

# A Study On Galatians 2:20

## I Am Crucified

*"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ lives 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*

## Explanation Of the Christian Life

In the above scripture, we find answers as to how we are to live the Christian life. This is the secret of the Christian life. It is not girding up the loins and striving to do better - it is realizing we cannot, and ceasing to do, trusting Him to do what we cannot. Our problem is with think we CAN do it. Hopefully we realize we cannot save ourselves, and so we trust the Lord for that; but in everything else we ask the Lord to help us to do it ourselves.

Imagine the foolishness of saying to the Lord, *"Please help me to save myself. I will work very hard and do the best I can. I pray you will strengthen me."* If you hear someone praying this way, hopefully you will explain to them that though they may be praying in sincerity, they are praying without full understanding. For we are not saved by trusting Christ to help us save ourselves, but by giving up trying to save ourselves and trusting Him to do what we cannot do. Once we realize it is by grace, and not works, there is nothing to do but raise our hands to heaven and say, *"Lord Jesus, I cannot save myself - I trust You for that! I receive the gift of God! Thank you for saving me!"* Prayer for help to do it becomes praise to God that it is already done.

But then what happens? We go forth and attempt to put into practice the teachings of Christ with our own human strength, willpower, and resolutions. That is not Christianity, that is religion. Jesus did not come to merely tell us how to live, or even to merely show us how to live. He came to be our Life. I live in union with Him, and He lives in union with me (John 15:4). The Teacher is one with the student. The Master is one with the disciple. Where and when do the two become one? **At the Cross.** This is precisely what Galatians 2:20 is saying. Otherwise, such a life is completely beyond me, totally out of my reach. The secret of how to really live is explained. According to the Apostle Paul the Christian life *is Christ living in the believer.*

Paul is basically saying, "I am living a different life than I use to live." I realize that most Christians say that exact, same thing but Paul's meaning is very different. It is some people's explanation of this statement where some depart from the Cross and Christ and move to a place where God has given them something. We end up with two different ways of living the Christian life.

## What is the Christian Life?

What is the Christian Life? It is I in Christ, and it is Christ in me and through me, doing what I cannot do myself. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me (Galatians .2:20a)."

### I Am Crucified

Isn't it true that most Christians believe that Christ lives in them? While that is true, they tend to omit one very important part. This scripture in Galatians gives us another important aspect and that is the Cross. How do we live out the Christian life? It begins with taking up the Cross. Then, only then, can we follow, for when we cease to do, He begins to do.

### The Importance Of Death

*"And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. 24Verily, verily, I say to you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it to life eternal." John 12 23-25*

The fundamental principle of Christianity is life out of death. That's what death, burial and resurrection is all about. We find here that only by being dead can we come alive. You see, the truth of Galatians 2:20 is that life comes from death. In order to be truly alive, we have to understand that we are truly dead. It's one of the greatest paradoxes of Scripture. It is a mystery of the Kingdom. Yes, God wants the world to have life, but life must be preceded by death. Jesus said that we must lose our lives in order to find them (Matthew 10:39). He also said that if we seek to hold on to our lives, we would not gain them. Jesus enunciated this principle in John 12:24. The kernel of wheat contains actual life, and within it there is the potential for bushels of wheat. But for that life to be multiplied, the grain must "die." The husk must be broken and decayed by the soil so the kernel can germinate and reproduce. It must lose its old form, bringing forth life in a whole new form. In one sense that husk is an earthen vessel.

John 12:23 shows us that this is the method whereby Jesus would be "glorified". While we may not see how being put to death is a way of being glorified, we can see that this method of multiplication is glorious. Christ is the life of God incarnate, and he has come to make this life available to us. But how is this life made available to people? It begins with; "I am crucified with Christ." Only by Jesus submitting to death on the Cross, could His life be made available to the world. Unless he was willing to die, he would have "remained by Himself, alone." So, just as there was purpose in His dying, so there is purpose in our dying. That purpose is greater than just getting rid of our problems. I am dying in order for Christ to live in me. I accept the sentence of death that I may have His Life in the place of my own. It is no longer I that live, but Christ that lives in me. Jesus didn't just come to earth and start His Kingdom. He first came and died. Had Jesus inaugurated God's kingdom, as his countrymen desired, he would have been a lonely King because no one else would have been after the same kind. But because Jesus was willing to die, his life became available to all who come to him.

## What Is Crucified?

What was crucified on the Cross with Jesus? We can easily say the two thieves. We can also say that our sin was crucified. But what was crucified on the Cross with Jesus was Me. If Galatians 2:20 is understood rightly then there is no reference there to an “old me” which would imply that somehow through the resurrection there is a new me. So, it is not just that the old me, with all my limitations and problems, has been put to death. No! Me in all my radiant glory has been crucified and replaced with Christ also. This Scripture says, “I have been crucified with Christ.” This is the first thing we must understand. It is a key to understanding who we really are now and how we should approach the life we now live in the flesh. It is a key to releasing us from the struggle of trying to live the Christian life by Christ’s help instead of by His life.

