

Galatians 2: 20; “I am Crucified with Christ”, Message # 12 in the series – “Christ Has Made Us Free”, Conducted by Pastor Paul Rendall on August 7th, 2013, at the church.

Truly, this is one of the most wonderful verses in all the Bible, even though at first sight it might seem otherwise. “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.” Crucifixion is not a pleasant thing to think about. It is one of the most gruesome of deaths. Our Lord Jesus was crucified for our sins. The text says that we as believers have been crucified with Him. We will attempt to understand this statement better in the next few minutes. In this verse we need to see that in conversion, God has dealt decisively with the self-life in the heart of every true Christian, through the crucifixion of Christ. And what He has done by His mighty grace at conversion, which is based upon the work of the Lord Jesus at the cross, He intends that it will affect everything that we as the believer will think and do, in living our Christian life. And so, as we consider these verses, we will want to better understand the 2 principles of truth and reality, which are given to us here, in relation to our own self-life as a believer in Jesus Christ. If we truly understand them, they will enable us to glorify God in the way we think, the things that we say, and all that we will do. 1st – I find here, the principle of truth and the reality that I have been crucified with Christ. 2nd - I find the principle of truth and the reality that it is Christ who is living in me.

1st – There is here a principle of truth and the reality that I have been crucified with Christ.

Now we need to remember that the Apostle Paul is speaking in the first person singular here. He is saying, “I am crucified with Christ”. All of us who would know that we are true Christians must remember that the whole of our being able to live to God, and for God, rests upon our personally being in spiritual union with our Lord Jesus Christ. Can you say, “Jesus is my Savior from sin? Have I died with Christ? We come to have all the blessings of salvation because Jesus Christ has died for our sins and we believe that. We believe that our being saved from our personal sins, and our receiving the free gift of eternal life, do not come from ourselves but from God’s having placed us in Christ. We now know, or we should know, that God is seeing us in Christ continually as we live to Him. When we come to Christ, we must understand that we have been crucified with Christ; that is, that God has literally spiritually placed us into His death. Turn with me over to 2 Corinthians 5: 14-16. We find the Apostle Paul speaking here of his great motivation in preaching the gospel. It was the love of Christ. “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; 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.” Now let us ask ourselves whether we believe in the doctrine of Particular Redemption, or whether we believe in a Universal Redemption? For a Universal Redemption by Christ means that God has provided salvation for you in Christ, but He will do nothing in particular for you, in the application of that redemption, to take away the dominion of sin over your life. You yourself must believe and repent and live unto God based upon your own decision and determination to follow Christ. The self-life is not really changed. But when we look at these verses we find that we have a very unusual wording given to us here in this passage. When Christ died, it says here, all whom He died for, also died. We must ask ourselves: Who are the “all” in this passage? And in what sense did they die? And is this all men universally who have died? The “all”, I believe, is most certainly the Elect of God; those chosen of God to inherit salvation and eternal life, because it is these persons, and these persons alone, who have died to their own ability to save themselves or change their own hearts. It is these persons who have believed in Jesus’ finished work on the cross for the forgiveness of their sins, and a righteousness better than their own. It

therefore is these, and these only, who experience a real spiritual death to sin, to the world, and to themselves being able to live the Christian life in their own strength. They die to living to themselves. Christ died so that all believers might live to God and to Him. Let me ask you whether you have experienced this, and are you now living in light of having been crucified with Christ? There is a way that you can know.

Turn with me over Mark 8, verse 31. “And He (that is Jesus) began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.” He spoke this word openly.” “Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him.” “But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, ‘Get behind Me, Satan!’ “For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.” “When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, ‘Whoever desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow Me.’ “For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.” You see, when you come to be a true believer in Jesus Christ, something drastic happens to your self-life at the time of your conversion. You believe in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, but you also receive a New Heart and grace to live to God’s glory and not your own. You begin, from that time forward to deny yourself; to deny your self-life and self-strength and self-righteousness as being the basis of anything that you do for God. You affirm, by faith, that every single ounce of merit, and any ability you have to do what God would have you to do, from all of the right motives, comes from Jesus Christ. This is what it means to be crucified with Christ. Your ability to deny yourself, to repent and not pursue sinful and worldly pleasures comes from Christ, because Christ has died for the forgiveness of your sins, and Christ has died so that you would no longer live the selfish sinful life that you used to live.

