

# Forsaking All I Take Him

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**Bible Text:** Galatians 2:20-21; 5:5; Ephesians 5:2,25

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## **Ballston Lake Baptist Church**

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I am confident this morning that you parents can relate to the following. Your son has grown out of infancy, out of early boyhood and has reached the age, perhaps, of 10 or 12. He has matured physically and, to a degree, emotionally such that he ought not to cry when things do not suit him. He ought not to pout and whine. He ought not to overreact to a bruise, to falling off his bicycle—now they wear full body armor anyway—or some other physical pain. Yet an incident arises, perhaps, again, he stumbles, a ball hits him, he cuts his knee, a sibling is using a toy that he wanted to use and that son immaturely responds with tears and a tantrum as if he were three years old.

Now what might be your response to it?

You might well say to that young man, to that boy, “Don’t be a cry baby.” Or, as I have said, I believe, to my grandson on more than one occasion, “Act like a big boy.”

You remind that boy that he is not a three year old. He is not a four year old, but a 10 or a 12 year old. In other words, you are telling him to “Be what you are.”

Perhaps the scene is like this. There is a full grown man, ladies, your husband. And he, too, has grown to maturity at least physically. He has a family. He has a job. He has the responsibilities of an autonomous adult. Perhaps he is a churchman. And he, too, has experienced some sort of set back. Maybe the car he recently purchased is already in the shop. Maybe he lost a sale upon which he was counting for his bonus at work. Maybe someone corrected him, probably his wife. Or he experienced some other kind of disappointment or perhaps has become afraid of someone or something. Again, you might remind this grown male of who he is. You may use words which are the equivalent of, “Don’t act like a child. Don’t be a baby. Be a man. Grow up!” In other words, “Be what you are. Don’t act like someone you are not. Be who you are.”

Now I ask you this morning: Who are you in light of our recent considerations in Galatians two? Who is the Christian. Well, in summary the answer is the Christian is someone in Christ, someone hanging upon, fastened to Christ’s belt, someone for whom Christ is his representative, is his captain—Hebrews 2:10—is his head, someone for whom Christ has acted on his behalf and someone we heard in the last hour in whom that one who has acted on his behalf indwells by his Spirit.

In the language of Romans six Christians are those—quote—united with him. Literally, planted together with. United with him in the likeness of his death and planted together with him in the likeness of his resurrection.<sup>1</sup>

Who is the Christian in Romans six? The Christian is that one dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Or as this identity of wanting Christ is expressed in the text of our continuing concern this morning, Galatians 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.”<sup>2</sup>

Who am I? Who is the Christian? The Christian is a new man in Christ. He is a man taken out of Adam and planted together with Christ. To excerpt analogous passages he is the man justified by faith in Christ and just as surely sanctified in Christ Jesus.

Paul will later describe us in Galatians 5:24 as those who belong to Christ.

Now what is the summary obligation of that identity? The summary obligation is to be who you are. Don't be a baby. Grow up and be the man in Christ you are. The summary imperative, indeed, the first imperative that meets us in the Roman letter comes in chapter six at verse 11, “Consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”<sup>3</sup> Consciously regard, consciously reckon, account in view of the facts who you are in Christ. Be who you are him.

This week I came upon an anecdote both in my friend pastor Donnelly's book on union with Christ and in the original source from which he drew the anecdote—that is, Augustine's *Confessions*. Augustine, before his conversion was a notoriously immoral man. And if you are surprised by that, check out his *Confessions* and see what he says about himself, particularly about his womanizing. It is a bit shocking. We think of the great Augustine as one of the heroes of the faith. And, indeed, he was. But you ought to see what he says about his life prior to conversion. He was a notoriously immoral man.

After becoming a Christian Augustine met a woman with whom he had had an immoral relationship. The woman approached him with a suggestive, seductive smile and said, “It is I, Augustine.”

Augustine responded, “Yes, but it is not I, Augustine.”

