

INI

Text: Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Every child is different, but on the other hand, every child does carry certain traits of both father and mother. This is true not only in appearance, but personalities, mannerisms, and other such things. So we can say that in a unique way our ancestors live in us, because when we look at each new generation we can see glimpses of the generations that have gone before. Ultimately, we reflect our parents in some way. We ought to celebrate Father's day in that we want to reflect Him and our love for Him!

We are all separate individuals. We all have our own personalities, our own appearance, but there is one thing that we have in common as believers. We are all children of God. We all have Christ living in us and for that reason there are traits that we share with one another. So today, we look through Paul's letter to the Galatians to see that **CHRIST LIVES IN ME.**

I. It means that someone else had to leave

Christ living in me means several things. The first thing it means is that if Christ lives in me, somebody else had to move out. Around the school its not impossible to hear one student shout to the other, "Get outta there, that's my seat! You can't sit there, that's mine!" It's a simple fact of life, two people can't sit in the same seat because it is built for one.

If there are two people trying to battle for the same home or same place to sit and they are totally opposed to one another and they are working to ruin each other, there is no way that the two of them can live together in the same place in peace and harmony.

When we consider what home our heart is by nature, then we understand that something had to move out before Christ could live within. We have to agree with Paul when he writes, "*I know that in me that is in my flesh nothing good dwells...the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice*" (Romans 7:18-19). Jesus Himself tells us, "*Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies*"(Matthew 15:19).

We are born in sin and our hearts are a home for sin and our sinful natures. So if we say that "Christ lives in me" that sinful nature had to be pushed out. That sinful nature can no longer rule there because where Christ rules sin cannot rule. Sin and Christ cannot co-rule because they are complete opposites.

The change—the pushing out of the old tenant in the home of our heart and Christ moving in—took place when the Holy Spirit brought us to faith. Through the faith which the Holy Ghost works in our hearts He makes Christ live in us. Paul wrote to the Ephesians and prayed, "*...that Christ [would] dwell in [their] hearts through faith...*" (Ephesians 3:17).

When we are brought to faith in our Savior, the old way of life—the old man in us—is chased out. Christ establishes rule in our hearts and in our lives. Through Christ living in us we are now joined to Him. He lives in us! And now our sins are crucified with Him on the cross. Paul says in our text, *“I have been crucified with Christ.”* Once we are joined with Christ through faith and once we have that special connection of Christ living in us then it is as if **we** died on Calvary.

Our sins were nailed to Jesus’ cross. We have taken our sinful natures and crucified them with Christ so that we are no longer slaves to sin (as Paul told the Romans) but now we are slaves to righteousness serving our Lord. *“...knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin...having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness”* (Romans 6:6,18).

Jesus is our substitute who gave Himself for us so that we could have Him living in us and that our sins could be crucified with Him on the cross. We had old death living in us. Now Christ, the living God lives in us.

Peter also wrote of no longer living for self. Paul mentions it in almost every epistle. It is the theme of the Gospel that once we are brought to faith in Christ everything that is old is done away with. Now a brand new life begins. He is living there, our are gone and now we live to serve and please Him. To the Corinthians Paul wrote, *“[Christ] died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again”* (2 Corinthians 5:15).

Later in this same letter to the Galatians, Paul gives a list of the fruits of the flesh, namely, all those things which we would do as a regular part of our lives if sin was ruling and living in us. However, when "Christ lives in me" we bear the fruit of the Spirit. *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit”* (Galatians 5:22-25).

Having Christ live in us means that day by day we crucify the flesh all over again. We still carry that sinfulness. It still rises up. Christ has pushed it out, but it keeps knocking on our heart’s door trying to get back in—and sometimes it does. So, day by day, we crucify that flesh anew, deny ourselves of the sinful pleasures and lusts, and follow Christ who has redeemed us... and that is tough! It is hard! It is difficult to go through this life denying ourselves. It is hard because there is that urge in our heart to go after what pleases us instead of what pleases God. But knowing that Christ lives in us, that He died on the cross for our sins, is what gives us the motivation and strength to keep pushing the sin out and say, "No! You don’t live here anymore because Christ lives in me!"

As we go through the struggle—the tug ‘o war that Paul describes—doing what we don’t want to do and not doing what we do want to do, there is comfort in this message from Galatians because it reminds us that Jesus is our **personal** Savior. Paul says in our text, *“it is no longer **I** who live, but Christ lives in **me**; and the life which **I** now live in the flesh **I** live by faith in the Son of God, who loved **ME** and gave Himself for **ME**.”*

It is true (and Paul speaks of this elsewhere) that Jesus died for the sins of the **WHOLE** world. He offers salvation for every sinner. But when it comes to this very personal verse, Paul writes that Jesus did it for **ME**.

Jesus is my personal Savior. Each of us needs to keep that in mind as we go through the struggle of pushing out sin and reminding ourselves that Christ lives in me. He is not just some abstract Savior who did something for some other people...He did it for ME.

