

“Crucified with Christ”

January 16, 2011

Text: Galatians 2:20

“Regeneration” is the Xn doctrine which teaches that believers in X die, and are reborn (or are “born again”), spiritually.

At conversion, the HS enables people to start life over, in a sense.

Titus 3:5=> *“He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of **regeneration** and **renewing** by the Holy Spirit [spiritual/moral renewal, through death and rebirth].”*

2 Cor 5:17 speaks of regeneration as the passing away of an old self (or man) and the birth of a new kind of man in his place=>

“If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”

In our text, Gal 2:20, Paul describes his own regeneration w/ 3 phrases=>

* I have been crucified (paraphrased=> I died).

* I no longer live (I’m dead).

* I now live by faith (I’m no alive).

Notice those 3 phrases as we read the text, then we will consider the meaning of each phrase separately=>

[Galatians 2:20]=> *“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, and delivered Himself up for me.”*

***Phrase 1—I have been crucified.** (i.e., I died)

Paul says he has been crucified with Christ.

Obviously, he doesn't mean he was literally nailed to the same cross with Jesus, but rather that he has identified w/ X in His death. What Paul says, every Xn can say=> Jesus' crucifixion was my own virtual crucifixion by my faith-union with Him. His victory on the cross over sin/death has become your/my victory also, if we have identified w/ Him by faith.

This faith-union w/ the crucified X has powerful/profound consequences:

* Justification

As we saw last time, "justification" means to be declared righteous in God's court of divine Law.

Scripture says that the penalty of violating God's Law is death, so our sin meant the Law condemned us to death. Jesus became Paul's/our Substitute on the cross, dying for us, & lifting the Law's curse/condemnation off our aching backs.

The Law put us to death in X, & thus it set us free from itself, because dead men are no longer subject to the Law.

* Emancipation

When the Law put us to death with X, it set us free, not only from its condemnation, but also from slavery to our soul's worst enemies=> sin!

* Rom 6:6=> "*Our old self was **crucified** with Him [X], that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be **slaves to sin.***"

We still sin, but we don't have to sin.

We have been set free from our slavery to sin.

* We can overcome the temptations of the sinful world around us (Gal 6:14)=> “*Through [the cross of X] the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*”

* We can overcome the temptations of our own sinful flesh (Gal 5:24)=> “*Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*”

As we are filled with the Spirit and walk in the Spirit,
we can now overcome the flesh.

Sin is no longer our master, so we no longer have to serve/obey it.

Since we no longer have to sin, we consecrate ourselves to God, our new Master.

Rom 6:11-12—“*Consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. /Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts*”

I.e., consecrate our body/self to God, now that you’re free from your slavery to sin.

Those are the principles, but it is all-important that we apply them to our own lives personally.

This is a very personal verse of Scripture, w/ 8 different words in the original language containing some form of either “I” or “me.”

The gospel is supremely personal by its very nature.

It calls a man to go beyond considering sin in a general sense as something theoretical, to contemplating his own sin as the H.S. convicts him of it.

He cries out with David in Psa 38=> “*My iniquities are*

*gone over **my** head; As a heavy burden they weigh too much for **me**. / **My** wounds grow foul & fester. Because of **my** folly, / **I** am bent over and greatly bowed down; **I** go mourning all day long” (4-6).*

The gospel also calls man to place his own personal faith in Jesus, asking forgiveness of his own sins, & inviting X to become the Lord of his own life.

It calls him to consider the fact the he, as an individual, will stand before X all alone someday, to be judged, based on his own deeds.

And through the gospel, he himself can experience the personal joy of salvation and the personal peace that surpasses all comprehension.

* It's good to know that X justifies sinners who believe in Him, but unless I believe in Him, I'm still unjustified/unacceptable to God.

* It's good to know about emancipation from sin as a general truth, but my concern must be sin's slavery over me.

* It's helpful to know that believers are to consider themselves dead to sin, but unless I do that, I'm a free-man who is still behaving like he's a slave to it.

No one can believe in X for you—as your proxy/substitute.

Scripture teaches personal election, personal calling, personal justification thru personal faith, personal (believer's) baptism, personal holiness/sanctification, personal resurrection, and personal glorification.

Jesus also teaches the personal damnation of those who are religious, but never form a personal relationship with Him.

Jn 15:6 (Jesus)=> *“If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”*

No one is saved because he’s associated with others who believe.

I like Spurgeon’s analogy in this regard, when he said=>

“Is a man a Christian because he lives in England? Is a rat a horse because he lives in a stable? ... A man [himself] must have living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, or else he is no Christian.”

Spurgeon then goes on to point out that no one is born again simply because his father/mother were Xns.