Like Augustine you and I are to meet sin and temptation in the strength of who we are in Christ. Again, to excerpt analogous Scripture, Colossians 2:20, “You have died with Christ”<sup>4</sup> and in Colossians 3:1, “You have been raised up with Christ.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Romans 6:5

<sup>2</sup> Galatians 2:20

<sup>3</sup> Romans 6:11

<sup>4</sup> Colossians 2:20

<sup>5</sup> Colossians 3:1

We are to meet sin and temptation in the strength of who we are in Christ and in the power of his Spirit who indwells you, his Spirit who in our personal histories regenerates, renews and goes about the progressive work of making that one in Christ a holier and a holier man and woman. We are to manifest, in other words, in real actual personal subjective experience our identity. We are to work out our salvation. We are to live out who we are. We are to manifest in our actual thinking and speaking and doing who and what we are hanging upon Christ's belt.

Again, referring to Romans six the imperative to reckon upon our identity, "Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus."<sup>6</sup>

"Therefore," as verse 12 begins, in consequence of who you are in Christ... And now the language of experience. "Do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts."<sup>7</sup>

There it is. Identity and, in consequence of identity, experience; they go together as justification and sanctification. "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God," now, again, the language of identity, "as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."<sup>8</sup>

Later, in Romans six at verse 19, "So now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification."<sup>9</sup>

The point is the Holy Spirit imparts to sinners an actual condition changing experience that is always the concomitant of their identity as a new man in Christ. The Holy Spirit imparts to sinners a new heart, a new character, new conduct which attests to who the Christian is.

Now, returning this morning to Galatians 2:20. Paul has described how a man—noting verse 19—might live to God. He has described, as it were, his own Copernican revolution; how he used to live in a law-centric universe, how he came to live in a Christocentric universe. To say it in another manner: Paul, in Galatians 2:20 has written his obituary, the obituary of one slain by the law, condemned, driven to despair by the law and having given up on that righteousness derived from the law is now a man in Christ. His new identity, he describes it this way. "I have been crucified with Christ...Christ lives in me."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Romans 6:11

<sup>7</sup> Romans 6:12

<sup>8</sup> Romans 6:12-13

<sup>9</sup> Romans 6:19

<sup>10</sup> Galatians 2:20

Now, as we move forward this morning Paul expresses in the balance of verse 20 the summary experience resultant from his new identity. His identity: crucified with Christ. Christ lives in him.

But what follows is the experience of that identity. What follows is that actual, personal, transforming experience. And it is, in a word, a life of faith, a life of Spirit given, Spirit wrought faith set upon Christ that governs and moves and controls this man who is now in Christ.

Galatians 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live...”<sup>11</sup> No longer the man in Adam struggling by means of the law to provide a righteousness of his own. No longer that man living. No. Christ now lives in me. And where we continue on? “And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.”<sup>12</sup>

That is the summary experience, a life of vital faith in Christ alone that is the concomitant in Paul’s actual life history of being in Christ.

We shall consider the balance of verse 20 beginning with, “And the life which I now live in the flesh...”<sup>13</sup> We shall take it up under three headings. The first will be the life of faith. The heading signifying, “And the life which I now live in the flesh...”<sup>14</sup> Secondly, we shall consider the nature of faith reflecting the language, “I live by faith...”<sup>15</sup> And, thirdly, the object of faith in the Son of God who loved me and delivered himself up for me.”<sup>16</sup> We, perhaps, will not finish those headings in this hour, but we shall begin, now, with the life of faith.

The life of faith, the life wherein this faith in Christ is a governing force and a vital principle—note in your Bibles—it is “the life which I now live in the flesh.”<sup>17</sup>

Now, plainly, the reference is to the duration of Paul’s mortal life. The sense of “in the flesh” is in this mortal body. He is signifying the external, earthly, flesh and blood character of this present life. Yes, there are occasions when Paul uses—quote—flesh, σαρξ (sarx) to refer to the unregenerate nature of man.

Turn back briefly to Romans chapter eight and note at verse five:

For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it

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<sup>11</sup> Galatians 2:20

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.<sup>18</sup>

“However,” Paul says, “you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit.”<sup>19</sup>

In that text, plainly, Paul is using the term flesh as he uses it elsewhere even in the Galatian letter to signify the unregenerate state of a man or woman still in Adam. You might turn ahead in the Galatian letter to chapter five at verse 16.

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.<sup>20</sup>

And then at verse 19 through 21 the deeds of the flesh. Those deeds, those manifestations that characterize an unconverted, unregenerate man who is still in Adam.

