

**Galatians 7 – Crucified with Christ**  
**Pastor Joe Oakley – GFC - 10-20-2024**

We are in a sermon series on the book of Galatians called Freedom Through Christ. The issue Paul addressed in Galatians was law vs. grace. In the first part of Galatians Paul defends his apostleship and the gospel of grace against those who were attacking it. Then he moves into explaining the gospel of grace.

Last week we took an in-depth look at the doctrine of justification. We saw that justification is a divine act where God not only forgives the sinner but declares the sinner to be innocent of his sins. When I am justified, it is “just-as-if-I’d never sinned!

This justification is based on the shed blood of Jesus. Romans 5:9 says:

***We have been justified by His blood...***

God justifies us not because of what we have done, but because of what Jesus has done. So stop thinking that there is anything you can possibly add to the work of Christ on the cross.

Galatians 2:16 makes this very clear:

***We have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, for by works of the law no one will be justified.***

This brings us to the passage I’m preaching on today what is probably the most familiar and popular verse in Galatians. Galatians 2:20 says:

***I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.***

The context of this verse is that Paul had said he had to die to the law in order to live for God. We discussed that last week. This verse can be hard to understand, so I want to spend a whole sermon teaching on it. The title of my sermon is Crucified with Christ.

There is something about the Christian life that makes it different from any religion. That difference is that most religions give a list of rules you must keep in order to follow their leader. But with Christianity, our leader - Christ Himself - lives within us and in a sense, lives the Christian life through us.

Romans 5:10 says:

***If, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the***

***death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life!***

We think of ourselves as being saved through faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross. That's true – **we are saved from sin and reconciled to God through the death of Christ. But notice – how much more shall we be saved through the life of Christ!**

We know we are saved by the death of Christ, but how are we saved by His life? The answer is found in a larger view of salvation.

**Being born again through faith in Jesus Christ is the greatest thing that can ever happen to us – but being born again is the beginning of a process of salvation.** When we are born again, the instantaneous changes are all spiritual changes. But you still have the same body and the same soul.

Our spirit is saved, but not our soul. It is in the process of being saved. Our souls are the place where we think, feel and decide. That means we still have thoughts that are sinful. We have emotions that can get out of control. When our will is weak - we give in to things like selfishness or addiction.

**Some very marvelous and wonderful things do happen when you get saved. You have a new heart and a new destiny. But many things about you are still the same. Your soul still needs saving!**

That makes some people wonder if they ever really got saved! What they've not realized is this: being born again is not the end – it's the beginning of a new life. Just as physical birth is the beginning of a life characterized by growth, so being born again is just the beginning of a lifetime of growth and change as we are transformed into the image of Christ.

You see - our spirits are saved in an instant when we are born again. Our souls are being saved as we are conformed to the image of Christ. James 1:21 says -

***Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.***

James is not talking about getting born again here. He was writing to people who were already believers. Yet he tells people who are already saved that they need saving. And wherever you are in your journey with Christ, you still need saving!

The soul is comprised of mind, will and emotions. And all three of these need saving. Our minds need to be renewed by the word of God. Our wills need to be submitted to the will of God. Our emotions need to be led by the Spirit of God.

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 says:

***Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your***

***whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.***

To be sanctified means to be holy, to become like Christ. **While justification is an instant event that happens when we are born again by placing our faith in Christ, sanctification is a process that begins at salvation and continues throughout our lifetime.**

But notice who is taking the responsibility for sanctification – God is! Yes, there are some things you must do and some ways you must obey, but even those things are done in God’s power. That’s why Philippians 2:12-13 says:

***Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to do according to His good purpose.***

Notice it says work out your salvation, not work for your salvation! Salvation is by grace through faith, but sanctification is the process of working out into our lives what God has worked in our lives. But notice, God works in you to give you the desire and the power to do His will. You do not have the desire nor the power on your own! Now – let’s take a closer look at Galatians 2:20.

