

9. Galatians 2:1-10 Paul's Fellow Witnesses and Paul's Adversaries June 29, 2008

This morning we will begin our first look at Galatians 2 and it is my intention to get through this entire second chapter in a total of 3 lessons beginning this morning with our look at the first 10 verses. Continuing with his autobiography begun in chapter 1:13, Paul in Galatians 2:1-10 describes one specific episode in his Christian walk that took place 14 years after his conversion and it is an event that has had important ramifications on Christianity to this very day.

2:1-10 ¶ Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. 2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. 3 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: 4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: 5 To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. 6 But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me: 7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; 8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) 9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. 10 Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

While I disagree with his statement in that he seems to fail seeing the sovereign, ordaining hand of God, Warren Wiersbe states that if Paul had not fought the battle laid before us in verses 1-10, Christianity might have become only a Jewish sect, preaching a mixture of law and grace. But while I disagree with that statement, I do agree with him in his assessment that Paul was willing to fight because he knew the truth. Paul was not in any way uncertain about his calling, his conversion, or his commissioning by Jesus Christ Himself and for this reason, Paul could not sit by idly and watch fellow believers continue in sinning by indenturing themselves their former master, the law.

This section of Galatians is debated by some as to when exactly it took place and is a primary reason why there is wide array of dates given for when this book was written. Some argue this is Paul and Barnabas' trip to Jerusalem to bring alms from the church of Antioch described in Acts 11:27-30, others say it is a visit not mentioned in Acts (similar to those who hold to this book being written to churches not mentioned in Acts). But I am convinced along with John Gill, John Brown, and Warren Wiersbe that this episode is the same one that is described by Luke in Acts 15 that took place in AD 49. And we will be examining that passage as well in order to understand Galatians 2 so you might want to hold your place in both Galatians 2 and Acts 15 as we will bounce back and forth between them a little this morning. But to understand these 2 sections of Scripture, we must also spend at least a brief amount of time discussing the characters in this episode other than Paul himself – Paul's comrades, Paul's adversaries, and some of the members of the Jerusalem Council.

Let's begin with Paul's adversaries.

In previous lessons I have referred to them as Judaizers, legalists, and false teachers. But Galatians 2:4 simply describes them as "false brethren". This means that they were men who had never been saved before but that were teaching that they had all the right answers. According to John Brown these were unbelieving Jews and perhaps unbelieving Jews who carried into their new religion all of their old prejudices. In other words they added to their old creeds, this new article "that Jesus was the Messiah" but they denied what he accomplished. They were Christians in name only. And according to verse 4 they had sneaked into the churches at Galatia in order to spy out the liberty that is in Christ Jesus alone. But they weren't just seeking to know what the difference was between the life of a Jew and the life of the Christian, they wanted to bring them back verse 4 says into bondage. This is the bondage of the old nature that the Jews didn't even recognize they were in – the bondage to the Pharisaical laws from the oral tradition, that Paul himself knew so well. But the false teachers were not just targeting Jewish believers in the churches of Galatia. They were seeking to turn Gentile believers away from Jesus Christ and ensnare them as well.

And how were they promoting the bondage under the guise of true religion? Look at Acts 15:1. *And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.*

The Judaizers were adding the requirement of circumcision as a precondition for salvation. But that is not all according to verse 5. Verse 5 says "*5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.*" So these Pharisees, former fraternity brothers to Paul himself, have now turned on Paul and the very good news – the Gospel he preached.

To the Jews, the false brethren's teaching invalidated the atoning worth of the cross and thereby urged them to return to the Levitical rituals. And to the Gentiles, they were substituting faith with good works similar to Cain's replacing a blood sacrifice with the fruits of his own labor, including circumcision. This was the bondage they were seeking to bring upon the believers in Galatia. Martin Luther in his commentary on Galatians said "For it seemed to them a strange thing that the law of God should be utterly taken away, and the Jews, who, until that time, had been counted the people of God, to whom also the promises were made, should now be rejected: also, it seemed a yet more strange thing that the Gentiles, being wicked idolaters, should attain to this dignity and glory, to be the people of God without circumcision, and without the works of the law, by grace only, and faith in Christ."

But in their attempts to straighten out new converts only forces them into their own crooked ways. This is well evidenced in *Galatians 6:12-13 As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. 13 For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.*

As Martin Luther summarized the false brethren, "they made good works, which are the effect of justification, its cause."

So now we have Paul and his adversaries. Next I want us to look at Paul's companions.

