

Freedom – The Crucified Life

9.13.26

Galatians 2:20-21

Sunday AM

Let me introduce – Thunder. Thunder loves me. Most nights he sleeps next to my side of the bed. He also loves the outdoors – terrorizing anyone who walks by. So, for his care, we have an invisible fence. Now, if you’ve ever trained a dog on an invisible fence, you know how entertaining it can be until the dog figures out the boundaries before the collar warns him.

Recently, Thunder reminded me of our new series as one day we let him out w/out his collar. Even though the power was off and the boundary was gone, he never left the yard. He could’ve taken off howling “**FREEDOM!**” like William Wallace – but instead, he stayed put. **He was free; he just didn’t know it.**

I fear this describes too many Christians today. B/c of the cross, we’ve been set free from the power/penalty of sin – yet too often, ***we don’t live like we’re free.***

For the next 12-weeks, we’re going to walk thru the Apostle Paul’s most encouraging epistles. *Galatians*, *Ephesians*, *Philippians*, and *Colossians* to learn what it means to be free and to live free.

Galatians shows us freedom from trying to earn God’s favor thru religion and Law. **Ephesians** shows us the freedom of knowing who we are in Christ. **Philippians** shows us a freedom circumstances can’t steal. **Colossians** shows us freedom from the things that promise life but can’t deliver b/c Jesus is enough.

Today, we’re going to start by looking at a familiar passage that speaks to living the crucified life.

I have been crucified w/ Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness comes thru the law, then Christ died for nothing. Galatians 2:20–21

TBS – most people spend their lives trying to discover ¹who they are, ²to find their passion, ³live their dream, ⁴follow their heart, ⁵discover their truth, and ⁶become the best version of themselves. **BUT** then Jesus comes along and says something completely different: He says – *whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Me.*

This is a conundrum. B/c Jesus said that to truly find your life, you must lose it. Meaning Christianity isn’t about becoming a better version of yourself; it’s about becoming increasingly surrendered to Jesus.

Christianity begins w/ something that sounds like a funeral – *I’ve been crucified w/ Christ, yet I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.*

The old life has died so Jesus can live His life in/thru us. This is the crucified life – *not me trying harder for Jesus but surrendering to Him so He can live thru me.*

This is the difference b/w religion and relationship. Religion says – *try harder*; Jesus says – *trust Me*. Religion says – *do more*; Jesus says – *abide in Me*. Religion says – *make yourself acceptable to God*; Jesus says – *I already did this for you.*

TBS – Galatians 2:20 isn’t some random devotional thought Paul dropped into this letter. He had been fighting against false teachers who were trying to convince others that Jesus was good – but not enough.

They were teaching Jesus plus the Law, plus circumcision, plus good works. But Paul's answer was simple: **Jesus + Anything = NOTHING. Jesus + Nothing = EVERYTHING.**

So, what does the crucified life actually look like?

I The Crucified Life Begins w/ a **DEATH**

I've been crucified w/ Christ.

The Greek is in the perfect tense – *Paul is describing something that was completed in the past whose effects remain in the present – I've been crucified w/ Jesus – and I remain identified w/ Him in His death.*

This is huge. The crucified life doesn't begin w/ something we do for Jesus, but only w/ what He did for us. And somehow, thru the transaction of faith in His grace a great exchange is made. This means Jesus didn't come to improve the old you. He came to put the old you to death and give you a whole new life.

If anyone be in Christ, they're a new creation. The old is gone, the new has come. 2 Corinthians 5:17

But what died? Paul wasn't talking about his physical death; Paul was still Paul. **What died was his right to rule himself.**

SEE – the crucified life isn't self-destruction, a loss of personality, or a passive resignation. It's the surrender of self-rule. The cross doesn't eliminate the person God created us to be; it eliminates our claim to be the god of the person He created us to be.

This is the issue of the crucified life. I'm no longer the owner, boss, or ruler of my life. I'm no longer king of the hill. And in accepting Jesus as my Savior/Lord, I've signed over the title deed of my life over to God – and I've been bought w/ the price of Jesus' death. So, I'm no longer the final authority – God is!

And b/c the old self was crucified w/ Christ, while my flesh may still want to fight for control over the H.S. w/in me – my flesh no longer has the right to rule.

II The Crucified Life Requires an **EXCHANGE**

I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

This speaks to the **doctrine of indwelling**. Thru the H.S. God takes up residence in a believer's life – and we become the temple of God called to glorify God! It's **Jesus take the wheel** – not *Jesus is my co-pilot*.

This is what Paul means by – *not I, but Christ*. It doesn't mean we cease to exist. It means there's been a change of ownership, control, authority, and source.

