



“Crucified With Christ”
Galatians 2:17-21
Sermon Date: October 26th, 2014

Reflections on Sunday’s Sermon

**** (The Sunday morning Scripture reading this week will be Psalm 20:1-7 if you would like to read and prayerfully consider it in advance) ****

Since our notes are based on the text being preached on a given Sunday, the aim of this section is to provide you with a space to write notes from the sermon, any questions you may have, any truths that stood out to you, any applications that came to your mind, and/or anything you may have committed to prayer and further reflection as a result of what you have heard.

Prayer

Before you begin your study, take a few moments to ask the Lord for clarity and understanding as you study His Word. Ask that you would be all the more convinced in your heart and mind that you have “been crucified with Christ” and that it is “no longer [you] who live, but Christ who lives in [you]” (Galatians 2:20). As you pray, consider the words of the following prayer taken from Everyday Prayers by Scotty Smith and make them your own before the Lord.

“Jesus...I need the gospel today just as much as the first day I believed it. This will be just as true tomorrow, and the next day, and the next. Keep me convinced, Jesus...”

It’s one thing for me to stress and stew about the ways this generation is distancing itself from your cross. But it’s quite another to see the subtle ways I try to keep you from the cross...

When I think, even for one moment, that my obedience merits anything, I deny your cross. When I put others under the microscope and measure of performance-based living, I deny your cross. When I wallow in self-contempt and shame, I deny your cross. When I’d rather do penance than repent, I deny your cross.

By the gospel, help me to mind the things of God more than the things of men. May your cross get bigger, and may my boast in it grow louder...I pray in your patient and persistent name. Amen.”

Review

Last week we studied one of the most important verses in the book of Galatians, and, in reality, one of the most important verses in all of Scripture. For in Galatians 2:16 we have one of the clearest statements regarding the way in which man can be justified before God, “we know that a person is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ.” The reality that man can only be justified through faith in Jesus Christ, and not by works of the law, lies at the very heart of the gospel and is the truth upon which every follower of Christ’s hope of eternal life rests. The churches in Galatia desperately needed to understand that their only hope of being found righteous (justified) before the Holy God was found not in their ability to make themselves righteous through works of the law, but to be declared righteous through faith in the completed work of Jesus Christ. It is this good news of justification through faith alone in Christ alone that Paul continues to elaborate on in our text this week.

Scripture

Galatians 2:17–21 – (English Standard Version)

17 But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! 18 For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. 19 For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. 21 I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

Handling the Word

1. What is the connection between verses 17-21 and all that has been said leading up to these verses (particularly 2:15-16)?

2. Summarize the main point of our passage this week in your own words.

Understanding and Applying

1. To begin this passage in verses 17-18, Paul continues to reiterate the good news that no one can be justified through the works of the law but only through faith in Jesus Christ alone. What had been “torn down” by the good news that would have been sinful for anyone to rebuild (refer also to Ephesians 2:11-16)? Although it may look different in our churches today than it did in the early church, what are specific walls we can be guilty of rebuilding which the gospel has absolutely destroyed?
2. One of the arguments the churches in Galatia may have been facing is that the gospel of justification by faith alone (rather than obedience to the law) was dangerous because it allowed people to live in sin and disobedience to the law of God yet remain in good standing with Him so long as they had faith in Jesus. Does the doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone encourage people to live in disobedience to all that God commands of us? Why or why not? What incentive do those who trust in Christ’s work alone for salvation have to live in obedience to God (Use this week’s passage along with 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 to explain your answer)?
3. Paul, in verses 19 and 20, makes some incredibly important statements regarding what it means when someone trusts Jesus Christ alone for salvation and justification. What do each of the verses below teach us about what Paul means when he says that believers “have been crucified with Christ” so that it is no longer we “who live, but Christ who lives in [us]” (v. 20)?

Romans 6:1-14, 7:4-6 –

2 Corinthians 5:17 –

Ephesians 2:6, 4:22-24 –

Colossians 2:6-15, 3:1-12 –

4. What does living a crucified life look like in your daily walk with the Lord (Mark 8:34)? When people take a good look at our lives, do they see a life that is crucified with Christ in any way? Why or why not?
5. Paul makes it clear in verse 20 that his life is no longer lived chasing after obedience to the law but living by faith in the Son of God who now dwells within Him. Are there areas in your life that you know are not being lived by faith and where you need to let Christ live His life more fully in you? If so, what are they and what must be done to change that?

6. Notice how intensely personal the language is at the end of verse 20 when Paul writes that Jesus “loved *me* and gave himself up for *me*.” Take a minute to consider what that incredibly personal language means for you. The love of Jesus Christ is not some impersonal abstract concept; it is intimately personal and was expressed in sacrificial action taken on your behalf. What are the implications of this truth in your own life? Why is it important that we really consider the personal language reiterated all throughout this passage?

7. In verse 21, Paul reminded Christians that to believe in justification through adherence to the law rather than faith in Jesus would mean that “Christ died for no purpose.” To suggest that salvation could be attained by any means other than through faith in Jesus Christ alone, is to render His work pointless and to make a mockery out of it. Write down the thoughts that come to your mind when you consider the following quote from commentator Timothy George: “...if we add works of the law to the sacrifice of the cross, then indeed we make a mockery of Jesus’ death just as the soldiers who spat upon him, the thieves who hurled insults at him, and the rabble who shouted, ‘Come down from the cross!’”

8. When we make salvation achievable by any works we are capable of doing ourselves, we absolutely diminish the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. What are other ways that we can be guilty of nullifying grace and diminishing the finished work of Jesus Christ (v. 21)?

9. Two very important pillars of the Christian faith are reiterated for us in this passage: the grace of God and the death of Jesus Christ. Why are these two truths foundational to our faith? In what specific way do these pillars serve to destroy the legalism that seems to occupy our thinking?

10. Are God’s grace and Christ’s death everything to you? What difference should they make in your love of Him and your actions in life?

“Christ will do everything or nothing: earn your salvation if your obedience to the law is perfect, or else trust wholly to Christ’s completed work; you cannot do both; you cannot combine merit and grace; if justification even in the slightest measure is through human merit, then Christ died in vain.”

J. Gresham Machen