## Not Just Willingness To Die -- Death

Too many want to surrender. If I am to take up the Cross it not only signifies my willingness to die, but my actual death. The Cross is not theoretical, but very real. Being willing to die is good, but actually dying and then living again is best. To take up the Cross today is to accept the sentence of death today. Some believe that all is well because they are willing to die for their faith. Faith is not following Christ and then dying, but dying and then following. Some will say, “*I am willing to die now that I have followed.*” But in truth, you are fit to follow now that you have died. Jesus knows that no human being is qualified to follow Him until they have first died. Jesus knows a man cannot live until he has died and been raised to life again. He therefore bids us to die right away. Just to clarify,... the death we are speaking of here is not our physical death, but our death with Christ which happened spiritually in Him through His death and has practical effects in our walk (Romans 6:3-6).

## Removed Or Improved?

As was just stated above, the way that many understand the effects of the Cross to work is that the “old self” has finally been removed and a new and improved “me” has emerged. For some reason we have not seen that the “old self” is not something apart from us... it is you and I. But God, in His wisdom, had something better in mind than just improving our human frame – He put the very life of Jesus within us. Therefore, He has not only solved the problems equated with an “old self” such as sin and failure but has also solved the problems of a “better me” such as pride and self righteousness. He has crucified all that was me and brought in a replacement! The answer God has supplied is not found in reformation, or renovation of our lives. It is important to note that when we say, “crucified all that was me” we are referring to our old life in regards to its nature of selfishness... however, we are not referring to the personality that God has given us!

A wonderful change has taken place but the change is not in terms of improvements in me. So, what is called for is not a new self in replacement of the old but we need the “Christ-self.” Now, I realize that receiving His life as a means of living is “New” but it is not a new “us.” The way God has chosen to deal with all that we are is not to reform it, but to remove it. God has done away with the old life so that He could give us a new life but not a new us. There is no “new me” unless it is Christ in me. This is what it means to be crucified with Christ. Because of Christ’s life in us, we are now under no obligation to our life. We have been set free, not from

some thing but from ourselves. We are dead to our old way of living mainly because we are dead. It is not that we are no longer the way we used to be; it *is* Christ.

## I Am Crucified Not Bondages

Many people look back and try to discover the things that are pronounced dead in their lives. Little do they know that it is they themselves who are pronounced dead. Christ died, not just to destroy the bondage in your life but to give you a life that is not subject to these bondages. Remember, at the Cross we didn't just dump the garbage in our lives but the garbage which is our life. Paul counted even the things that were gain to him as dung and said of himself, "in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwells no good thing" (Philippians 3:8, Romans 7:18-19). By the power of His crucifixion Paul says that he is no longer sin's servant because he is no longer (Romans 6:18). Be-cause of crucifixion, we can live a new life and do it by a new life source: Christ lives in me. That is why Paul could write Philippians 1:21, "For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain." Today we want to reverse this verse and say, "For to me, to live is gain, and to die is Christ." Meaning, "I want my desires, wishes, and way! I want it all now and when I die, then I will take Christ."

## What Being Crucified With Christ Means

Notice the Apostle states that "I am crucified with Christ." Paul was not speaking of a past tense happening of "been there, done that Cross thing!" No! Paul uses the tense called perfect that states a past action that continues to have results in his life today. In other words, Paul was saying he could not get over the impact of the Cross in his life. It was still impacting and impaling his life as he penned these words for you and I to read.

When we speak of the impact the Cross has had on a life we usually think in terms of salvation. But Jesus said the Cross should have a daily impact on our lives. The Cross is to impale and impact our lives today. There are too few who can say with Paul, "I have been crucified with Christ." Even if we have come to embrace this statement concerning our own crucifixion, it usually is embraced in some theoretical way having no real practical impact upon us.

You can believe that those who died on Roman Crosses found the Cross to be very practical. Most people who lived in the first century viewed the Cross as a brutal and final end for those who suffered its death. For those who hung on a Cross it was the end of their dreams, desires, aspirations, plans, prestige, and insecurities. Paul viewed it just the same, as if he himself had met this horrid and untimely end. You see, it was not just some "supernatural, spiritual death" but the end of his life and the direction of his life in all practical matters.

In Galatians Paul makes reference to the term "crucified affections" (Galatians 5:24). So, when Paul was speaking of his view of what the Cross dealt with in our lives, he spoke of all that we hoped and dreamed of in terms of future plans. It also affected the total being including: failures, background, and position. There are those who want to accept the fact of crucifixion with Christ but never give up such things as these. Again, Paul viewed even the religious things and attainments of his own life as dung compared to Christ being His life.