

Christ Lives In Me

Introduction. The compelling force behind our service to God is our loyalty and love for Jesus. If our appreciation for Him is lacking, then so will our service in His kingdom. Jesus pointed out that the result of our loving Him is the keeping of His commandments (John 14:15, 21; 1 John 5:2-3).

But at this time I would like for us to notice a slightly different angle than just the fact of the necessity of keeping the Lord's commandments. We want to consider the depth of our commitment and love for Him. Something dedicated to God in the Old Testament was described as "devoted" or "consecrated," but the level of commitment is expressed in a different way by Paul in the letter to the Galatians (Galatians 2:19-20).

I. ***We Live Unto God***

- A. Paul's earlier dedication to the Law of Moses was unquestionable. He cherished it. It was the center of his life. It was his identity. Its friends were his friends and its enemies were his enemies.
- B. Not only did he love the Law, but the Law provided him with great rewards. It gave him purpose. It gave him power and prestige. It was his future path to greatness as it had made him a leader of men. It filled him with a sense of pride (Philippians 3:4-6).
- C. But the Law did not make him alive unto God (Romans 3:20). The day came when Paul had to "die" to the law (Romans 7:4-6). He had to part ways with its promise, rewards, prestige, and power. It was the only way to "live unto God." Righteousness will not come through the Law of Moses, nor by any other scheme or plan except the gospel of Christ.
- D. Because of our circumstances, our focus will not be the Law of Moses. But whatever it is that we love and trust; that we are focused on; that is the center of our lives; we must set it aside in favor of putting Jesus Christ in His proper position (Parents: career, recreation; children: school, activities, relationships). We must have the same attitude as Paul: when compared to knowing Christ, everything else is rubbish (Philippians 3:7-8).

II. ***We Are Crucified With Christ***

- A. When did Paul's "crucifixion with Christ" occur and to what does it refer? Essentially, it happened when Paul said "no" to self and "yes" to Christ. It happened when he became committed to trust and obey, and to put away what did not fit with living for Jesus. To sum it up in one word, Paul was "crucified with Christ" when he repented.
- B. This crucifixion is spiritual, or figurative, in nature, though it has visible results in one's life. And just as Christ's literal crucifixion occurred

before His burial, so does ours. We repent, and then we are buried in anticipation of rising up from our spiritual grave to live a new life (Romans 6:6-7).

- C. How tiresome it is to hear people suggest that grace is meant to assure us of eternal life whether we truly repent or not; that we can continue to sin "that grace may abound" (Romans 6:1-2). That is not how it is at all!
- D. While God does provide grace to His children who stumble and sin (1 John 1:8-10), He does not permit a careless, nonchalant attitude toward disobedience. As he made it abundantly clear to the Galatian Christians, not only is it possible to fall from grace and be severed from Christ, some of them had already done it (Galatians 5:2-4).

III. ***We Have Christ Living In Us***

- A. When did Jesus begin to live in Paul? This new life began when Paul arose from baptism.
 - 1. First came the crucifixion with Christ (repentance), then the burial with Christ (baptism), followed by being raised up with Christ (to walk in newness of life).
 - 2. It is when we are "baptized into Christ" that we are "clothed with Christ" (Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 3:10).
- B. So strong is Christ's presence in the life of a Christian that Paul even exclaims that it is no longer he who lives but Christ lives in him!
 - 1. How ridiculous it would be for me to claim that I am in this kind of fellowship with the Son of God if my daily living is given to neglect, selfishness, envy, strife, bitterness, hatred, malice, worldliness, deceit, materialism, etc.
 - 2. If my interests are of this world, as made evident by my speech and conduct, then my claim to be what Paul describes is a false claim (Ephesians 4:24-31).
 - 3. An anonymous quote says, "Listen: I'm against sin. I'll kick it as long as I've got a foot. I'll fight it as long as I've got a fist. I'll butt it as long as I've got a head. I'll bite it as long as I've got a tooth. And when I'm old, fistless, footless, and toothless, I'll gum it till I go home to glory."
- C. This verse does not mean that we have a personal indwelling of the Savior within us. Jesus Christ dwells in our hearts through faith (Ephesians 3:17), which is the same manner as the Holy Spirit dwells in us.

IV. ***We Live By Faith***

- A. Paul's life was righteous in Christ. It was not a righteousness of his own (cf. Romans 10:1-3). He had not devised his new life, Jesus had.

Paul had merely surrendered himself to Jesus, putting his faith in Him. This type of life, Paul realized, was his only hope.

- B. Seeing the need to live in the flesh by faith in the Son of God does not nullify the grace of God. Some say that being saved by grace means we are saved no matter how we walk, but this is not true (2 Corinthians 5:10). Grace does not nullify the need to "live by faith." It does not take away the need to love, trust, and obey Jesus.
- C. "Living by faith" is analogous to "walking by faith" (2 Corinthians 5:7). This simply means that every part of our lives will be controlled by the recognition of and adherence to the law of the Lord (Psalm 119:100; Ephesians 4:1).

Conclusion. Christ is not valued at all, unless he is valued above all. Although grace brings salvation, it also brings responsibilities. When those responsibilities are met, we are living by faith. There is quite simply no other path to God; if there is, then "Christ is dead in vain" (Galatians 2:21). But there is not. His death was an absolute necessity, and there is no other way to the Father except by Him (John 14:6).