Again he says=> “You must appear before God, my dear Friend, on your own feet, and neither mother nor father can stand in your place.”

There is no family-plan in the Kingdom of God, no salvation by association.

Everyone is on his own, and must make his own choice=>

* to believe in Jesus, trusting Him alone for his soul’s salvation,

* or not to believe in Jesus.

Each individual is responsible for his/her own faith.

Family may stand around our death bed, but they can’t go w/ us.

Paul delighted in the thought that he had died w/ X.

He found confidence in knowing that, by virtue of Jesus’ death, he himself had satisfied the Law’s demand for his death.

He longed for the most vivid possible sense of this union with X in his death, writing in Phil 3:10=> *“that I may know Him, & the power of His resurrection & the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.”*

Paul wanted to feel himself stretched out on that cross w/ X, saying, “I am absolutely dead because the Law has killed me in X, and now it can do no more to me.”

Paul also felt the power of X’s death in himself, executing his old corrupt nature, and we can too.

We can say, whenever we’re tempted by the pleasures of sin=> “I can no longer enjoy these, because now I’m dead to sin. They were once very sweet to my heart, but now I have been crucified with X.”

But we can only say these things, if we are walking in the Spirit, not in the flesh.

It’s a blessed thing when a believer can feel that, through X, he is utterly dead to this world and its evil passions.

He can enjoy the triumph that comes w/ being crucified w/ X.

* **Phrase 2—I no longer live.** (i.e., I’m now dead)

“I” in this part of verse 20 is *ego*, and it is emphatic.

I.e., Paul’s old ego was now dead—really dead.

In Paul’s life, crucifixion had led to its natural conclusion—death.

The old self-righteous/self-seeking Pharisee he had once been, who based his hope of salvation on obedience to the Law, was now pronounced dead.

And he was dead because of Jesus' crucifixion.

Paul himself describes that old Pharisee in Phil 3:4-6=>

“If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: / circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; / as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.”

The old Paul had tried to find safety/security for his soul in meticulous obedience to the Mosaic Law.

He must have sensed that he could never obey it perfectly, & that it always condemned him, but he tried as hard as he could.

He says in Rom 7:5=> *“While we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.”*

The new Paul found justification/his-soul's-security in a personal relationship w/ X, and this had set him free from the Law's condemnation.

This was the discovery Galatia's legalistic Judaizers needed, so they too could enjoy true salvation/justification.

Paul himself was still alive, but now he was a different Paul.

His desires/perspectives were altogether different from the former Paul.

The original Paul was a ruthless persecutor of Xns.

This new Paul was a teacher/leader of the Xns.

The transformation of his beliefs/character/personality was so drastic, that his fellow Xns were slow to welcome/receive him at first.

They couldn't believe anyone could change that much.

His old friends may have said what some of yours said after your conversion: It's just a phase, & the old Paul will be back soon.

But that old Paul was dead—he would never come back.

Until a person is ready to let his old man die, he can never experience the new life resulting from faith in X.

He cannot become born again, as long as he is saying, “I want to be saved, but I don't want to give up my old friends, my old pleasures, my old freedom to do things my way, ignoring the commands of God's Word.”

I.e., “I want to be Xn, but not so Xn that it cramps my style, or restrains my own desires.”

As long as he is unwilling to relinquish an old corrupt lifestyle for a new life of purity, wisdom, joy in the Lord, and devotion to X, cannot be saved, because he loves his old self too much, to let it die.

In fact, X said (Lk 14:26) if he loves even his physical life in this world more than he loves X, he can't be saved.

True life (eternal-life) is found in letting one's old life go.

In Lk 17:32, Jesus said=> *“Remember Lot's wife. / Whoever seeks to keep his life shall lose it, and whoever loses his life shall preserve it”* (32-33).

For Lot's wife, the pleasures/comforts of Sodom
were so great, she couldn't bring herself to turn
them loose.

And so, she died.

Paul could say, "*It is no longer I [the old self] who live,*" because
that old "I" has died, & I say, "Good riddance!"

Review

Paul has described his regeneration by saying=>

* The old Paul died.

* The old Paul is now dead.

And now he adds=> * The new Paul is alive.

* **Phrase 3—I now live by faith.**

In the last part of our text, Paul says=> "*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.*"

I.e., I'm a new kind of me, and I live a new kind of life.

Augustine lived a very immoral life as a young man.

He had a godly Xn mother (Monica), who taught him the Xn
faith and the Xn way of life.

But there was also a very wicked young woman whom
Satan used to enslave him to his lusts.

When Augustine finally gave his heart/life to X and
became born again, his old man in him died, and he
began a new life of faith in Jesus X.