In chapter five at verse 24, “Those who belong to Christ Jesus,” they are in Christ, “have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”<sup>21</sup>

Now, granted, that is a dominant sense with which Paul attaches to the word “flesh.” But there are other occasions such as the one before us where it is plain that flesh refers not to something inherently evil, but to this God created, mortal body. For instance, in 2 Corinthians four and verse 11. “For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our,” and it is translated, “mortal flesh.”<sup>22</sup> That the life of Christ is put on display as I live my life in this tabernacle of flesh and blood.

In 2 Corinthians 10 at verse three, “For though we walk in the flesh...”<sup>23</sup> We are mortal men. Our souls are tented in this tabernacle of flesh and blood. “Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.”<sup>24</sup> That is, our weapons for our spiritual warfare are not things we put in our hand. They are not carnal.

It is said of the Lord Jesus in 1 Timothy 3:16, “He who was revealed in the flesh...”<sup>25</sup> Same term that Paul is using here in Galatians 2:20 and, obviously, the same sense. This God created fleshly body, this mortal body—and we do not buy into the Platonic dualism that the flesh is inherently evil and what is spirit is good. That is a sub biblical, unbiblical

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<sup>18</sup> Romans 8:5-8

<sup>19</sup> Romans 8:9

<sup>20</sup> Galatians 5:16-17

<sup>21</sup> Galatians 5:24

<sup>22</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:11

<sup>23</sup> 2 Corinthians 10:3

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> 1 Timothy 3:16

view of the created order. We yet live in these created mortal bodies. That is what Paul is saying in Galatians 2:20, “The life which I now live in the flesh...”<sup>26</sup>

And before going onward I want to add quickly some dimensions of truth revealed elsewhere in the Scriptures about this mortal body, this flesh in which I live.

I had occasion recently to speak to my doctor. It is the second time about this. Psalm 139 verse 14 concerning this flesh, “fearfully and wondrously made.”<sup>27</sup> It is not to be denigrated. These bodies are fearfully and wondrously made. And as such they display something of the excellencies of the creator. Our bodies are to be esteemed in such a way.

Secondly, we can say about these created mortal bodies: They are purposed—I Corinthians 6:19-20—to glorify God. We are to glorify God in them. We are to glorify God with them. We are to be stewards of these mortal bodies.

But, thirdly, we have to say this. A testimony of the Scriptures is there is a principle of sin remaining in these mortal bodies. Turn briefly to Romans chapter seven. Paul speaks to this directly at verse 18.

For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish. But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body<sup>28</sup>

And, accordingly, in chapter eight at verse 13 we are to be putting to death the deeds of the body<sup>29</sup> Suffice it to say without exposition, there is a principle of remaining sin which adheres to our mortal bodies.

And then, fourthly, due to that, due to the curse and to sin what do we say about these mortal bodies? They are perishable. They shall die. The outer man is decaying and the outer man shall decay and die.

What we say, fifthly, from the longest treatise on the resurrection in the New Testament these very mortal bodies that are perishable shall put on in the resurrection the imperishable. We shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Galatians 2:20

<sup>27</sup> See Psalm 139:14

<sup>28</sup> Romans 7:18-23

<sup>29</sup> See Romans 8:13

<sup>30</sup> See 1 Corinthians 15:51-52

As Paul writes to the Philippians in chapter three, “Who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of his glory.”<sup>31</sup>

Yes, there is within me a principle of sin due to the curse, due to sin within me. My body is perishable. It shall decline. It shall die. But just as surely because my body is joined to Christ it shall be raised and transformed.

But going back to Galatians 2:20. Yet for the appointed number of my days, for the fixed number or duration of one’s early existence in this wondrously created body, Paul says, “I live.”

Now recall what you heard in the last hour. And, again, what follows was prepared without reference to that. I live. I think. I speak. I work. And I do so not governed by the controlling impulses either of my unregenerate flesh or of my mortal flesh, not by the aims, pursuits, ways and pleasures which characterize those still in Adam as they, too, live in the body. No. I live by faith. That is the controlling principle in a Christocentric universe. That is the power. I live by faith. During that time when we are, in Paul’s words, at home in the body... What follows in 2 Corinthians five? He says we walk by faith, not by sight.<sup>32</sup>

We don’t walk like those in Adam who are yet in the body. Everything is what the senses discern, what the body wants. Though we walk by faith and not by sight. We look not at the things which are seen, that is temporal, but at the things which are not seen, eternal. There is, in other words, the coexistence of life in the mortal body and life by faith and the Spirit in Christ.