Galatians 2:1 tells us that after 14 years Paul went back to Jerusalem and this time he went with at least 2 companions: Barnabas and Titus. And Acts 15:2 says "that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them," went up to Jerusalem. We briefly saw Barnabas last week. But what do we know about Barnabas. According to Acts 4:36, his real name was Joses derived from the name Joseph but he was known to the Apostles as Barnabas – the "son of consolation" or the "son of encouragement". And we see this very meaning of his nickname in the way he supports Paul before the Apostles when they were still scared of him. And even though we know so much more about Paul, Barnabas was also a great preacher and a teacher and you may even recall that the people of Lystra falsely called him the god Jupiter because of his enormous presence. And throughout his ministry he believed unwaveringly in the effect Jesus Christ has on the lives of men, both Jews and Gentiles. That carries even to this council in Jerusalem. Paul's second named companion is Titus, but Warren Wiersbe I believe best describes him when he calls Titus "Exhibit A" and the "test case". Titus was a Gentile and according to Titus 1:4, Titus was Paul's spiritual son, in other words, Paul claimed to be instrumental in the conversion of Titus. But that very conversion was what the Judaizers were calling into question as Titus was, even in Jerusalem, uncircumcised. And verse 3 of Galatians 2 tells us that they compelled or constrained him to be circumcised. Now while I am on this point, I need to point out that one of the few debates about the text of the book of Galatians involves verses 3-5 of Galatians 2. According to J.B. Lightfoot, an expert in Greek even referenced by John MacArthur, verses 3-5 are a "shipwreck of Greek grammar." These verses are considered to be complex as well as incomplete and this has led to some even to go the point of saying that Titus and Paul ended up giving up and Titus submitted to circumcision. But John MacArthur and even J.B. Lightfoot say that despite the doubts, the context makes it clear and obvious that the outcome was that Titus remained uncircumcised. And this leads MacArthur to say that for the rest of his life, Titus provided "a living verification that the Judaizers taught a spurious gospel" and was "a monument of victory". But as an aside, this debate also leads to some questioning Paul's actions in the case of Timothy, who he did support being circumcised. But the difference lies in the fact that Timothy was born of a Jewish mother and Titus was not. Also, Timothy's circumcision had no relation to his being a Christian, it was the removal of a potential stumbling-block in his future ministry. Some also say that Timothy's ministry was more to Jewish congregations, while Titus served in more Gentile areas. Regardless, Titus really was exhibit A at the council in Jerusalem. If the Judaizers were right, Titus was not a believer in his present condition. Before we look at the result of this council, that we all already know, let's examine the key members at this council. Paul names them in verse 9 of our text as James, Cephas [or Peter] and John and he continues on by saying they "seemed to be pillars". While we know much of John and Peter, the question must be raised, who is James. As I referred to even last week in verse 19 of chapter 1, he is called James the Lord's brother. There are 3 commonly given answers to this question of who James is, and oddly enough, all 3 potential answers are all found in 1 text, Acts 1:13-14.

Acts 1:13-14 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. 14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

The first is that this James is the brother of John. But this is not consistent with the rest of Scripture as the council in Acts 15, takes place after the martyrdom of James recorded in Acts 12:1-2. The second is that this is another disciple and apostle, James the son of Alphaeus, also called James the less. (some hold him to be a cousin of Jesus) And the final possible answer is that James is as mentioned in chapter 1, the brother or better stated half-brother of Jesus who is mentioned in both Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3.

According to John 7:5, none of Jesus' brothers followed him during his earthly ministry before his death, but we need to look at 1 Corinthians 15 to see the change.

1 Corinthians 15:3-9 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: 5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: 6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. 7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. 8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. 9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

I believe, as so do most expositors, that James, Jesus' half-brother mentioned in verse 7, is the James of Acts 15 and Galatians 1 and 2. But regardless of the answer, James was evidently the chief spokesman for the council in Jerusalem as he provides the final decision in Acts 15:13-21 that we will look at in a few minutes. But before that, I want to point out the defense given at the council. We already know the argument given by the Judaizers, but at this council amongst the debate, Peter, Paul, and Barnabas provide the testimony supporting salvation apart from circumcision and the law.

10. Galatians 2:11-14 Paul's Rebuke to Help Peter Remember July 6, 2008

I want to begin this morning with a very important question – Whether openly or subtly, how much should it bother us if someone attacks the Gospel? Correctly answering this question has much to do about study of Galatians. The need to defend the Gospel at all costs. Last week I didn't make it through all of my notes so this morning, I want to complete our look at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 and continue our examination of Galatians 2 where we will see a second monumental event in the life of Paul and the history of Christianity. Last time we looked at Paul's adversaries – who were the false brethren claiming that circumcision and the keeping of the Law were required for salvation – we looked at Paul's fellow comrades – who included Barnabas and Exhibit A (aka Titus) – and we looked a little at the 3 named members of the Jerusalem council – those being John, Peter, and James. Since we ran out of time we were unable to look at the verbal arguments given at the Council and we of course didn't look at the decision of the Council.

Our text for this morning will once again be found in both Acts 15 and also Galatians 2. But first let's read Galatians 2:1-10 and then later on this morning we will look at verses 11-14.

1 ¶ Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. 2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. 3 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: 4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: 5 To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. 6 But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me: 7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; 8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) 9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. 10 Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

In addition to what we find in Galatians 2, Acts 15 records for us the testimony given before the Council of Jerusalem so let's begin our look there. The first person whose argument is recorded is a member of the Council, the Apostle Peter. Let's now look at the testimony given in Acts 15.

Acts 15:6-11 ¶ And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. 7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. 8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; 9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. 10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

In my opinion, verses 10 and 11 are the key to this entire debate. For Peter to side with the legalists would not only have meant a denial of Paul's ministry according to this council, but also siding with the legalists would have meant Peter was denying what Christ had told him his ministry would entail. In Matt 16:19 Jesus told Peter, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven:" and that is exactly what we find happening in the book of Acts where Peter preached on Pentecost to the Jews, he prayed for the Samaritans in Acts 8 that Holy Spirit would come down upon them, and he was instrumental in the conversion of the gentile Cornelius in Acts 10. Peter knew firsthand from his experiences with Cornelius and his household recorded in Acts 10 that Gentiles could be and had been regenerated.

After Peter's arguments, we next come to Paul and Barnabas' arguments, who according to Galatians 2:2 went to this council because of a divine revelation. This raises an important point, that Warren Wiersbe picks up on in his commentary when he says "Paul was not unsure of his ministry...what he was concerned about was the future of the gospel among the gentiles, because this was his specific ministry from the Christ." Paul was willing to fight and we will see later this morning a second fight that Paul waged. Paul knew the importance of defending the truth of the gospel. If he had not, his work would have been much more hindered even though his message would not have changed. So what was Paul and Barnabas' defense. In Acts there argument is summarized in one verse, verse 12.

