key phrase that helps us understand this argument about law versus grace. What do you think that key phrase might be?

ANSWER - *The commandments and doctrines of men.* Paul is not teaching that we are no longer to live the 10 commandments, or the moral law of God. We as believers are always to strive to that ideal, even though we know we cannot hit the mark (*cf. Romans 3:23*) However, he is adamantly pointing out that we are not to feel obligated to obey those commandments and laws that MAN has added. This was a real problem in New Testament times, and is also a problem today.

We are crucified to the entire concept of works salvation. We are saved entirely by grace.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I am crucified to the power of sin

Let's make some application of this verse, though, beyond the immediate meaning of works versus grace. For this, we'll need *Romans 6* again.

QUESTION - What does it mean to be crucified to the power of sin?

It DOES NOT mean that we have a license to sin as believers. *cf. Romans 6:1-2*

QUESTION - What is the power of sin?

ANSWER - DEATH! *cf. Romans 5:12; 6:23.*

When you and I DIED with Christ, sin's power was broken in our lives. Sin can no longer harm us, for sin's power is death, and WE ARE ALREADY DEAD! You can't be any more dead than dead!

QUESTION - How does this help us in our actual daily lives? Does this thought help us overcome the sinful tendencies we live with on this earth?

It is important to understand this truth in two distinct ways:

Positionally

In the mind of God, you are already dead in Christ. When He died on the cross, you died with Him. *cf. Romans 6:6,11; Galatians 2:20*

Practically

The fact is, we're still walking around! We're not actually physically dead.

Our life on this earth is a process of becoming IN PRACTICE what the Bible teaches we already are IN POSITION. It's a process that we call sanctification.

READ - *Romans 6:12-13; Galatians 2:20; Romans 13:14; Galatians 5:16; 1 Peter 2:11*

And so, let's consider how we LIVE the concept of being crucified to the power of sin in our lives. If you are like me, you have no trouble accepting the positional part. I believe without question that when Jesus died, I died with Him in the mind of God, and that my life is hid in Christ. I believe that when I die, I'll wing my way straight to heaven because of His death. I have no trouble accepting those truths from scripture. However, seeing actual and consistent victory over sin is a much more difficult concept, isn't it?

Let's concentrate on 3 verses - *Romans 6:11-13* and see if we can find the key to making this truth real in our day to day lives.

QUESTION - There are 2 key words in those 3 verses - 2 verbs which tell us what we need to DO with this truth. What are those 2 words?

ANSWER - RECKON and YIELD

Reckon yourself to be dead

QUESTION - What does "reckon" mean?

ANSWER - Believe... accept by faith that a thing is true.

The first key in seeing victory over sin in a practical way is to simply BELIEVE that we have it. Every aspect of our Christian life is steeped in faith. We are saved by faith, and we walk by faith. We obtain heaven by faith, and we obtain victory over sin by faith.

You must learn to see yourself as already dead, and ALREADY VICTORIOUS over sin.

ILLUS - My favorite professor in Bible college explained it thus: A dead man cannot sin, because he is dead. I am dead, therefore I cannot sin. I cannot go to that bar and drink, for I'm dead. I have no legs to carry me there.

We can apply this thought to any temptation and any sin. It is only the first step of 2, but it is vital. We must RECKON ourselves dead... BELIEVE that we are already victorious because dead in Christ... ACCEPT that sin has no power over us because we are already dead and past its power.

Yield

Reckoning is an act of faith, or belief.

Yielding is purely an act of the will, based on what we believe.

QUESTION - Paul describes yielding in two ways, one a positive, and one a negative. What are they?

We are to never yield to sin. Exercise your will in the matter and, as Nancy Reagan used to say, "Just say no."

We ARE to yield to God. In other words, replace the time, effort, and thought that would have been used for sin with the things of God. If we just take away something from our lives (sin), and don't fill that void with something else (righteous activity), then the sin will tend to come rushing back. The key is to fill that void with God's things.

ILLUS - READ - *Matthew 12:43-45*. When you empty your heart of sin, you need to fill that empty place with righteous activity and thought. Don't let sin back in!

I am crucified because...

We won't develop these final thoughts in this lesson. I only present them here for you to meditate on. The REASONS we can say we are crucified to the power of sin in our lives include:

Jesus loved me - *Galatians 2:20*

Jesus died for me - *Galatians 2:20*

I am crucified so that...

Again, we'll save this point for another time. For now just consider the result of all this. In this day and age when so many "believers" attend church and claim Christ only for what they can get out of it, we need to understand the real meaning of being crucified with Christ. It affects our lives on this earth, brings us into a position of being "debtors" to our Lord and Savior, and of being "servants" in every area of our lives.

I am crucified so that:

... the life of Christ might be demonstrated through my life on this earth. READ - 2 *Corinthians 4:11; Galatians 2:20; Romans 6:10-13*

... the life of Christ might be mine forever in eternity. I will live with Him forever in heaven when He calls me home. READ - 2 *Timothy 2:11; Romans 6:8*

Conclusion and Application

Consider these thoughts this week.

We are crucified with Christ.

We are crucified to the concept of works salvation - He saved us by His grace. All we need to do is believe that truth, and accept it as our hope of heaven.

We are crucified to the power of sin in our lives. We can RECKON ourselves dead, and choose whether we will YIELD to sin or to God in our daily activities. We have that freedom to choose because we are crucified with Christ.