

HIS SIDE VERSUS OUR SIDE - OVERVIEW OF GALATIANS

Or, What is a TRUE Christian?

by Norman Harrison

Copyright © 1947

by Norman Harrison

edited for 3BMB by Baptist Bible Believer in the spirit of the Colportage Ministry of a century ago

~ out-of-print and in the public domain ~

CHAPTER 4

CHRIST INLIVING -- I CRUCIFIED - GALATIANS 2:20

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

These amazing words of the apostle we conceive to contain the FINEST, CLEAREST statement in a single sentence anywhere to be found of how the Christian life is really to be lived. But why is it here this early in the Epistle, before the exposition has even begun? And why is it in the first person singular, when it gives the great essentials of Christian living for all believers?

Many times I have quoted these words and spoken from them, but never until now have I seen them in their true light. They are the clincher to Paul's claim for the Gospel he preaches. It works. It is authoritative, authenticated as it is by the presence and power of the Author Himself.

It is as though Paul said, "The Christ-centered Gospel I preach is all-sufficient. I am demonstrating its sufficiency in my own experience. Since I met CHRIST on the Damascus road my life-principle is entirely changed. I no longer depend upon self-effort, much less law regulation. CHRIST lives in me. The life I NOW live is Christ-controlled. His control is perfect and complete.

Distinctive New Covenant Truth

We can never be sufficiently grateful to the HOLY SPIRIT for giving to the Apostle Paul a ministry that lays undying emphasis upon the indwelling presence of CHRIST; that since He has died, has risen and ascended He has become "a life-giving Spirit"; that this presence is the covenanted promise to all believers, and that this presence is the distinctive characteristic of the New Covenant.

It is nothing short of tragic that the average Christian, seemingly oblivious to these great facts, is still living in Old Testament truth. Of course, the Old Testament is still, blessedly true, and we

derive great joy and strength from appropriating its precious promises; but what makes the Christian life Christian is CHRIST Himself, incorporated into human living.

Examples of the distinction are plentiful. Take the Psalms. **"I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved"** (16:8). **"Thou art with me"** (23:4). **"The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous"** (34:15). **"Lead me to the rock that is higher than I"** (61:2). **"I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me"** (40:17). **"Let Thine hand help me"** (119:173). **"My help cometh from the Lord"** (121:2). **"The Lord hath done great things for us"** (126:3).

These are typical expressions of an Old Testament saint's confidence in the Lord as his helper. Where is He? Outside, watching, guarding, guiding, upholding. (And many of these expressions of confidence are carried over in the New Testament Scriptures, for they are true for us as well.) But the typical New Testament truth brings us to a life centered in an inward, abiding presence, and that presence is our resource for a **"walk in newness of life."** **"Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them"** (II Corinthians 6:16). **"Know ye not as to your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you?"** (II Corinthians 13:5). **"Abide in Me, and I in you"** (John 15:4).

That such a stupendous fact, filled with divine potentials, should be brushed aside to reduce Christian living to a mere matter of behaviour is a Satan-engineered calamity. That any group of believers at all taught in the Word, much less any preacher or teacher of that Word, should "fall for it" -- what a piece of strategy on Satan's part to defeat the Gospel. Let us beware!

Identification in Full Operation

The text heading this chapter, Galatians 2:20, embodies the principle of identification in its fullest extent. It is this that gives to it peculiar significance for the defense of the Gospel. We are all **"by nature"** identified with Adam -- his children, in the grip of death. The Gospel reveals GOD's provision of the plan -- a marvelous plan it is -- and the power to transfer us over completely and effectively to another allegiance, even to Himself. His provision is in the person of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, ministered by the HOLY SPIRIT.

How did He do it? By three steps, so important, so essential to the Gospel that every Christian should ponder them well:

1. He became identified with us in flesh and blood.

The marvel of the ages this, that GOD the Creator would become the creature, walk this earth as a son of Adam, calling Himself the Son of man. Thus sharing our lot He brought to it the perfections of His own sinless being, deliberately purposing to die our death, **"that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver"** us from **"bondage"** (Hebrews 2:14, 15). So He **"gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from"** being identified with Adam and **"this present evil world"** (Galatians 1:4).

2. We became identified with Him in death and resurrection.

The sons of Adam, now the sons of GOD. We have changed sides. We have "**passed from death**" -- the death column, "**unto life**" -- the life column. What effected the transition? Our sharing in His death and resurrection as though actually ours. "**We thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead**" (II Corinthians 5:14). "**Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness**" (I Peter 2:24). These are but a few of the many scriptures of the New Covenant, revealing its purpose and power to bring us through the experience of the death of CHRIST out into the living reality of His resurrection life. By His death and resurrection made ours we have been brought over onto His Side.

All Christians understand and believe the first step, whereby HE DIED FOR US. So few enter into the realization of the second step, whereby WE DIED WITH HIM.

3. He now identifies Himself with us in living presence.

This step is wholly dependent upon the two preceding. If He had not died for us, and we had not died with Him; if He had not brought us through death and resurrection over onto His Side, He could not now give Himself to us in actual presence. The New Covenant literature goes on, especially in Ephesians and Colossians, to explain this life-union as the very nature of the Christian life. It is that alone which makes Christian living possible. We are in a head and body relationship to Him. Such identification is not only complete but practical. The head controls the body; the body expresses the head, its will and wisdom. This union constitutes a sovereign personality, not subject to rules and regulations. Thus, Christian living is Christ-centered and Christ-controlled.

What these three basic steps total to is this: GOD's aim and purpose in the Gospel is not to make good people, a mere matter of conduct; but rather a people "peculiar" to Him -- so peculiar to Himself that He can come and live in them and be Himself the regulator of their lives. This is really wonderful!