Acts 15:12 Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

In other words, God doesn't confirm falsehoods with miracles, so the Gentiles that Barnabas and Paul ministered to must be saved.

So now before we move into additional portions of Galatians 2, let's look at the conclusions of this council. Certainly, in addition to the words of Peter, Barnabas, and Paul in this council, the uncircumcised Titus was being observed for evidence of new life. And on this point, John Brown eloquently states "It is as if he said, 'Nothing can be a more satisfactory proof that the apostles did not object to my doctrine respecting the non-obligation of the Mosaic law on gentile converts than this, that Titus my companion, though known to be a native Gentile, was not required to submit to circumcision.'"

With that said, let's look at Acts 15 again.

13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: 14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. 15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, 16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: 17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. 18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. 19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: 20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. 21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

As this last verse states synagogues were very prevalent throughout the Gentile world so the occasion for stumbling blocks was very high and this led to the very rulings of the council. The council at Jerusalem was asking the Gentiles to conform to the most important sensitivities of Jewish Christians in order to remove significant stumbling-blocks. These 4 rules, which we won't spend time studying this morning all have associations with the Noahic laws of Genesis 9, the laws for Gentiles living in Israel as established in Leviticus 17 and 18, and they are associated with common pagan cults of Paul's day.

The end of this passage makes it clear who won.

22 ¶ Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: 23 And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: 24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment:

The disciples declare officially in verse 24, that the Judaizers have no authority to preach what they were saying. Paul summarizes this decision in Galatians 2:7-10.

Galatians 2:7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; 8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) 9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. 10 Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

Verse 7 discusses 2 gospels, but we know from our study of Galatians 1:6-7 that there is only 1 gospel. So what Paul is declaring is that they are the same Gospel. And how did it come about that the disciples and Paul preached the same Gospel. Well this another proof of Paul's argument about where his gospel came from that we discussed last week. The answer is they all had the same source of their gospel – Jesus Christ Himself. And this is why verse 8 says that both Peter and Paul were made Apostles by the same Lord.

Before moving on in Galatians 2, I want to provide a fourth answer to the underlying question of our study of Galatians proposed by Warren Wiersbe. To answer it, I would point you back to Peter's argument and then to the conclusion in Acts 15:30-31.

Acts 15:30-31 So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle: 31 Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.

So the fourth answer I would give you this morning is that **If I want to be a really good Christian I must rejoice and be consoled by or find rest in the fact that it is not through works of the flesh or the law but rather through the grace of the Lord Jesus that both Jew and Gentile are saved.**

At this point we are finished with Acts 15 but let's begin our look at the second fight for Christian liberty that Paul fought also found in Galatians 2. It is not clear when exactly this second fight occur, but some hold that it took place before the fight earlier in the chapter but most believe it took place in the months shortly after the Jerusalem Council when Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch.

Galatians 2:11-14 ¶¶ But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. 12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. 13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. 14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

According to this section of Scripture, the Apostle Paul once again could not sit idly by when as stated in verse 14 believers “walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel.” But rather than reprove the masses, Paul went to the seemingly subtle source of the problem. Paul went toe to toe with Peter. As John Brown states, Paul “had not hesitated to differ from, aye, and to reprove, Peter, one of ‘chiefest of the apostles’ when his conduct was not according to the truth of the gospel”. John Brown continues on by saying “Paul did not keep silent as if he had been afraid of Peter as a superior; he was not awed by the example of so great an apostle into the silent sanction of what he thought wrong.”

So what was Peter doing that was so wrong? What was he to “be blamed” for? To begin answering this question, it must be recognized that while the problem was visible (as seen by the opening of verse 14 when Paul writes “when I saw”), it was also subtle. It was not some large or enormous sin in the eyes of everyone. But verse 12 tells us clearly what Paul saw Peter doing.

12 For before that certain came from James, he [Peter] did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

You may recall from a couple of weeks ago that I mentioned the Pharisaical law hedged about Leviticus 22:6, that Jews were forbidden to eat with Gentiles because of the risk of intermarrying or idolatry. This was a practice Paul, Peter, and all of the other apostles were very familiar with from their childhoods. But their old Jewish ways were not consistent with the new creatures they had become in Christ. And Christianity is an unwavering faith. That brings me to the hymn we sang this morning. **I Have Decided To Follow Jesus #397** As this song says repeatedly “no turning back, no turning back.” There is no turning back to the ways of the old man. And the reason there is no turning back is Jesus Himself. The truth of Jesus Christ is more captivating than any other thought or idea in our old life. And we would do well to focus on Jesus Christ whenever we are tempted to do anything that is a part of our old nature.

The sin of Peter and others who followed his example including Barnabas, in the KJV is called dissimulation, in the Greek it is the word υποκρισις (hupokrisis) and it is from this word that we get the word hypocrisy. It is presumed that Peter still sat at the Lord’s Table with Gentiles but not at regular meals. This inconsistency of Peter avoiding eating with Gentiles in public, but his willingness to partake of the Lord’s supper with Jewish and Gentile brothers in Christ, made people wonder what was real and what was not. And this was the goal of the false brethren who had sneaked into their midst. Their target in this passage was convince Jewish Christians that even though they were converted, they needed to keep the law to please God. The action of Peter and others who would not publicly eat with Gentiles threw obscurity and doubt on the true gospel that men are saved entirely by faith through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. But Paul was conscientiously persuaded that Peter was wrong and persuaded that a public statement of this conviction was necessary to serve the purpose of general edification.