As one writes, “Granted, that it is still a life in the flesh, yet it is in its highest aspect a life of faith.” In this visible sense this life is an earthly one, yet it is characterized at the same time by a higher, controlling, dominating principle and that governing principle, that moving dynamic is faith. As the writer to the Hebrews defines, “the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”<sup>33</sup> It is that kind of faith that moves men and bonds them with the Spirit to Christ.

“The life which I now live in the flesh.”<sup>34</sup>

I do not live as if what can be carnally sensed, what can be carnally, sensually possessed and enjoyed is my supreme good and are the controlling factors of life. I lived...I live that way in Adam, but not in Christ. Knowing Christ, the experience of being in Christ means I live by faith, faith that directs leads and influences, faith which casts the faculties of my humanity upon that one who is now the center of my cosmos, the life of faith.

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<sup>31</sup> See Philippians 3:21

<sup>32</sup> See 2 Corinthians 5:6-7

<sup>33</sup> See Hebrews 11:1

<sup>34</sup> Galatians 2:20

Now, second, the nature of faith. Reflected by the heading is the language, “I live by faith.” Paul’s life, he is telling us, was no longer like the former days when he in his pride and in his self righteousness and smugness endeavored to obtain a righteousness of his own doing, of his own law keeping, days of self dependence. And yet they became days of despair and of guilt. They became days when he began to be dominated by the futility of it all because the law began to expose him for who he really was. And in his case, among other things, he was a coveter. And that undid Paul.

But these are new days. Now Paul lives by reliance upon, by trust in another. He has done with self. His confidence, his hope has been entirely redirected, abandoning, forsaking, disowning any and all confidence in himself and in his own doings, in his works, in his performances of any sort, Paul says now, “I live by faith.”

What is faith? What is the nature of faith? Well, now exhaustive answer is going to be given, but an answer that at least comprehends what Paul writes to the Galatians about faith.

Now I began by asserting, concerning the nature of faith, that faith is not what many men in Adam think it is. There are many in our day that equate faith with mere optimism.

“Keep...you got to have faith.”

They don’t even know what they are saying. They just got this syrupy, unfounded notion, this optimistic notion that things will get better. It will work out for the best. That is not true. If you are in Adam, they will not work out for the best.

Faith is not a mustered up optimistic hope separated from an object upon which it rests who has the power to really order and determine events and outcomes. No doubt if you and I responded to the generic encouragement, “Keep the faith,” with a descriptive identification of Christ as the only object which validates faith, well, you know, how many would respond to it. They would not smile. Faith is not mere optimistic sentiment.

What is faith? Well, quickly faith is a gift worked in the sinner by the Holy Spirit. To excerpt from the Philippian letter concerning faith, it has been granted to believe in him. Faith is a gift. How can a man dead in Christ believe in Christ? He can no more believe in Christ than he can repent of his sin. Yes, he is responsible. But he is a dead man and in bondage to his sin. He can’t believe or repent. He must, but he can’t.

No, it has been granted to believe in him just as in Peter’s report concerning what happened at Cornelius’ house he said to those in Jerusalem, “God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.”<sup>35</sup> And as the Bible teaches, repentance and faith, again, are concomitants. They are two sides of the same coin, of conversion that are the immediate expressions of regeneration. Faith is a gift worked in the soul by the Holy Spirit. It is a penitent faith. Wherever there is repentance there is faith. Wherever there is faith there is repentance, a self forsaking, self renouncing, a self and

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<sup>35</sup> Acts 11:18



sin disowning, Christ embracing, Christ trusting, Christ alone relying upon disposition of the soul. That is what we mean when we say, “You have got to have faith.” That’s faith.

Now, again, in the context of the Galatian letter the nature of faith is revealed to be—and there are several things that now follow. First and foremost the nature of faith is revealed to be the instrument of justification. Any teaching on the nature of faith in the Galatian letter must start there going back to verse 16. “Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ.”<sup>36</sup>

And this language of agency, this language of means, this language of instrumentality pervades the Galatian letter. You can read in chapter three repetitiously of this kind of syntax using the preposition “by” or “through.” Paul is teaching that the alone instrument of justification is this Spirit wrought gift of faith. Faith is that by which justification is received, is apprehended, sinners are justified by and through faith, not on the grounds of faith. Were that the case what we deduce? Then justification is by works. We are back with the Judaizers because faith is something I do. I actually believe. Faith is, rather, like unto the outstretched empty hand that receives justification by receiving Christ. Faith is a stricken man stricken by a sense of who he is before God and his law looking and going outside of himself giving up on himself, declaring his own hopelessness and looking to and trusting in Christ alone for a righteousness that prevails in the holy presence of his Father.