#### **1- I have been crucified with Christ...**

We all know Jesus was crucified for us. But few understand that we were crucified with Him. Romans 6:6-8 says it this way:

***For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him.***

When Jesus was crucified on the cross, God included us in His death. Our old man – the person we were before we were saved – is now dead. This is more than having sins forgiven – this is having new life and identity in Christ.

For Paul that meant that who he was before Christ – Saul, the persecutor of the church – was dead and he was now Paul the follower of Christ. That’s why 2 Corinthians 5:17 says:

***Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!***

The old is gone because it was crucified with Christ. **The phrase “I am crucified with Christ” speaks of a past completed action having present-day results. Being crucified with Christ in the past has benefits today.** It enables us to walk in the resurrection life and power of Christ today! Because we died with Christ – we have His resurrection life in us.

Because we died with Christ – we should no longer be slaves to sin.  
Galatians 2:20 goes on to say:

**2- I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live...**

When you were saved the old you – the one that wanted to live for sin and self – was nailed to the cross and died. A new you was born.

Col. 3:3 says you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.  
Ezekiel 36:26 says you have a new heart and a new spirit.  
2 Peter 1:4 says you now have a divine nature.

Once we are born again, our life is no longer in the realm of “I;” it has nothing to do with us anymore. It is not an evil “I” being changed into a good “I,” or a filthy “I” being changed into a clean “I.” It is to be “no longer I, but Christ.”

Romans 6:6 & 11-13 says:

***We are no longer slaves to sin. For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin... So you also should reckon yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus. Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires. Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God.***

Paul tells us that Christ died to free us from sin, yet it is necessary to reckon ourselves dead to sin. The word reckon is an accounting term meaning to calculate, to count. It means we should count ourselves, consider ourselves, dead to sin.

But Paul didn’t stop there: he also said to reckon yourself alive to God and give yourself completely to God. Basically he is saying – just as you used to give yourself to sin, now yield yourself completely to God.

**The Bible does not teach that the self dies, but that we die TO ourselves.  
Dying to self is applying the work of the cross in our lives.  
Dying to self is yielding ourselves totally to the spirit of God.**

my thoughts or feelings conflict with God – I will choose to die to myself by saying NO to myself and YES to God. This is what Jesus meant when He said in Luke 9:23

***If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.***

cannot even get saved without dying to self.

That means we must give up all hope that we can save ourselves and trust totally in Jesus to save us. That brings us back to Galatians 2:20.

### **3- I no longer live, but Christ lives in me...**

The Christian life cannot be lived in our own strength. It requires Christ living in us and through us. Overcoming has nothing to do with our power. Instead we exchange our defeat for Christ's victory!

Some people think: "It is easy for others to overcome. But it is very difficult for me to overcome. My problem is worse than anyone else's, my thoughts are more unclean than others,' and I am more sinful than others are. I cannot control myself."

To which I say: "You are right. Not only is it difficult for you to overcome; it is impossible for you to overcome." Overcoming is not about you trying harder to change. It is about you giving up hope in yourself and placing all hope in Jesus!

**That's why dying to self means: to no longer live for yourself.  
To no longer trust in your good works for salvation.  
To no longer trust in your power to overcome sin and Satan.**

Dying to self means you place no faith in yourself and all your faith in Christ. If it's up to us, we cannot make it!  
Victory comes when we realize it is no longer I, but Christ!

From now on there is no sin too great for me to overcome. There is no temptation too great for me to withstand. Because victory is Christ; it is no longer I!

Is there any sin too great for Christ to overcome? NO!  
Is there any temptation too great for Christ to resist? NO!  
Is there any devil too strong for Jesus to defeat? NO!

Jesus has already defeated sin and temptation and the devil! And He continues to do that in us when we realize it is not I, but Christ!

The overcoming life is something that is obtained; it is not attained. To obtain means to acquire something. To attain is to earn something. Everything we need is not attained by works, it is obtained by faith! It is not ACHEIVED by works; it is RECEIVED by faith! And it is obtained by Christ in us.