And this is where many Christians get frustrated b/c they've spent years trying to live **FOR** Jesus w/out ever learning how to live **FROM** Jesus.

So, ***Christ lives in me*** doesn't mean Jesus gives me enough help to do what I can't do on my own. It means an exchange has occurred where Jesus becomes the source of life helping me to live – b/c **only Jesus can live the Jesus life.**

III The Crucified Life Operates by **FAITH**

The life I now live in the body, I live by faith...

Circle **NOW**. Paul isn't describing heaven; he's describing everyday life – *marriage, family, work, church, success, conflict, disappointment*, and everything in b/w. *The life I now live... I live by faith.*

This means the same principle that ***saved*** Paul was the principle that ***sustained*** Him. He was saved by faith, walked by faith, served by faith, suffered by faith, obeyed by faith, and faced uncertainty by faith.

BTW – this was the mistake the Galatians were making. They had trusted Jesus for salvation but were drifting back to self-effort/religion for sanctification. And this is one of Christianity's great temptations – ***saved by grace but lived by grit.***

This is why faith isn't just a one-time decision. It's a daily posture and a moment-by-moment dependence.

Listen – Jesus isn't your kickstand. Nor is faith your emergency backup plan. Yet too often we live what I call ***practical atheism*** – that is, we say we're saved but live as if God doesn't exist. We say we trust God but live as if everything depends on us. But when things fall apart, we cry out – Jesus, help!

Living by faith reverses this. Before a decision – *Jesus, give me wisdom.* Before responding to criticism – *Jesus, control my tongue.* Before the conversation – pray – *Jesus, speak thru me.* When someone hurts me – *Jesus, love them thru me.* This is living by faith.

But don't mistake this for passivity – we're to be in relentless pursuit of Jesus. It just means we trust in Him instead of in ourselves b/c ***grace doesn't eliminate effort; it eliminates self-reliance.***

IV The Crucified Life is Motivated by **LOVE**

...the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me...

Notice Paul words – *who loved me.* They're intensely personal. This is b/c the crucified life isn't surrendering to a tyrant – it's surrendering to the One who loved us enough to lay down His life for us.

Jesus didn't just die; He died for you. He wasn't just crucified; He was crucified for you. So, if Jesus could give His all for us, how can we offer anything less?

Before Paul moves on, he added one final reminder:

I don't set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness comes thru the Law, then Christ died for nothing.

IOW – don't turn the crucified life into another religious checklist. We weren't saved by trying harder, but by grace thru faith. Even more – we don't live the Christian life by trying harder either. The same grace that ***saved*** us is the grace that ***sustains*** us.

SEE – the Law says – DO. Grace says – DONE! Religion says – ACHIEVE. Grace says – RECEIVE. So, the crucified life isn't about proving what I can do for Jesus; it's learning to depend on what He's already done for us – and now wants to do thru us.

WTM – the crucified life begins each day w/ a simple acknowledgment – Jesus, everything in my life belongs to You. My family. My career. My schedule. My ambition and reputation – everything. I lay it down and surrender it to you.

This isn't perfection; it's surrender. It's not inactivity; it's obedience. It's not – look what I can do for Jesus – but look what Jesus can do thru a surrendered life.

The crucified life is living from the finished work of Christ, under the ownership of Christ, thru the life of Christ, by faith in Christ, b/c of the love of Christ.

There is an old story told about missionary James Calvert, who was sailing to the Fiji Islands to work among cannibals. The captain reportedly tried to stop him and warned him that if he got off the boat, he'd lose his life. Calvert replied – *We died before we came here*. This is Galatians 2:20-21.

This means that my life isn't mine. My future isn't mine. My reputation isn't mine. My rights aren't mine – b/c I've been crucified w/ Christ. I no longer live but Christ in me. So, it's not I, but Christ.

What if the greatest problem in American Christianity isn't a lack of information about Jesus but a lack of surrender to Him? We know a great deal about Him but still insist on **owning** what He purchased.

TAKEAWAYS

The crucified life is a finished reality. By faith I've been united w/ Him in His death and resurrection.

The crucified life is a surrendered life. I don't lose my personality; yet I do have to surrender ownership and give Jesus the right to lead every area of life.

The crucified life is a dependent life. I can't live the Christian life in my own strength; I live by continual dependence on Christ in an abiding life.

The crucified life is a loved life. I don't surrender out of fear, but b/c Jesus loved me and gave His life.

The crucified life is a grace life. I'm saved, sustained, transformed – and one day will be glorified by His grace – not my self-righteousness or reliance.

ARE YOU LIVING THE CRUCIFIED LIFE!