This is why Paul stood up to the challenge. And he did it publicly according to verse 14 which says "I said unto Peter before them all". This action is consistent with what Paul taught Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:20 which says "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."

While we will look at it more in depth next week, Lord willing, notice briefly, Paul's logical argument to Peter "*If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?*"

In other words, Paul was asking Peter, why do you expect the Gentiles to do what we can't do properly despite a lifetime of exposure and training.

In our final minutes, I want to point out a few lessons we can learn from this episode in the life of Peter and Paul?

First, this account provides us a nice example that we shouldn't succumb to peer pressure for the sake of unity when the clarity of truth is being challenged.

Second, when a problem arises within a group of believers, it should be dealt with courageously. Doing so is actually edifying to believers. And if properly handled by all parties involved, it should not produce long lasting alienation but rather peaceful and loving brotherhood. We know in the case of Peter and Paul, that Peter did not resent Paul for what he did. In fact Peter calls Paul a beloved brother in 2 Peter 3:15, a book written much later than Galatians and therefore long after the episode in Antioch. Peter was not a grudge holder and neither we should be. In fact we would do well love those willing to correct us, even though I admit that is easier said than done.

Next week we will look more at Paul's argument to Peter and we will delve into the word justification. But for this morning, we would do well to realize and resolve once again that the truth of the gospel is worth fighting for. And as Warren Wiersbe states, "Paul's concern was the 'truth of the Gospel' not the 'peace of the church.' 'Peace at any price' was not Paul's philosophy or ministry, nor should it be ours."

11. Galatians 2:15-21 The Inability of the Law

July 13, 2008

For the past two Sundays we have looked at Galatians chapter 2 and we have seen 2 battles Paul fought in defending the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ – the first being at the Jerusalem Council as recorded in Acts 15 and the second as a face to face rebuke to Peter in Antioch. And within our last lesson, I shared with you a fourth answer to our recurring question from Warren Wiersbe. That fourth answer was **If I want to be a really good Christian I must be justified by the faith of Christ and not the works of the law.** This morning I want to look closer at this doctrinal driving force that gave Paul the courage to wage these important battles.

While last week we examined Paul's confrontation of Peter, what I did not point out is that theologians debate where the confrontation ends and Paul's commentary about this confrontation begins. By this I mean that even godly Christian men debate whether Paul's rebuking words to Peter end with verse 14, 15, 21 or somewhere in between. Regardless of which words Paul spoke to Peter's face, these are all words he was more than willing to speak to Peter and they are all words inspired by the Holy Spirit and preserved for our learning to this very day. And yet I for one can admit that my understanding of this topic is extremely limited and I feel inadequate teaching this morning more than many other mornings. For that reason among others, I can promise you a lot of what you will be hearing today from my mouth are not my words but rather quotes from men who are much more studied than I.

Gal 2:11-21 ¶ But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. 12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. 13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. 14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? 15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. 17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. 18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. 19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. 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. 21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Before digging into our text, one piece of ground work must be laid. In this text, particularly verses 15 through 17, the word "we" is used five times. But who's we? As you look at this text, the word "we" should be understood as Paul, Peter & all of the other Jewish Christians. You will recall from last week that Paul's argument in verse 14 was highly similar to Peter's argument at the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:10). And in the text we just read Paul points out similar to Peter that a Jew cannot adequately keep the law. Verse 15 points out that even with a Jewish heritage by birth and not the lawless heritage of Gentiles, as described by the title "sinners", the law is not enough [Paul is not saying in this verse that Gentiles are sinners but Jews are not – that is put to rest in numerous places in his epistles]. That inability of law is the primary premise of our entire lesson this morning. But despite the inadequacy of every Jew to keep the law, the law was what the false brethren were convincing the Galatians they needed to actually rely upon.

This brings us to the doctrinal driving force behind Paul's courage. Look again at verse 16. This one verse, verse 16, is one of the most important verses in Galatians and is foundational to properly understanding much of New Testament doctrine – this verse lays out the doctrine of justification. John MacArthur calls justification the “most essential doctrine in the epistle.” In fact, as we examine the doctrine of justification, from the start we can easily see that the Holy Spirit and Paul want us to be sure about it from the fact that the same idea is repeated three times with slight variation in this one verse. This repetition helps explain why in his commentary on Galatians, Martin Luther wrote that “if the article of justification by faith is lost, all Christian doctrine is lost.” It also helps us understand why John MacArthur also wrote “This passage is as forceful and unequivocal a statement of the doctrine of salvation by faith alone as can be found in Scripture.” Verse 16 says first that it should be known to any believer that a man is not justified by the works of the law. So look at the three parallel statements of this verse.

- 1) *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by [or through] the faith of Jesus Christ*, - this is the general statement made by Paul
- 2) *even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law*: - this is the personal statement made by Paul
- 3) *for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified*. – this is the universal statement

With this one verse, and its 3 simple parallel statements, there should be absolutely no doubt that a legalistic or works based salvation is contrary to the teaching of Scripture. And when “the law” is used in this passage it entails both the moral and ceremonial law. No man in his effort to keep either one can be justified by it. And this is simply demonstrated in the fact that no man can Love the Lord his God with all his heart soul, and might. And Martin Luther takes this inability of the law even further in his introduction to his commentary on Galatians, “except thou be ignorant of the law, and assuredly be persuaded in thine heart, that there is no law, nor wrath of God, but only grace and mercy for Christ's sake, thou canst not be saved” (p.xiii). Now before I move onto what the word means and what the right means of justification is, let me point out that this past week, I heard a recorded message by John MacArthur where he mentioned a new and dangerous trend of evangelism where the law is intentionally excluded. And some might use this very text to argue such a methodology. But as Martin Luther points out in his commentary, just because the law doesn't justify doesn't mean it is worthless. It just means it is a false and deadly “means” of salvation. The law has a purpose in evangelism and we will come to that in a lesson later in our study of this book of Galatians.