One day while walking in Carthage, he saw the woman who had been his companion in sin, but he totally ignored her. She ran after him shouting, “Augustine! Augustine! It is I.” He stopped, looked back at her & said “Yes, but it is not I.” Augustine had become a new creature in X (a radical transformation).

Paul said=> “*The life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God.*”

Paul’s faith in Jesus X had become the central principle—and the dominating force—in his whole life.

In Phil 1:21, he said=> “*For to me, to live is Christ.*”

He understood that the essence of the Xn life is Jesus’

living His own life through the individual believer, as we yield ourselves to Him.

Col 2:9 says all the fullness of Deity dwells in X, so when He dwells within a Xn, the whole Godhead enters that believer’s life.

At one time the believer lived his life separate/apart from X, but now his body has become God’s dwelling place and Temple.

And 2 Pet 1:4 says that he has also become a partaker of the divine nature, because he is a child of God, born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (Jn 1:13).

Moreover, the H.S. has permanently indwelt him.

Paul now based his hope of justification/salvation exclusively on the righteousness of X, imputed to him thru his faith.

Positionally, he was now “in X”, so that in looking at Paul, the Father saw Paul in Jesus, and Jesus in Paul.

Paul applied that same principle to our own great hope as Xns, in Col 1:27=> *“Christ in you, the hope of glory.”*

When X comes into a man, He gives him new desires for holiness.

He writes His law on that person’s heart, changing the whole tenor/direction of his life.

X also assumes the right to rule in that person’s heart as Lord, the person himself having become X’s slave, surrendering his will to X’s will.

His opinions/attitudes/morals are now subject to those of X.

Moreover, in X, that person finds his greatest source of strength.

As Paul himself would write in Phil 4:13=> *“I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”*

Paul needed that strength because he suffered more than once for the privilege of proclaiming X.

And yet it enabled him to find contentment in whatever circumstances he was placed—even in suffering.

As Paul contemplated his new life of faith in God’s Son, he was always gratefully amazed by Jesus’ love for him;

Love so great, that He was willing to be delivered up to condemnation, scourging, beating, crucifixion, & the Father’s forsaking Him, in order to die for Paul’s sin.

The motive for Paul's devotion/obedience to Jesus was gratitude for the sacrifice his beloved Savior had made on his behalf.

That's to be the motive behind our devotion/obedience as well.

What exactly does it mean for a Xn to live his life by faith in X?

Here are a few ideas about what such a faith-life might look like.

It's not an exhaustive, or even an extensive, list.

But it should be enough to allow you to see how such a life based on faith would translate into your own situation.

1) The faith-life means that a Xn will live an active, productive life, pursuing God's will and His glory.

* When Isaiah heard the Lord say, "*Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?*" he instantly responded by faith=>

"Here am I. Send me!" Isa 6:8=> Isaiah's response was active and would result in a life of productive ministry.

* When Paul was confronted by the glory of X on the road to Damascus, he asked, "*What shall I do, Lord?*" (Acts 22:10), again producing an active ministry.

* Jesus Himself told the Jews=> "*My Father is **working** until now, and I Myself am **working***" (Jn 5:17).

At the end of His life, He could pray to His Father=>

*"I glorified Thee on the earth, having **accomplished** the **work** which Thou hast given Me to do"* (Jn 17:4).

The faith-life of Jesus was one of active/productive work for the Kingdom of God.

The faith-life is a life of active service/obedience to God.

Adam was placed in the Garden, even before he sinned, to do work in order to keep it—that was God’s will for man.

After he sinned, he was to live by the sweat of his brow.

But God had *always* intended for him to be active/productive.

A strong-bodied person who does no work is a sluggard, who can never glorify God, unless he becomes active for God’s glory.

Prov 6:9 derides him, saying “*How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep?*”

A sluggard is the opposite of someone who lives by his faith in X.

Within the Church, God’s incentive plan for sluggards to work is hunger.

2 Thes 3:10=> “*If anyone will not work, neither let him eat.*”

The Xn faith encourages people to work hard/productively, giving an honest day’s work for an honest day’s pay, and in doing so, to bring honor/glory to their Savior/Lord.

It admonishes believers to work with integrity, as if their employer were the Lord Himself.

E.g. Eph 6:5-6=> “*Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, **as to Christ**; / not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.*”

So living by our faith involves working hard, as if Jesus X were our employer, in order to glorify Him by the way we work.

Although this applies to every Xn, it’s especially important for those of us in the ministry to live by this principle.

Paul certainly did, and he could say in Col 1:29=> *“For this purpose also I **labor, striving** according to His power, which mightily works within me.”*

2) The faith-life means that a Xn will seek help from X, in his work.

