

Speaking to the soul



Crucified with Christ

My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20

In these first two chapters of Galatians, Paul gives a fascinating summary of his life story since he became a Christian, reminding his readers of his background. He had been so deeply committed to his Jewish faith that he had done everything possible to destroy the Church. Paul makes it clear that when he started following Christ, he didn't rush to Jerusalem, where the first church was formed. First, he went away into Arabia, and only after three years did he go to meet the leaders in Jerusalem. The point he was making was that his new life as a Christian hadn't been shaped by other people and their traditions, but only by Christ. It was another 14 years before he returned to Jerusalem and the church leaders recognised him as the one God had sent to preach to the Gentiles. The Jerusalem church was, not surprisingly, focused on people from a Jewish background.

Paul's life was completely defined by Christ, not by any humans or their traditions. His new life was no longer his own but Christ's, and he was certain that he had found the best life imaginable. He had long since learned that living for himself wasn't worth it. In Romans chapter 7, Paul reflected on the struggle inside him when he lived life by himself. He tried to do the right things but consistently failed. He exclaimed: "Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?" He triumphantly concluded: "Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 7:24-25).

To give up his entire life to Christ might sound an incredible thing to do, but don't miss the punchline. He was delighted to give himself completely to Christ because the Son of God had loved him and given up his life for him. Living for Christ,

whether in the first century or the 21st, is purely and simply a response to God's perfect love for us in Christ.

QUESTION

How do you understand the expression "crucified with Christ" for you personally?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, I thank you with all my heart that you love me and gave yourself for me. Amen

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