

New Life in Christ

Galatians 2:18-21

3/ 12/ 06

Intro

We come now to Paul's letter to the church in Galatia. Galatia is a region in central Asia Minor, the largest region there. It was called Galatia after the Gauls who had conquered it in about 275 BC. History tells us that the Gauls swarmed Asia Minor like bees.

Paul traveled to the region and founded several churches there, but there were some who came from Jerusalem later with the intent to turn the churches with their own mixture of Christianity with Judaism. They wanted the churches to believe that the way to find God's favor was to earn it.

But there was the rub. Paul would have nothing of it. In fact he said some of his strongest words about those who would distort the gospel. **See Galatians 1:6-10.**

In the verses we are studying today, Paul gives us some of the most important insights into how we have been given life in Christ, "I have been crucified with Christ."

It's about understanding how we can find life in Christ through His death.

This is so important because everyone is on a search for life, not just breathing and existing, but really living. Most people discover that there is only death in worldly living, so here they can see that new life is found in Christ.

These are insights into finding new life in Christ.

I. Don't Rebuild What Should be Destroyed

A. Some things should remain broken

- There were some who would travel from church to church in Paul's day and would try to convince the churches that they needed to live by the Law as believers in order to have a right relationship with God.
- Paul writes that God already destroyed the Law, so why would anyone want to rebuild it?

Colossians 2:13-14, "He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross."

- We now have a relationship with Christ that was not possible before, so why would we return to those things that stood between us and God?

Galatians 4:9, "But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?"

Illus – The title of Matthew's sermon last week made for great conversation. He called it, "Avoiding the Vomit." We've been regurgitating the sermon all week. But the point is a very good one – Don't go back to what you were before.

B. God is against that which hurts us

- First, it must be clearly established that God is for us.

Romans 8:31-32, “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?”

- God wants you to be edified, to be built up. He gave all the **spiritual gifts for the building up** of the church, so you know that He doesn't want His church to be hurt in any way.
- We are saved by grace, so there are two things we need to avoid.
 - Trying to relate to God through works, laws, or rules.

Illus – If you insist on relating to God that way, He will let you. If you say, “I’ve kept the rules now give me what I deserve,” you’ll get what you deserve, which isn’t very much.

Matthew 6:5, “When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.”

(Jesus revealed that the real problem with such religion is that it is not lived before God, but before men.)

- Not responding to God's grace by returning to the old worldly ways.

Illus – When Nicole was little, we went camping at the beach. While we were there, we stopped to see the boats, but curiosity got the best of her...

There's nothing to the old way, there is nothing solid about it.

II. Find Life by Living for God

A. It is no longer I who live

- This is really the key. Paul writes in verse 20 that it is no longer I who live.

Illus – My self centered, self lived way, does not produce life. The more I live for myself, the more death comes in. The more I live in the world and for the world, the more comes into my life.

Romans 7:5-6, “For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.”

- The only way I can find life is by being in Christ.

Illus – Someone once said that we were all made with a God shaped emptiness that only God can fill. We were made to live for God. I am empty without God in the highest place in my life.

Colossians 3:2-4, “Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”

B. Now Christ lives in me

- This verse is very important because it shows the degree to which we have unity with Christ.
- Paul tells us that we are in Christ... and that Christ is in us.
- To the church at Laodicea, Jesus wrote...

Revelation 3:20-22, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me. He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

- Jesus taught the disciples that being one with Christ was the only way that their lives would bear fruit.

John 15:4-5, “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”

III. Live by Faith

A. It means trusting God for your life now

- When Paul writes about the life in the flesh, he means his life right now, on this earth, ... not just in heaven.
- Paul says, “The life that I now live, I live by faith.”
- It means knowing that God is with me, that God is in me, and that God is for me.
- It means trusting in God’s promises for my life and living to please God.

Hebrews 11:6, “And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.”

- It also means trusting that God is at work in your life even when things don’t go your way. When it seems everything is against you.

Habakkuk 3:17-19, “Though the fig tree should not blossom and there be no fruit on the vines, though the yield of the olive should fail and the fields produce no food, though the flock should be cut off from the fold and there be no cattle in the stalls, yet I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength,”

B. Because of how much He loves you

- This is really the crisis of the day. If people could be convinced of this, it would change our lives forever.
- Paul says that he walks by faith in the Son of God who loved even to the point of dying for him.
- God's love knows no bounds. our response should be to trust in it by walking by faith.

Romans 8:35-39, "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Conclusion

The offer of new life is for every one of us, we do not have to try to impress God by how well we keep rules to receive His love. It's just the opposite, if we know how much we are loved; then we should live for Him because of it.