[Isa 28:24-29]=> *“Does the farmer plow continually to plant seed? Does he continually turn and harrow the ground? / Does he not level its surface, And sow dill and scatter cummin, And plant wheat in rows, Barley in its place, and rye within its area? / For his **God instructs and teaches** him properly. / For dill is not threshed with a threshing sledge, Nor is the cartwheel driven over cummin; But dill is beaten out with a rod, and cummin with a club. / Grain for bread is crushed, Indeed, he does not continue to thresh it forever. Because the wheel of his cart and his horses eventually damage it, He does not thresh it longer. / This also comes from the LORD of hosts, Who has made His counsel wonderful and His wisdom great.”*

God instructs the farmer how to farm, & I believe He will help you to do your work, whatever that may be, if you seek His help, if it is honest/God-honoring work, & if you seek to glorify Him by your doing it.

Involve Him in your problems by talking them over with Him in prayer, even if your problem is as small/mundane as knowing how long to thresh your wheat or when to plow your fields.

If you're a Xn, you have the incalculable privilege of consulting with the world's greatest Source of wisdom, over whatever you face, at work, at home, or at church.

In Gen 24, Abraham sent his servant Eliezer out to find a wife for his son Isaac.

Can you imagine your boss asking you to find a wife for his son?

Can you imagine an assignment more fraught with potential for failure?

In Gen 24:12, Eliezer prayed, “*O LORD, the God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today, and show lovingkindness to my master Abraham.*”

God answered Eliezer’s prayer, so that he met Rebekah, & the rest was sacred history.

God gives the Xn laborer strength for his task, & the Xn artisan skill for his craft.

In Ex 35:31, we read this about a man named Bezaleel=>

*“He [God] has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding and in knowledge and in all **craftsmanship**; / to make designs for working in gold and in silver and in bronze” (31-32).*

Bezaleel was building the Tabernacle for Israel’s worship.

He was apprenticed to God as he did so.

You don’t have to be in fulltime ministry to seek help from God in your work.

Your faith in X sanctifies whatever your calling may be.

Assume He has called you to whatever task you do, seek His help in it by faith, and use it to glorify Him.

That attitude can ennoble even the most tedious kind of work as long as you do it w/ a Xn spirit, just as X would do it.

I.e., with courtesy/gentleness/patience/love, looking for an opportunity to share the gospel with others.

Someone: “The people I work with are vile individuals.”

That’s something every missionary must contend with, and that’s the mission field where God has placed you.

3) The faith-life means the Xn will cast his burdens on the Lord.

As 1 Pet 5:7 says=> *“Casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.”*

If we didn’t have X living within us, we would be left all alone to confront the problems/anxieties of life on our own.

We would be just like the frenetic people of this world, whose strategy-of-choice in dealing with trouble/crisis is to panic or to rely on their own human strength.

But our faith is in the Lord, so Phil 4:6 instructs us to=>

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. / And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (6-7).

That is the Xn faith being applied practically to a very real life-situation we all must face from time to time.

Faith keeps our minds focused on the fact that Jesus is right here with us, available to help in trouble, as our great Burden-Bearer.

In John 14:18, He promised=> *“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”*

Faith can look at every trial/disaster as God's will for us, trusting that He will work it all together for good, and He'll give us the strength to get through it, in the meantime.

4) The faith-life means learning how to bow out graciously.

Change can be one of the most difficult aspects of life, but our faith enables us to handle it.

* E.g. the business executive who knows the time has come to step back from the leadership of a company into which he has poured his life, letting stronger-arms and younger-minds take over.

* The mother whose nest is quickly emptying, & who wonders what role will be left for her to play in her own house, when her children no longer need/want "mothering."

Changing one's settled routines, and beginning a new life, may be great for adventurers, but what if you're not an adventurer?

God called the Israelites to literally walk by faith, moving about in the Sinai Desert at His command.

He didn't want them getting so comfortable with any one location, that they stopped looking to the Pillar of Cloud and Fire for their security, and started looking instead to their circumstances/surroundings.

And that's what the faith-life teaches us too, keeping our minds focused on our Great Shepherd.

When we get really good at it, we will be able to say, “My Master knows best. If He wants to continue using me as one of His vessels, fine. If He wants to set me on the shelf, I’ll accept that placidly, trusting that He’ll use even that for His glory and my good.”

The ultimate “bowing out” is death, and by faith we can die well, if we have learned to live by our faith.

* X did, praying (Jn 17:4): *“I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do.”*

* Paul did, saying (2 Tim 4:7): *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.”*

They bowed out graciously and triumphantly, having lived by their faith.

We too can face death gracefully, if we’ve lived by our faith.