Stated boldly, stripped of superficialities, the Christian life is a re-incarnation of CHRIST. He who walked the earth nineteen hundred years ago walks again in us: "**I will dwell in them, and walk in them.**" He who once shrouded His glory in a tent of flesh now trusts that glory to the tenting of our flesh -- see John 1:14; 17:22. He who once found flesh and blood expression for Himself in one body now claims a similar expression for Himself in any body -- yours and mine -- the bodies of all who will believe and receive the benefits of the Gospel.

Four Practical Steps in Realizing the Life

The life thus depicted is too wonderful for words. It is staggering in its possibilities. To think of anyone missing it! "But," says some doubting Thomas, "It's wonderful, if -- if it works, if one could live it." Let us acknowledge that if it fails to work, the failure is ours, not His. As in the case of an automobile with the engine running at full speed and the wheels standing still -- plenty of power but no transmission -- we have failed to transmit and transmute His power into our daily living.

Galatians 2:20 is, as we have suggested, is the most perfect statement of the nature of Christian

living anywhere to be found. It's a classic. Every Christian should carry in mind the reference and its content -- Galatians 2:20 -- as we do John 3:16. It is a fly-leaf from Paul's experience; but he is stating for all of us the essentials of Christian living.

Here are four steps, simple but inescapable: I have been crucified with CHRIST; it is no longer I that live; CHRIST lives in me; Now the life that I live is one of utter dependence upon Him. These words are an inspired prescription for successful living. Then let us take these steps as directed, wisely concluding that they point the way to the finest life known to man:

1 -- Know that You Have Died.

This is the distinctive mark of the Christian -- the experienced Cross. Not merely that CHRIST died FOR us, but that we died WITH HIM. In this matter the Word is explicitly clear: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him" -- picturing a crucifixion EN MASSE -- "**that the body of sin might be destroyed**". "**If (since) ye be dead with Christ**" (Colossians 2:20). The practical effect in our person is: "**They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts**" (Galatians 5:24).

This is the first step in a changed personality. Other people live their own lives, only to face death. We have already died, and have entered into life (read John 5:24). Death must precede real life. That is what happened in yonder wheat field: the thousands of grains of wheat died; now new life has sprung up. Consider how Jesus applied this fact to His death -- and ours as well (John 12:23, 24). It's GOD's one way of dealing with sinful human nature -- Crucify it! And He did!

Our inclusion in His crucifixion is the indispensable basis of fellowship with CHRIST. He has died, risen, and entered into new life. And we haven't died? Then the Cross would separate, hopelessly. But now it unites us. We are one in death -- one with Him and in Him. While the Scriptures clearly establish this fact and its necessity, for the art of living we must CULTIVATE THE CONSCIOUSNESS THAT WE HAVE DIED. Learn to live in the reality of it. Think it! Live it!

2 -- Know that CHRIST Lives in You.

What happened when you became a Christian? You "**received Him**" (John 1:12). According to His own word, "**I will come in to him**" (Revelation 3:20), He actually came into you. He came in to stay, to "live." Then, of course, you aren't the same person as formerly. You have another Person living in you. "**Christ in you, the hope of glory**" (Colossians 1:27).

Ponder well this startling fact. Who is this CHRIST? There is but one CHRIST: "**Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever**" (Hebrews 13:8). And He lives in you! Nothing could be more wonderful.

Consider Him in His "yesterday"; "**All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made**"; "**By Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible ... He is before all things**" (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16, 17). And this wonderful Person who made everything is today, right now, this very minute and

each succeeding minute, living "in you"? Say, you ought to be wonderful, too!

Consider Him in His "today": "**Who is even at the right hand of God**"; "**Upholding all things by the word of His power**"; given the "**name which is above every name**" (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 1:3; Philippians 2:9). And this wonderful Person lives where? "In you"! What sort of a person, think you, should you be?

Consider Him in His "for ever": "**The government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end**" (Isaiah 9:6,7). And this world ruler lives today "in you." He can bring peace to this troubled world, and He can't bring peace to your troubled heart? Then something is wrong, so very wrong. Lack of transmission? Is something in the way, hindering Him? Would you HINDER, even defeat this wonderful Person?

3 -- Take Yourself Out of His Way.

"**It is no longer I that live.**" Do you dare make that a practical reality? It's the key to the whole situation. It will prove the hardest step you ever took; but take it. Possessed of "**all power**," you are on the threshold of a wonderful life. Courageously take out of the way the thing that is blocking that power. That something is in New Testament truth, "you."

The philosophy involved is the exact opposite of the world's. But it fits the facts. The world's philosophy has failed; this works. You have "**Christ in you**"; then do everything to let Him realize Himself, His traits of character, His life in you. Paul did it, outstandingly. Read Philippians 3:7-10. Says Paul: "My most prized attainments I counted by loss to gain CHRIST, to know Him, His power, His fellowship." What did this involve? Hear his testimony: to realize the new life in CHRIST, "**I die daily**" (1 Corinthians 15:31). Can you do any less and hope to succeed? Hearing this, will you also heed? Your greatest problem will always be yourself -- always until you match His death with yours in a firm, meaningful "no longer I."

Dear friend, your future is unlimited -- limited only by the degree to which you limit Him. Any future failure is simply the failure to let Him live out His faithfulness in you. He "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" -- displaying this ability in us personally -- but it is "**according to the power that worketh in us**" (Ephesians 3:20), that is, the degree of freedom we accord Him. The art of living is to give Him unlimited freedom to exercise His faithfulness in us. Possess your possessions and your future is assured.

~ end of chapter 4 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>