The Galatian letter teaches as to the nature of faith that it is, first and foremost the alone, the exclusive, the solitary instrument of justification. Receiving the gift of justifying righteousness. But secondly, concerning the nature of faith, faith is biblically informed. It is not just any old faith. It is not generic. It is not ill defined. It is biblically informed faith.

And such a description arises from what we see in verse two of chapter three. And in the interest of time simply note the phrase of hearing with faith. That brings to mind what Paul wrote to the Romans, “How shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard?”<sup>37</sup> What is Paul saying by that rhetorical question? Faith must be biblically informed. There must be the hearing of the truth of that one who alone is the valid object of faith. Faith is validated by its object. And the object is Christ. And one must hear of Christ and hear with faith. It is a biblically informed faith.

Thirdly, it is a working faith. Coming to Galatians five at verse six we read of these epitomizing words, “Faith working through love.”<sup>38</sup> It reminds us that faith is not mere religious talk. It is not mere mental assent to a religious creed. Rather, faith is an active power in the soul. It is a dynamic. It is lively. It is vital. It is influential. It is moving,

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<sup>36</sup> Galatians 2:16

<sup>37</sup> Romans 10:14

<sup>38</sup> Galatians 5:6

controlling and directing. It is, as James writes in James two, “a working faith”<sup>39</sup> that moves a man.

And the great commentary on that aspect of faith is Hebrews 11. “By faith...by faith...by faith.” And throughout Hebrews 11 we read of what men and women did by faith. Faith is a working faith. It constrains. It leads. It animates. It is a power in the soul.

But then, fourthly, again noting in Galatians 5:6, “faith working through love.”<sup>40</sup> Well, that serves to remind us of something else about the nature of faith. And that is what the Bible teaches elsewhere. Faith in Christ is always joined by love for Christ. There is no such thing as faith in Christ alone. Faith in Christ is joined by life for Christ.

Peter writes, “Though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him.”<sup>41</sup> We believe in that one we do not see with our physical eyes. And we love him.

But there is another associate always with faith. Not only love for Christ, but obedience to Christ. And, thus, Paul writes the very same Paul. He writes of the obedience of faith. Our Lord says, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”<sup>42</sup>

Our friend, pastor Martin, calls this the three fold cord, three strands of a cord of our relation to Christ: faith, faith in Christ; love for Christ, obedience to Christ. The three go together, three strands of one saving cord. Whereas the analogy is there is the seed of faith in Christ, the tree of love for Christ and then there are the branches or leaves of obedience to Christ. Again, the all go together. Where there is true faith there will be love for and there will be obedience to Christ. And that is certainly why in John 3:36 the terms are used interchangeably. “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not,” and he doesn’t say believe. It says, “obey the Son shall not see life.”<sup>43</sup>

Why does John use as equivalents believe and obey? Yes, they have a distinctive nuance by definition, but in the Christian’s experience, they are always together. Where there is true faith there will be love for Christ and obedience to Christ or the profession of faith is a counterfeit.

Yes, it is faith alone that receives Christ, faith alone, the empty hand receiving the justifying righteousness of Christ, but it is not faith that is alone. That faith is productive of love and obedience. It is a loving, obeying, working faith. If it is not that it may be human optimism, but it is not faith.

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<sup>39</sup> James 2:22

<sup>40</sup> Galatians 5:6

<sup>41</sup> 1 Peter 1:8

<sup>42</sup> John 14:15

<sup>43</sup> John 3:36

Now, fifthly and finally this morning, with regard to the nature of faith as it can be understood, just keeping ourselves in the Galatian letter, as to the nature of this faith and going back to 2:20, it is personal.

Now note back in 2:20 how many times there is a reference to the first person. Verse 19. "I died to the Law, that I might live to God."<sup>44</sup>

Verse 20. "I have been crucified with Christ; and 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."<sup>45</sup>

We ought not miss the repetitious use of the first person. It shows us that the matter of faith in Christ is a very personal affair.