In Isaiah, God says, "*I have redeemed you, I have called you by name, you are mine*" (Isaiah 43:1). He knows each and every one of you by your very name. Jesus offered Himself on the cross for each and every one of you by name, individually. He is YOUR personal Savior. He is YOUR PERSONAL substitute. He is the one who was PERSONALLY crucified for you—you! ... You, individually and now lives also in you.

II. It means all of life is affected

Our Savior living in us also means that our life is going to be affected in everything we do. If I have a virus living in me, it will show itself. I'll carry a box of kleenex with me, I will sound sick, and I will probably look sick. If I have a broken leg "living in me" it will show itself in everything I do because I will limp or have to use crutches wherever I go.

Christ living in us affects us far more dramatically and far more importantly than these examples. Paul says that he lives in this flesh, but by faith in the Son of God. We do live and walk by faith and not by sight (cf: 2 Corinthians 5:7). Just as hard as it is for us to deny our sinful selves, so it is equally hard for our human natures to walk blindly by faith. It is as if we are walking into pitch-black darkness in an unknown place. Who knows what lies ahead? It's hard to go blindly by faith in day-to-day life.

When something troublesome happens to us or to a loved one, how hard is it to take that by faith and say "thus it shall be for the Lord has so willed it"? It's hard to walk by faith and never question God. It's hard to walk by faith and never doubt if He really does know what is best for me. Nevertheless when we know that "Christ lives in me" we can walk by faith and not be afraid. We walk holding onto His hand. In a dark totally strange place we would stumble and fall, but NOT if we are holding the hand of someone who does know where He is going. So Christ lives in me and He says "I will take you through life's darkness. Walk by faith trust Me."

We are also able then to persevere in this life with Christ living in us. The writer to the Hebrews says, "*Therefore, we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God*" (Hebrews 12:2).

It was not easy for Jesus to keep going in His work of redemption either. He had His disciples all flee from Him. He had people spitting in His face, slapping Him across the face. He had people forsaking Him right and left. He knew what He would face on the cross, but for the sake of our salvation He persevered and kept going. Jesus persevered by keeping in mind what He was accomplishing for sinners. When we have that Savior living in us we have the assurance that even in the middle of temptations and trials of every sort we have "Christ living in me" to give the strength to persevere. If Jesus went to the cross to redeem me, He can surely also strengthen me against these temptations and help me persevere in this life.

With Christ living in me it also means that this life is not the end. Paul wrote to the Romans, "*If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's*" (Romans 14:8). When Christ our Savior lives in us we know that in this life we serve Him. He will bring us through this life, but then comes eternal life and final glory and all the joys of heaven.

Christ lives in me and it makes a difference in my life because it is no longer I who am living, but the eternal living Savior who lives in me and He will bring me to eternal life as well.

III. It means that I am an epistle to the world

Finally, Christ "living in me" affects us in such a way that we become an epistle to the world. We have the inspired text of Paul's letter to the Galatians. He wrote on paper to them, but what we do, what we say is our "writing" to those who see us.

We have Christ living in us and that will show itself forth. We show forth our love to Him. "*We love Him because He first loved us*" (1 John 4:19) Paul says, "*Who loved me and gave Himself for me...*" That kind of love doesn't come around every day. Jesus said in John, "*Greater love has no one than this than that He lay down His life for His friends*" (John 16). Jesus showed us the ultimate love—He the Son of God sacrificing Himself for our sins. That love works in our hearts and will show itself to the world.

We strive then to live and conduct ourselves in a way that is worthy of the Gospel. Paul told the Philippians, "*Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ*" (Philippians 1:27), that is, conducting ourselves in a way that shows forth the Savior who lives in us—in a way that gives honor and glory for all that He has done and brings no shame to Him.

With Christ living in us, we are the light of the world. He is THE Light, but when He is shining in us we become lights to shine into the darkness of unbelief, to show people what it means to have Jesus, the Son of God, our Savior, living in us. It makes all the difference!

There is so much theology—so much Gospel truth—all wrapped up in this one small verse of Paul's letter:

- He speaks of our personal Savior—a Savior for each one of us.
- He speaks of that substitutionary work of Christ. He did all of this for our sakes.
- It was the Son of God who willingly sacrificed Himself for my sins
- The incredible love of the Father who sent His Son to do this. The incredible love of the Son to die for us. The incredible love of the Holy Spirit to bring us to faith which then means that Christ lives in us.
- We also learn from this one short verse that we are in daily need of self-denial, beating down our Old Adam and following our Savior.
- The ever-abiding comfort that Christ lives in me to see me through.

All of this in one verse, all part of Gospel truth that Christ lives in me. So with that in mind we pray (using the words of one of our Christmas hymns): *O dearest Jesus, holy Child, make Thee a bed soft, undefiled, Within my heart that it may ever be a quiet chamber kept for Thee!* [TLH #85 st.13] — A place for Jesus to live—now and forever. Amen.