In our study of Galatians, this morning is not planned to be the only time we look at the doctrine of justification, but as the first, there is so much to cover. We will certainly cover more about justification in our upcoming study of chapter 3. But let's start with some basics. The word justify in the Greek is δικαιωω (*dik-ah-yo'-o*) and is always translated as “justify” or “justified” except for 3 times in the NT. But that still doesn't tell us what the word means. It is undisputable that the word justification is, as Charles Spurgeon called it, a forensic term, in other words, it is a legal term. And this is clear from the fact that the Greek word for justified is derived from the Greek word, 1342 δικαιος *dik'-ah-yos* which is commonly interpreted as righteous, or observing divine law.

And if I thought I could hold your attention for long enough I would read a 3 page definition of this word found in Albert Barne's Notes on the NT. But instead I have tried to distill it down into 1 page of highlights. So everybody wake up yourself, wake up your neighbor, and listen closely because this definition is very important for us to grasp.

Albert Barne's Notes on the New Testament

I. Justification is properly a word applicable to courts of justice, but is used in a similar sense in common conversation among men. An illustration will show its nature. A man is charged, e.g., with an act of trespass on his neighbour's property. Now there are two ways which he may take *to justify himself*, or to meet the charge, so as to be regarded and treated as innocent. He may (a) either deny that he performed the act charged on him, or he may (b) admit that the deed was done, and set up as a defence that he *had a right* to do it....

II. Charges of a very serious nature are brought against man by his Maker. He is charged with violating the law of God; ...in one word, with being entirely deprived. This charge extends to all men; and to the entire life of every unrenewed man.

III. It is impossible for man to vindicate himself from this charge. *He can neither show that the things charged have not been committed, nor that, having been committed, he had a right to do them....* But if he can do neither of these things, then he cannot be justified by the law.... It must be by some system which is distinct from the law, and in which man may be justified on different principles than those which the law contemplates.

IV. This other system of justification is that which is revealed in the gospel by the faith of the Lord Jesus. It does NOT consist in either of the following things:

(1.) It is *not* a system or plan where the Lord Jesus takes the part of the sinner *against* the law or *against* God....

(2.) It is not that we are either innocent, or are declared to be innocent. God justifies the "ungodly," [Romans 4:5](#).... It will be always true that the justified sinner has no claims to the mercy and favour of God.

(3.) It is not that we cease to be undeserving personally. He that is justified by faith, and that goes to heaven, will go there admitting that he *deserves* eternal death, and that he is saved wholly by favour and not by desert.

(4.) It is *not* a declaration on the part of God that *we* have wrought out salvation, or that *we* have any claim for what the Lord Jesus has done. Such a declaration would not be true, and would not be made.

(5.) It is not that the righteousness of the Lord Jesus is *transferred* to his people....

It is not true that we died for sin, and it cannot be so reckoned or imputed. It is not true that we have any merit, or any claim, and it cannot be so reckoned or imputed. All the imputations of God are according to truth; and he will always reckon us to be personally undeserving and sinful. But if justification be none of these things, it may be asked, what is it? I answer, *It is the declared purpose of God to regard and treat those sinners who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as if they had not sinned, on the ground of the merits of the Saviour.* It is not mere pardon.... Pardon is a free forgiveness of past offences. It has reference to those sins as forgiven and blotted out. It is an act of remission on the part of God. Justification has respect to the law, and to God's *future dealings* with the sinner. It is an act by which God determines to treat him hereafter as a righteous man, or *as if* he had not sinned. The ground or reason of this is the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ; merit such that we can plead it as if it were our own. The *rationale* of it is, that the Lord Jesus has accomplished by his death the same happy effects in regard to the law and the government of God, which would be accomplished by the death of the sinner himself. In other words, nothing would be gained to the universe by the everlasting punishment of the offender himself, which will not be secured by his salvation on the ground of the death of the Lord Jesus. He has taken our place, and died in our stead; and he has met the descending stroke of justice, which would have fallen on our own head if he had not interposed,..."

As Barnes concisely stated, justification is *the declared purpose of God to regard and treat those sinners who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as if they had not sinned, on the ground of the merits of the Saviour.*

This is why I asked for **Hymn #309, Beneath the Cross of Jesus** to be sung this morning. We must be found beneath the cross of Jesus, or perhaps better stated, beneath the Jesus of the Cross. As the second verse states,
*Upon that cross of Jesus mine eye at times can see
The very dying form of One Who suffered there for me;
And from my stricken heart with tears two wonders I confess;
The wonders of redeeming love and my unworthiness.*

Because of how important the doctrine of justification is, I want to continue examining what Scripture as well as others have said or written about justification. It is not just in Galatians that Paul writes about justification. Paul extensively discusses justification in Romans, but before we look there, turn to Acts 13. As I read the next several passages of Scripture, listen to what I read for they are the very words of God. Listen to these words and see if you are standing in agreement with what they teach or if you believe in some modified system destined to fail in bringing about justification.