Young people, no one can believe for you. No one else's faith is going to suffice for you. You, each one of you, you must personally disown yourself and cast yourself on Christ. You, you must reckon with your own sin.

Young men, you young guys past puberty, you must reckon with what your lust tells you about your character. You must do that. It is telling you a lot about who you are. You need to reckon with that. And see in the reckoning that you do not have one whit of a hope to save yourself. You are already condemned. You need to reckon with that. Nobody else can do it for you. You need to come to your own personal despair. You need to despair about yourself, your own guilt, your own corruption, your own pride, your own self righteousness, your own ego. You have got to deal with it. You have got to reckon with it. You need to grasp what it says about you.

There is an acronym using the very spelling of faith. The acronym says, "Forsaking all I take Christ." It's a good summary to this dimension of faith. "Forsaking all I take Christ."

Young people, you must reckon with the very personal, self forsaking, Christ embracing, the deadening delusion that I am convinced is all too present even in our modestly sized assembly, the deadening delusion that doesn't seem to give way to any amount of preaching. The deadening delusion is this. That mere association with a Christian family, with an external Christian routine, mere association or presence at a church somehow renders one a Christian. And the evidence that one is living that delusion is that one regularly in the midst and under the sound of gospel preaching in a church in family worship, wherever, who remains smugly complacent. That tells you they are terminally infected with that delusion. They are dying with it. They are smugly complacent.

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<sup>44</sup> Galatians 2:19

<sup>45</sup> Galatians 2:20

What those associations without faith bring: hardness of heart, deaf ears and blind eyes. All the while maintaining external habits. Smug complacency, hard heart, while going through the motions.

The Philippian jailer asked: “What must I do to be saved?”<sup>46</sup> What must I do about my guilt and my depravity and my despair and my...? What must I do? Not the guy in the next cell. What must I do?

And Paul answered, “Believe in the Lord Jesus and ye shall be saved.”<sup>47</sup>

Young people, may the jailer’s question be your question. May God quicken hard hearts and liberate from the deadening delusion of mere associational Christianity so that you can say with Paul, “The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and delivered himself up for me.”<sup>48</sup> And may the waters of baptism behind me give testimony soon that God had mercy on you and relieved you of your smug complacency and quickened a life changing faith where Christ now is the center of your universe?

Now, thirdly and finally, with regard to this profound statement, the object of faith in the “Son of God who loved me and delivered himself up for me.”<sup>49</sup>

The apostle is setting out unmistakably the exclusive object of his faith, the one to whom faith is directed, upon whom faith is cast, in whom it is placed, to whom faith bonds him. And that one is the Son of God who loved me and delivered himself up for me. The object of faith is the second person of the eternal Godhead. That one who being very God of very God, fully God with all the prerogatives of deity before the world was, that one took upon himself a true and a full humanity. Faith rests not upon a creature, but upon that one fully God, fully man, so like God that he is described as the exact representation of his image, so loved by the Father as to be described as that one who is in the bosom of the Father, that one who is described as the “Word became flesh,”<sup>50</sup> that one in whom, as Paul writes, “all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form,”<sup>51</sup> that one who in gracious condescension was in the theme of Isaiah 53, the obedient servant of Jehovah who humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.<sup>52</sup> And this one was that one revealed to the self righteous soul in the language of Galatians one. He was pleased to reveal his Son in me.

The object of faith, the eternally begotten, Son of God who emptied himself not by jettisoning anything, but by taking, taking to himself a true humanity.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Acts 16:30

<sup>47</sup> See Acts 16:31

<sup>48</sup> Galatians 2:20

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> John 1:14

<sup>51</sup> Colossians 2:9

<sup>52</sup> See Philippians 2:8

<sup>53</sup> See Philippians 2:7

Now Paul describes the Son of God, the object of his faith here in verse 20 in terms of his love and the supreme demonstration of his love. Note in your Bibles “who loved me.”<sup>54</sup>

The kind of love conveyed is that love known by what it gives, that love known by what it expends, that love that is demonstrated by sacrifice for the good of those loved. It signifies self denying, self expending love that acts. It acts to secure the welfare of those loved. The incarnation and all that was comprehended by the incarnation was an expression of his love, but the aorist tense, “who loved me,”<sup>55</sup> followed by the aorist, “delivered up himself,”<sup>56</sup> unmistakably points to the once and for all superlative act of love that is his curse bearing, substitutionary death in the place of his people.