Christ does not just give those things TO us – He IS those things in us!  
1 Corinthians 1:30-31 says:

***You are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God — that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."***

Christ does not give us wisdom or righteousness apart from Himself. He is those things in us!

That's why this verse says to boast in the Lord. Because we cannot acquire these things on our own. We only have them because we have Christ in us, the hope of glory! It is no longer I, but Christ. The I was crucified on the cross with Christ.

**The cross is not about self-improvement – it's about dying to self because self is the problem!** True change requires dying to self. Living for God requires dying to self. Being willing to help others requires dying to self.

If you died with Christ – why are you alive to the world's ways?  
 If you died with Christ – why are you living for the flesh?  
 If you died with Christ – why are you submitting to Satan's schemes?

Sanctification involves a daily realization that we have died with Christ and in Christ we have been raised from the dead.

Extreme self-denial does not get to the real issue – your heart. All of man's rules and regulations and techniques and self-help approaches to change can never bring about internal transformation. They have an appearance of wisdom, religion and humility, but they have absolutely zero power to overcome the flesh! They all focus on what you do rather than on what Christ has done! **The only way to deal with the flesh is to die to it!**

Outside cleanup does not result in inside cleanup. External rule keeping does not change the heart. Behavior modification cannot change the heart. Only the cross can do that! That's why only Christ in us is the hope of glory!

So, reckon your old self dead to sin and your new self alive and free in Christ!  
 Colossians 3:4 says:

***When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.***

Christ does not just give us life – He IS our life. The problem with many people is that they just add Jesus to their life rather than realizing He is their life. They don't change anything about their life or delete anything from their life. They just want to keep living the same life – but add Jesus to it.

Brothers and sisters, it does not work that way!  
 Either Christ is the source of your life or something else is.  
 Either Christ is Lord of your life or something else is!  
 You'll never experience the power of Christ in you until you die to yourself.  
 You can't keep wanting your old life and live the new life in Christ.  
 You can't keep finding your identity in your iniquity rather than in Christ.  
 You must come to the place of I no longer live, but Christ lives in me!

**4- The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.**

Our new life is a Person, the Lord Jesus living in us! The new life is a Person within a person, living out His life in that person.

Instead of attempting to live life in obedience to a set of rules we now yield to Christ in us. And we do that by faith. The faith Paul lived by was not faith in himself, faith in the law, or faith in what he could earn or deserve before God. It was faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Before his conversion, Paul's relationship with God was based on what he could do for God — his faith was in himself. Now the foundation was what Jesus Christ had done for him — his faith was in Jesus – the One who loved him and gave Himself for him and us.

**Did the Law ever love us? Did the Law ever die for us? NO! Jesus is the only One who did that.**

Yes, Jesus gave His life the sins of the world, but He did it all for you. Some people have problems with songs like When He Was on the Cross, I was on His Mind because they think it seems self-centered. But Paul said Jesus gave His life for me.

Yes, He gave it for everyone, but at some point it must become personal when we have faith that Jesus died for me. And just like we had faith in Christ for the forgiveness of sin – we must have faith in Christ in us to provide power over sin. Just like we had faith in the cross for salvation, we must have faith in the resurrection life and power of Jesus Christ in our daily lives!

You know that Christ is your life when – not matter what you need – you know that the answer is not in you, it is in Christ.

You know that when you have to wait – Christ in you is your patience.  
 When you are in a storm – Christ in you is your peace!  
 When you are sinful – Christ in you is your righteousness!  
 When you need answers – Christ in you is your wisdom!  
 When you are hateful – Christ in you is your love!  
 When you are hurt by others – Christ in you is your healing!  
 When you are weak – Christ in you is your power!  
 When you need freedom – Christ in you is your deliverance.  
 When you are lost – Christ in you is your salvation!  
 All your needs are met according to God's riches in glory by Christ Jesus!  
 That's why Christ in you is the hope of glory!  
 That's why you were crucified with Christ!