Acts 13:38-39 *Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: 39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.*

Now turn to the book of Romans

Romans 3:20-30 *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God <this verse helps show the link between the words justify and righteousness> which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. 27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. 29 Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: 30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.*

Romans 4:25-5:2 *Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. 5:1 ¶ Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

Romans 5:9 *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

Romans 8:28-30 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 ¶ For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

Titus 3:5-7 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

With the words of Paul in mind, I want to now proceed to what two other great Christian evangelists have preached about justification. And I will say now that much of what I am about to share comes from the Spring 2004 edition of the Free Grace Broadcaster which was entirely dedicated to the topic of Justification and is available for free at www.mountzion.org.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon at the age of 22 on April 5, 1857 preached a sermon entitled "Justification by Grace" and this is what he had to say about justification: "Man ceases to be regarded by divine justice as a guilty being; the moment he believes on Christ, his guilt is all taken away. But I am going a step further. The moment the man believes in Christ, he ceases to be guilty in God's esteem; but what is more, he becomes righteous, he becomes meritorious, for in the moment when Christ takes his sins, he takes Christ's righteousness; so that when God looks upon the sinner who but an hour ago was dead in sins, He looks upon him with as much love and affection as He ever looked upon His Son. He Himself has said it: 'As the Father loved me, so have I loved you.' He loves us as much as His Father loved Him. Can you believe such a doctrine as that? Does it not pass all thought? Well, it is a doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the doctrine whereby we must hope to be saved." (Spurgeon then continues on and compares the believer to the High Priest Joshua in Zechariah 3 who is taken out of filthy garments (pardon) and clothed with royal raiment (justification) and then he continues on by saying "The sinner and Christ do just what Jonathan and David did. Jonathan put his robes on David, David gave Jonathan his garments.")

Then later in his sermon Spurgeon says this:

"God of heaven has a right to do as he pleased. In his infinite mercy he consented to the arrangement. 'Son of my love,' said he, 'you must stand in the sinner's place; you must suffer what he accounted guilty, and then I will look upon the sinner in another light. I will look at him as if he were Christ; I will accept him as if he were my only-begotten Son, full of grace and truth. I will give him a crown in heaven, and I will take him to my heart for ever and ever.' This is the way we are saved."

Next, I want you to hear from Charles Hodge, who is considered by most to be the most influential American Presbyterian of the 19th century. To those who believe in justification by works, Charles Hodge says, "They suppose that the Law may be satisfied by very imperfect obedience....They suppose that the demands of the Law are so low that although they are sinners and need to be forgiven, they can still do what the Law demands."

"God does not pronounce the ungodly to be godly; He declares that notwithstanding his personal sinfulness and unworthiness, he is accepted as righteous on the ground of what Christ has done for him."

"That to justify means neither simply to pardon, nor to make inherently righteous or good is proved."

"Condemnation is not the opposite either of pardon or of reformation. To condemn is to pronounce guilty or worthy of punishment. To justify is to declare not guilty.... If to condemn does not mean to make wicked, to justify does not mean to make good."

"As 'to impute sin' never means and cannot mean to make wicked; so the negative statement 'not to impute sin' cannot mean to sanctify. And as 'to impute sin' does mean to lay sin to one's account and to treat him accordingly; so to justify means to lay righteousness to one's account and treat him accordingly."

From what Paul, Albert Barnes, Spurgeon, and Hodges have stated, I hope that this morning you can better appreciate the our need to both understand and defend the doctrine of justification which is called into question by every alternative faith or religion. Martin Luther does, I think, an excellent job of throwing down the gauntlet and contrasting justification by the law with justification by faith. Martin Luther in his Galatians commentary wrote:

“Where the righteousness of the law ruleth, there cannot the righteousness of grace rule, for one of them must give place to the other. And if thou canst not believe that God will forgive thy sins for Christ’s sake, whom He sent into the world to be our High Priest: how then wilt thou believe that He will forgive thee thy sins for the works of the law, which thou couldst never perform, or for thine own works, which be such as it is impossible for them to countervail the judgment of God.”

Let me conclude this morning by offering you one final appeal from Paul that not only defines and defends justification, but also offers a challenge to us to apply this truth. Turn finally to Philippians 3.

Philippians 3:4-14 ¶ Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: 5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; 6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. 7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 ¶ And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. 12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

May the Lord grant us the grace and mercy needed to know Him and to undergird us as we press on toward the prize, Jesus Christ our righteousness.

12. Galatians 2:17-21 The Crucified Life

July 20, 2008

Last week our lesson focused almost entirely on Galatians 2:16, which highlights the most essential doctrine of the epistle of Galatians – that being the doctrine of justification. As Barnes concisely stated, justification is *the declared purpose of God to regard and treat those sinners who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as if they had not sinned, on the ground of the merits of the Saviour*. This morning I would like us to finish our look at the second chapter of Galatians and I think in these final five verses we will see the type of life that justification is divinely designed to bring about – and I would term that life the crucified life. To get the whole context we will again read verses 11-21.

Gal 2:11-21 ¶ But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. 12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. 13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. 14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, if thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? 15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. 17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. 18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. 19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. 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. 21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Verse 16, which we looked at last week, pits legalism and justification by faith. And I think it is important that we appreciate a statement by Martin Luther in which he said, “This word ‘works of the law’, reacheth far; it extendeth to all that is contrary to grace. Whatsoever is not grace, is the law, whether it be judicial, ceremonial, or the ten commandments.” But as I stated last week, even though verse 16 leaves no doubt that a works-based salvation is contrary to the teaching of Scripture, Martin Luther made it also clear that just because the law doesn’t justify, doesn’t mean it is worthless. This brings us to verse 17. And while I did not realize it when I began this study, verse 17 has become one of the most confusing verses I have encountered thus far in my study. I say this because there seem to be more opinions and variations about what this verse means than I have seen anywhere else. In fact I don’t think I found 3 commentators who agreed on any one interpretation and then when I was about to give up myself, I came across the honorable John Gill who in his commentary actually gives 4 possible interpretations and never says which he thinks is best. So I recognize that what I share with you this morning, would not be what some other godly men may teach, so please study this for yourselves and don’t take it from me. Verse 17 begins with the supposition that justification is by Christ and not the law, but what does it mean when it says “we ourselves also are found sinners”?