Now the Bible teaches that the love of God the Father constrained the giving of his Son, John 3:16. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.”<sup>57</sup> The Father loved. The moving cause of the atonement was the Father’s love.

Romans 5:8, “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”<sup>58</sup> The love of God the Father constrained him unto the giving of his Son.

But here what is upon the apostle’s mind is the love of God the Son. The love of God the Son constrained the Son to give himself. And this language of the Son loving his people unto giving himself up for them, is found in other places of the New Testament. This same verb is used in Ephesians five at verse two. That is, the verb “love” followed by “gave” or “delivered himself up.” Paul writes, “Walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God.”<sup>59</sup>

Later in that chapter addressing husbands. “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church,”<sup>60</sup> same love, same aorist followed by the same verb “gave” or delivered himself,” “loved the church and gave Himself up for her.”<sup>61</sup>

The love of God the Son constrained the Son to act, constrained him to self denial, to self sacrifice, to self giving. And what we ought to know here in verse 20, among other things, is how Paul takes this and personalizes it.

As one writes, “No matter who else were loved, Paul says, he loved me. No matter for whom other he gave himself, he gave himself for me.” And then setting that confidence of Christ loving me, delivering himself up for me in its context, the writer says, “Is it any wonder, then, that my life,” speaking now in the first person for Paul, “even now is a life

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<sup>54</sup> Galatians 2:20

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> John 3:16

<sup>58</sup> Romans 5:8

<sup>59</sup> Ephesians 5:2

<sup>60</sup> Ephesians 5:25

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

of faith in him and no longer a life of legal bondage. If the Son of God loved him and so loved him that he gave himself to death for him, and if his faith has been resting on that love crowned in his sacrifice, how could he ever think of disowning his Redeemer, slighting his love, disparaging his gift by relapsing into any kind of legal observance, rebuilding what he had strenuously torn down. His confidence in the Son of God and the near and tender relation of the Son of God to him, he loved him. He loved me. He delivered himself up for me makes such a retrogression, such a retreat impossible.”

If you were reading Martin Luther’s commentary on Galatians 2:20 with sarcasm, he speaks out of his Romish background and he sarcastically and rhetorically asked, “Wilt thou bring thy cowl?” What was a cowl? It was the hooded cloak of a monk who is in his monastery, trying to gain merit. “Wilt thou bring thy cowl, thy shaven head, thy chastity, celibacy, thy obedience, thy poverty, thy works, thy merits, what shall these do in the presence of that one who loved me and gave himself for me?”

We can personalize that kind of man’s doings. What shall all that nice guy religion do in view of the Son of God who loves sinners and gave himself up for them?

Paul in effect was singing the children’s hymn in the back of our Trinity Hymnal. “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.” He loved me. And what was the superlative demonstration of that love? Verse 20 concludes with it. “And delivered himself up for me.”<sup>62</sup> The reference is to his voluntary sacrifice of himself, sacrificing himself to condemnation, to scourging, to the crown of thorns, to the mockery, to the spittle, to the beating, to the injustice, to the bearing of guilt, to the curse of the law, to the abandonment by the Father and, primarily, to a criminal’s death by crucifixion.

The verb has the sense of giving over, handing over, yielding up. And it is a verb that is often used of the sacrificial death of Christ. It reflects what Jesus said of himself in John 10. “The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep... I lay down My life for the sheep... No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative.”<sup>63</sup>

That is what is reflected by what Paul is saying of our Lord. He delivered himself up. He gave himself over for me. Yes, evil men delivered Jesus up. The very same verb is used in such a connection as in Acts three at about verse 13. “The one whom you delivered up and disowned.”<sup>64</sup> Yes, God the Father, in the economy of redemption delivered him up. Romans 4:25, God “delivered him up for us all.”<sup>65</sup>

But here the emphasis is upon the demonstration of the Son’s love. The Son of God who loved me and delivered himself for me.”<sup>66</sup> The object of faith, the second person of the Godhead incarnate, who constrained by selfless love offered himself an atoning sacrifice for souls.

