

Yet Not I, But Christ

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By David A. DePra

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I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives 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. (Gal 2:20)

When you read this passage from Galatians, does it ever make you wonder why most Christians have no clue as to what Paul is talking about? Paul is talking about Jesus Christ living in and through him. He is talking about living by the faith OF – not merely by faith IN – the Son of God. Christianity is CHRIST IN US, the hope of glory. This passage describes what ought to be happening because Christ is in us. It is a description of the Truth that stands behind living in Christ.

Obviously, God wants for every believer what Paul experienced. So what is the key? Paul gives the key. He tells us right up front what makes the experience in Christ described in this verse possible. He says, "I am crucified with Christ."

You will note that Paul did NOT say that Christ was crucified FOR him. Paul knew that and taught that. Indeed, what Paul does teach in this verse is based on it. Paul is describing the impact that Christ crucified FOR us ought to have UPON us: We have to now be crucified WITH Christ.

But how? We know that if we are saved that in a very real sense we have been crucified with

Christ. But Paul is talking about the reality of that being worked out. He says, "The life that I now live...." There has to be a way in which all of this Truth is translated into LIFE LIVED. Or, to put it another way, if we have Christ in us, then what does it take in order for Christ to be living in us and through us? Paul says the starting place is, "I am crucified with Christ."

Justification by Faith

One of the great Truths of the Christian faith is, "Justification by faith." This Truth states that if we put our faith in Christ, then all of His righteousness is IMPUTED to us. And all of our sin is IMPUTED to Him. This doctrine is based on the death of Christ which PAID for all sin. This is wonderful. But if you examine just that much, and ONLY that much, it speaks only of the LEGAL aspect of the Truth. This alone does nothing to put Christ IN ME, let alone make it possible for Christ to live through me.

It is a fact that if God merely IMPUTED to us the righteousness of Christ – if that is ALL that He does for our salvation – that this alone does nothing to change us. Yes, it takes away the penalty FOR sin, but it does nothing to deliver us from SIN ITSELF. And as mentioned, it certainly does nothing to give us NEW LIFE IN CHRIST. If all there is to salvation is a legal justification by faith, then God has imputed a legal righteousness to those who have no possibility of righteousness in them. Something is wrong here.

Now, don't misunderstand. We do NOT have any righteousness in us. But what I'm saying is that if we limit salvation to merely a legal imputation of

righteousness then even AFTER we are saved, and even AFTER we are legally declared righteous, we would still have NO righteous in us. That puts God in the position of declaring righteous those who are no more righteous after salvation than they were before He declared them as such. This would mean God is lying. He is calling righteous those who are NOT.

Of course, someone is liable to say that even after salvation – even after God declares us righteous – that we are not righteous in ourselves. That is it is all BECAUSE of Christ that any of this is possible. Sure. I know that. But really, this leads me to the whole point. Salvation in the Bible is NOT limited to a legal imputation of righteousness unto those who believe. Indeed, there is a greater reality BEHIND why God is able to justly declare those who believe to be righteous. The reason God is able to justly and truthfully declare you and I righteous is because Christianity is Christ in us – we have Righteousness Himself dwelling IN US.

What I am saying is that, yes, God IMPUTES to us the righteousness of Christ. But the reason He is able to justly do so is because He IMPARTS to us Christ Himself. Christ in us is OUR righteousness. He is the only righteousness we have. So you see, God is actually telling the Truth. When He declares us righteous, it is more than a legal classification. It is a living reality. Christ is in us. He is righteous. And we are baptized INTO Him. Thus, we are imparted with His righteousness.

I am not yet talking about sanctification or living the Christian life. I am simply stating the fact that God's legal imputation of the righteousness

of Christ is based upon the living impartation of Christ Himself. Paul was very clear that any righteousness he had was that of Jesus Christ. He was very clear that any LIFE he had was the life of Christ. This is why he said, "Yet not I, but Christ." We might expand that to say, "Yet not our righteousness, but Christ's righteousness." We have LIFE IN HIM – and in His life is His righteousness. This is more than legal. It is the definition of what it means to be a new creation in Christ Jesus. We are ONE with Him in spirit – and thus, all that He is has been both imputed and imparted to us.