Some teach this merely is Paul's way of stating Jews are sinners too, but I believe that Paul was not just stating the obvious. A second possible meaning of this phrase may be that Paul wants them to consider if their freedom in Christ which allowed them to even eat with Gentiles was actually leading others to see sin in their lives, then Christian liberty is nothing more than antinomianism, or utter lawlessness. Antinomianism is the polar opposite of legalism and is the idea that members of a particular religious group are under no obligation to obey the laws of ethics or morality as presented by religious authorities. But I don't think the battle against antinomianism is waged in this passage. A third interpretation and the one I hold to is that in this phrase Paul is talking about a condition of Paul and other Jews who had already been justified. He is talking about being found a sinner after regeneration. What I believe he is stating is that if Peter is correct in reverting back to not eating with Gentiles then, the way Paul and Peter had previously been preaching was leading to sin by being overly free from the law. In other words, if you teach justification by faith but Peter is right that the law in some aspect remains necessary then Jesus Christ is not only enough, but also He is a minister of sin. Regardless of your interpretation, the question becomes is justification by Christ sufficient or not? If not, then Christian liberty in Christ is resulting in sin.

And therefore Paul is led to ask the question "*is therefore Christ the minister of sin?*" In other words, if the Judaizers were right than the way of Jesus Christ is wrong and worse than that sinful. If the way of Jesus is wrong than Jesus is a minister of sin, because He is asking us to abandon justification by the law, which the Judaizers say is essential to justification. I believe Wiersbe pointed this out best when he says to be called a hypocrite was one thing but to call Jesus a minister of sin "must have shaken Peter to his bones". The audacity to call Jesus a sinner – the implications of such a belief would be that no one is justified. If Peter's actions of removing himself from the Gentiles was what was righteous, then Jesus and the Holy Spirit have aided abetted sinned in permitting the pretense of gentiles being converted. But just like Paul, Peter knew from his own life experience that the conversion of Gentiles by faith in Jesus was a real result of the Gospel. On this point Martin Luther wrote "There is no sin which Paul and the other Apostles did so much detest, as the contempt of grace, and denial of Christ, and yet there is no sin more common." So despite so many believing the contrary, the answer to the unimaginable question of is Jesus a minister sin is Certainly Not or God Forbid. As we sang a couple of Sundays ago, there is no turning back, no turning back and that is exactly what verse 18 teaches when it says "*18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.*" Paul was making it clear that he wasn't having second thoughts about the Gospel Jesus Christ had revealed to him. And as I was studying this I realized an interesting link to our earlier study. Look back at *Galatians 1:23* "*But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.*" If the Judaizers were right than Paul's life would have gone from destroying Christianity to destroying justification by the law then back to destroying justification by Jesus Christ. Paul was certainly not going to become a doubleminded man who is unstable in all his ways. He was certain of who he was.

And this brings us to verses 19 through 21 where in these verses Paul declares not only his condition but I am convinced ours as well. This is a theme we will also continue, Lord willing, next week when we progress into chapter 3. In verse 19, Paul states the reality of his condition – *For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.*

This truth so closely parallels what Paul writes about in Romans 7 so please turn there. *Romans 7:1-6 ¶ Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? 2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. 3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. 4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. 5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. 6 But now we are delivered from the law [I would make this equivalent to now we are justified by the faith of Jesus Christ], that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.*

Our life, as was Paul's is now God's. We are His servants. We are bought with a price as 1 Corinthians 7:23 tells us. And that price is what we saw in Galatians 1:4 which states "*4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.*"

Again this morning I remind you that we have a great deliverer in Jesus Christ. As Charles Hodge preached on this verse, "We are delivered from the law, not by its abrogation [abolishing, doing away with], but by its execution."

With that said, we now come to one of the most beautiful and well known verses in all of Scripture – Galatians 2:20. It was because of this verse that I asked for us to sing **Hymn #113 - The Old Rugged Cross**.

The third and fourth verse of this hymn say:
*In that old rugged cross, stained with blood so divine,
A wondrous beauty I see,
For 'twas on that old cross Jesus suffered and died,
To pardon and sanctify me.*

<Refrain>

*To the old rugged cross I will ever be true;
Its shame and reproach gladly bear;
Then He'll call me some day to my home far away,
Where His glory forever I'll share.*

With those words of that popular hymn in mind, look now at verse 20.

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.

In this one verse there is so much rich truth. And I certain I am not unique in thinking that this is such a rich verse because Charles Spurgeon in fact preached 3 sermons with this one verse as his central text. But we will come back to what Charles Spurgeon says in a few moments.

But first I want us to look at a couple of things from Kenneth Wuest's word studies in this text that help us understand what being crucified with Christ means. In his exposition of the Greek Kenneth Wuest points out that the phrase "I am crucified" is in the perfect tense meaning it is a past completed action having present finished results.