Turn over to Galatians 5: 24 and 25. “And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” Notice the wording here; “those who belong to Christ have (past tense) crucified the flesh”. That is, the reigning power of this selfish and sinful principle which used to dominate them before conversion has been removed in their conversion experience by the working of the Holy Spirit circumcising their heart. They have willingly gone along with the initial and on-going work of God the Holy Spirit in their mind and heart and spirit, and have themselves crucified the flesh in their minds and hearts. God the Holy Spirit has given them life in Jesus through the New Birth. He also expects that by that same life, they will willingly walk in truth and righteousness according to God’s word, and manifest the fruit of the Spirit’s working. The power of sin and the world which characterized the old “you”, have been broken by Christ at the cross, and the new power of living righteously and godly has come.

2nd, I as a true believer in Jesus Christ, find the principle of truth and the reality that it is Christ who is living in me.

“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.” This reality is a most blessed reality; that Christ lives in me, the one who is living by faith in Him. Notice that this is not simply a matter of being justified. Paul has dealt with that back in verse 16. Here Paul is speaking about “living the Christian life”. That is a matter related directly to sanctification and holiness. Paul says that this life is to be lived by faith in the Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself for me. Those are the things which each of us should remember. Christ has loved me and given Himself for me on the cross so that He might live and dwell in my heart. And He has come to my heart so that His life, and His work of grace, might be cultivated and seen in my life. I must trust in Him and believe that this good work of grace is going on in my life; that He has begun it, and He will bring me to maturity through it. This good

on-going reality of Christ's presence and work of grace will bring me to the place where I really become righteous and holy in a way that keeps me humble, and which will bring Him all the glory for all that He has accomplished in and through my life. Our Lord Jesus Christ uses ministers of His Word to help in His own work. Turn with me over to the book of Colossians, Chapter 1, verse 24-29. "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints." "To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." "To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily." So you can see from this that Christ lives in you, the believer, and He is there to do His great works of grace to transform you from a sinful, selfish person, to being a holy, loving, and thoughtful person who keeps His Word.

These works of grace, performed by Christ in your heart, will lead you to do good works. And all of these good works are being engaged in by the power of Christ in you. Christ's power and purpose is to give you grace which will lead to righteousness. What is your responsibility? Well look over at Colossians 3: 1. "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God." "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." "When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory." Your responsibility is to keep seeking Christ, since you have been raised from the dead spiritually in your heart. Your responsibility is to seek those things which are above where Christ is literally seated in the heavenly places at the right hand of God. Cultivate a spiritual life, the hidden life of faith in Jesus Christ in all the situations which you face every day. Remember also what it says over in Philippians 2: 12-16 – "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure." "Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain."

But you will say, "If Christ is literally physically seated at the right hand of the Father, then how can He also be in me, dwelling and living in my heart? Well, turn with me over to John 14, verse 15. "If you love, me, keep my commandments." "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither see Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you." "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you." Christ has loved you and given Himself for you so that He might dwell with you and be in you. He dwells in you by giving you the gift of His Holy Spirit when you first believe. The worldly people around you are not going to understand this life that you are living. They will not be able to see it because they neither see Him, nor know Him. But He will be your Helper in everything spiritual forever. Turn over to John 16, verse 7. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth." "It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you." "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged." "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now." "However,

when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever he hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.” “He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.” This is how Christ can be in you, and still be physically seated at the right hand of the Father. He and Father have sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in your heart. And the Holy Spirit is guiding you into all the truth of God’s Word. He is perfectly and faithfully taking what is Christ’s and declaring it to you through the preaching of God’s Word. These 2 realities of having been crucified with Christ, and Christ living in the believer’s heart, are the greatest realities in the experience of everyone who belongs to Jesus Christ.