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<sup>62</sup> Galatians 2:20

<sup>63</sup> John 10:11, 15, 18

<sup>64</sup> Acts 3:13

<sup>65</sup> Romans 8:32

<sup>66</sup> Galatians 2:20

Now in the context, coming to verse 21 the sense is it all comes down to an either or. That is, in the context of what Peter has done, going back to the middle of the chapter, temporarily denying this truth, the summary statement where all of it leads, verse 21, Paul now says, “I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law,” as Peter was acting out, “then Christ died needlessly.”<sup>67</sup>

Now the ideas—without any careful exposition—bound up in verse 21 are these, the idea, the foundational idea is this. Righteousness comes either by the law or through Christ. There is no combination. It is black or it is white. There is no gray. It is either through the law as Peter was acting out or it is through the grace of God offered in Christ.

The second idea is this. If man could provide a righteousness by his own doings of whatever sort, then Christ’s death was pointless, was needless. The death of Christ, summarily stated, was endured to secure his people’s justification. Had the works of the law been sufficient to achieve that end, the death of Christ is, then, superfluous.

The final idea: Paul is having no part of that kind of statement. Paul is not going to participate in such a denial of God’s grace. He is not going to set it aside. He is not going to declare the grace of God in Christ as of no use as his fellow apostle Peter in Antioch had done.

I conclude this first sermon this afternoon by going back in verse 20 to the statement “I live by faith in the Son of God.”<sup>68</sup> Listen to Bishop Ryle, his notable description of faith. “True saving faith is an act of the whole inner man. It is an act of the head, heart and will all united and combined. It is an act of the soul in which seeing his own guilt, danger and hopelessness and seeing at the same time Christ alone offering salvation, that man ventures on Christ, flees to Christ, receives Christ as his only hope and becomes a willing dependent on him.”

True faith has nothing whatever of merit about it. One reason being it is the gift and the work of the Holy Spirit. It is but a laying hold of a Savior’s hand, a leaning on a husband’s arm, a receiving of a physician’s medicine. It brings with it nothing to Christ but a man’s sinful soul. It gives nothing, contributes nothing, pays nothing, performs nothing. Faith only receives. It only takes, accepts, grasps, embraces the glorious gift of justification which Christ has accomplished and freely offers.

And then you may recall these descriptions. Saving faith is the hand of the soul. The sinner is like a drowning man at the point of sinking. He sees the Lord Jesus Christ holding out help to him. He grasps him and is saved. That is faith. Saving faith is the eye of the soul. The sinner is like the Israelite bitten by the fiery serpent in the wilderness and at the point of death. The Lord Jesus Christ is offered to him as the brazen serpent set up for his cure. The believing man looks to Christ and is healed. Saving faith is the mouth of the soul. The sinner is starving for want of food, sick because of his sore disease. The

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<sup>67</sup> Galatians 2:21

<sup>68</sup> Galatians 2:20

Lord Jesus Christ is set before him as the bread of life, as the great physician. He receives it and is made well and strong. This is faith. Saving faith is the foot of the soul. The sinner is pursued by a deadly enemy in fear of being overtaken. The Lord Jesus Christ is put before him as his only refuge. He runs to him and is safe. That is faith. The hand of the soul, the mouth of the soul, the foot of the soul. Saving faith, the sinner brings nothing to Christ but his sinful, hopeless self. And in saving faith, remember, the sinner receives not some portion of Christ, not some man made Americanized version of Christ, but he receives a whole Christ as he has revealed himself, Savior and Lord. And in saving faith, again remember, and remember, young people, the sinner who comes to Christ in faith withholds nothing from him, nothing of his heart, nothing of his mind, nothing of his will, nothing of his affections. The case is: whatever has your heart has you. In saving faith Christ alone gets your heart.

The life which I now live in the flesh I live by this governing dynamic, faith, the object of which, the Son of God who loved me and delivered himself up for me.

*Father, we pray this afternoon that especially those who have spent their entire young life under the sound of the gospel would be done with their complacency, would see their desperate state, would withhold nothing of their heart from Christ and, Father, would cast themselves upon him.*

*Lord, we pray that we would meet the enticements, the temptations of the week ahead in the strength of who we are in Christ and in the moral power and life of the Spirit of Christ within our renewed humanity. And I ask these things with confidence that one who loved us, that one who delivered himself up for us, was bodily raised on the third day, ascended into the heavens, now is enthroned, shepherding his Church as our living head, our ruling head, shall return and receive us unto himself. Amen.*