So whatever Jesus accomplished in the past in being crucified is something that still has present day results. How good it is to know that the work of Christ once accomplished is all we need. And Kenneth Wuest's exposition of this verse is as follows: "The Lord Jesus lived under the law, fully obeyed that law, assumed the guilt and penalty which the human race incurred by having violated the law, and in dying under the law satisfied its requirements. Thus He passed out of the realm where law in its legalistic aspect had control over Him. All believers were identified with Christ in His death and also in His resurrection, and thus have passed out of the realm of divine law so far as its legalistic aspect is concerned."

And as I meditated on this verse I realized anew that this verse demonstrates well the truth contained in Hebrews 10:10-18 that we will not take time to read this morning but that I will remind you instructs us that the sacrifice of Jesus was a one time event. It was a finished work that accomplished exactly what the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit intended. It gave us new life and allows us to live a Christ-centered life.

But in addition to Kenneth Wuest, Horatius Bonar also provides some insight when he said, "The truth is, that all that Christ did and suffered, from the manger to the tomb, forms one glorious whole, no part of which shall ever become needless or obsolete; no part of which can ever leave without forsaking the whole. I am always at the manger, and yet I know that mere incarnation cannot save; always at Gethsemane, and yet I believe that its agony was not the finished work; always at the cross, with my face toward it and my eye on the crucified One, and yet I am persuaded that the sacrifice there was completed once for all; always looking into the grave, though I rejoice that it is empty and that 'He is not here, but is risen'; always resting (with the angel) on the stone that was rolled away, and handling the grave-clothes, and realizing a risen Christ, nay, an ascended and interceding Lord; yet on no pretext whatever leaving any part of my Lord's life or death behind me, but unceasingly keeping up my connection with Him, as born, living, dying, buried, and rising again, and drawing out from each part some new blessing every day and hour." This is what Horatius Bonar saw as the means of living a life of being crucified with Christ.

This 20th verse next discusses that we are not still dead but rather we are made alive through Jesus Christ. On this point Martin Luther helps us understand why we need Christ to live in us when he writes in his commentary, "If I lived by my own life, the law would have dominion over me, and hold me in captivity." There is no hope for any of us apart from the resurrected Christ living in and through us. And we would do well to realize that the crucified and resurrected life of the believer is not the life we lived before regeneration. You cannot come to Christ and walk away the same way you were before. You must become a new man. The life which I now live in the flesh cannot be the same life we lived in the flesh before if I am truly saved. And in his commentary John Brown drives this point home when he says "I should be entirely devoted to Him who devoted himself entirely for me."

This 20th verse continues by declaring the reason why all this is made possible. Paul declares Jesus is the one "who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Spurgeon's third sermon on this text captures well this declaration. Preached on May 10, 1888, his sermon was entitled "Christ first, Me last: Nothing between but love." In that sermon he says "He is not speaking now of the love of benevolence which the Lord Jesus Christ has towards all men, or even of that aspect of his work which bears upon every creature under heaven; but he is thinking of that special love, that discriminating grace which had lighted upon him."

In his first sermon on Gal 2:20, preached almost 21 years earlier than his third, Spurgeon preached "How many personal pronouns of the first person are there in this verse? Are there not as many as eight? It swarms with I and me. The text deals not with the plural at all; it does not mention some one else, nor a third party far away, but the apostle treats of himself, his own inner life, his own spiritual death, the love of Christ to him, and the great sacrifice which Christ made for him. "Who loved me, and gave himself for me." This is instructive, for it is a distinguishing mark of the Christian religion, that it brings out a man's individuality."

And these words are intended to give the believer assurance of eternal life. Spurgeon said "It is not necessary for us to go through life merely hoping and fearing, questioning and enquiring; we may come to the certain knowledge of the fact, if it be a fact, that we have an interest in the special love of Jesus Christ, that we are redeemed from among men, that we are called and separated to be the Lord's peculiar people, that each of us may be able to say of the Lord Jesus Christ, "Who loved me, and gave himself for me.'" I would not distress the mind of anyone who is feeble in faith, and who is clinging to Christ, but has never yet received full assurance of salvation; but I would encourage such a person never to rest until he gets rid of all questions, and is able to say without the slightest trepidation, "Who loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*'."

Martin Luther centuries earlier wrote "Read therefore with great vehemency these words "me", and "for me", that thou with sure faith mayest conceive and print this "me" in thy heart, and apply it unto thyself, not doubting but that thou art of the number to whom this "me" belongeth." We would do well to listen to Spurgeon and Luther this morning. Can you insert your name in this verse and know it to be true. If you cannot, take Spurgeon's advice and do not rest until you can.

The final verse of chapter 2 reiterates the teaching of Gal 2:16 but in a slightly different manner. Here Paul ends his logical argument of chapter 2 by saying *21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.* This verse like the preceding verses continues to declare our liberty in Christ Jesus, and Christ Jesus alone. On this verse Martin Luther said so many good things but I will just share with you two of the shorter and best gems. And we would do well to contemplate and appropriate them both in our individual lives. The first quote from Martin Luther is very simple but absolutely mind boggling if you really think about it. Martin Luther points out "He suffered not in vain, nor for Himself, but for us." What a simple but great truth that should humble every believer here this morning. And the second quote I would share I think explains this 21st verse well. "The law could not justify us, for if it could, Christ had done unwisely in that He gave Himself for our sins, that we might thereby be justified." Do any of you here this morning dare think Christ has done anything unwisely? I for one do not.

This morning we have finished our look at the second chapter of Galatians and in these final verses we have seen the fifth answer to Warren Wiersbe's question of how you finish the sentence. The fifth answer is - **If I want to be a really good Christian I must be living by the faith of the One Who loved me and gave Himself for me.**