So we see that, "justification by faith," is more than just a legal justification. But we also see that this requires more than just a legal faith. It is easy to academically place your faith in a doctrine or in a fact. It is easy to say, "I believe God has declared me righteous." But it is much more to say, as Paul said, "Christ lives in me, and the life that I know live I live by the faith of the Son of God." Christianity is a life lived from out of Christ. This requires a living and on-going faith in Christ NOW.

To Win Christ and Be Found in Him

Despite the value of understanding the Redemption from a LEGAL standpoint – and Paul surely goes to great effort to explain it in those terms – we must do on with Paul into a living experience of Christ. It is one thing to accept the doctrine of justification by faith – to accept Christ as our righteousness -- but it is another to walk by faith in this foundational Truth.

In Philippians 3, Paul gives a bit of an autobiography as to HOW he lost his life to Jesus Christ – as to how he came to where he could proclaim, "Yet not I, but Christ" – and as to how he came to, "win Christ, and be found in Him." In his personal account there are many foundational spiritual principles that apply to all believers.

If you scan this passage, you will find the words, "loss," and, "found." Thus, as noted, Paul is going to recount exactly what he had to LOSE -- in order to FIND Christ. And he is going to tell us what happened as the result.

No Confidence in the Flesh

For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. (Phil. 3: 3)

This verse is so easy to skip over. But it really does set the stage for everything that Paul is going to share. Some of the terms used may be strange to us if we are not familiar with Paul's use of them.

For example, he says, "we are the circumcision." What does he mean? The term refers to the Jews who were, through the rite of circumcision, under the Old Covenant. Paul certainly was a Jew, but in this verse he means something much more by that term, "the circumcision." He tells us directly what he means: The circumcision – as used in this passage – are those, "who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ, and have no confidence in the flesh."

Paul is taking this rite of circumcision – which was instituted by God under the Old Covenant – and showing the true spiritual meaning. When a baby was circumcised, there was a, "cutting off," of the flesh. More than that, it was a cutting off of the flesh on the part of the body that perpetuated the Adam race. So the first thing to see about the spiritual meaning of circumcision is that it represented the END to the old creation – and END to the Adam race.

This picture shows that circumcision was a type and shadow of the Cross. Jesus death on the Cross was the end of the Adam race. On the Cross, Jesus bore, yes, all sin. But He also bore US – the entire old creation. Thus, when we come to Him, and take our place in His death, it is the end of OUR old creation.

This is why Paul is able to say in Romans 6 that, "our old man is crucified WITH Him," and in Galatians 2, "I am crucified WITH Christ." The fact that Jesus died FOR us – died a death we will never have to taste – is a foundational Truth. But it is because He died that we are able to DIE IN HIM. This is the basis for all freedom from sin, and of the new creation – that we have first died IN CHRIST.

Paul is gathering up these realities into the representation of circumcision. Some Christian tradition suggests that baptism is the NT counterpart to OT circumcision. That is not directly the case. Circumcision is clearly a type and shadow of the Cross – and baptism is likewise a picture of death via the cross. In that sense, circumcision and baptism represent the same

Truth – the fundamental Truth to which they both point is the Cross of Jesus Christ.

Paul is using this picture of circumcision to describe one who is born from above. He is saying, "We are spiritually the circumcision. We no longer worship God with our natural man. We worship God in the spirit. We rejoice, not in ourselves, or in anything about ourselves, but in Christ. And we have come to realize that there is absolutely NOTHING in ourselves over which to put confidence or have faith."

Herein we see that Paul is saying that the outcome the work of the Cross – spiritual circumcision is that our lives and our faith will proclaim, "Yet not I, but Christ!"

The emphasis Paul is making is that believers are supposed to have realized the Truth about themselves – and if we do, we could not possibly continue basing any part of our relationship with God upon OURSELVES. Indeed, we are not even to worship or live on a daily basis with God on the basis the old man. Rather, all of our faith, and all of our life, IS CHRIST – Christ in us, the hope of glory.

It is important to see that Paul is not here laying down some mechanical principle for people to follow. He is not creating a religious system. He is telling us what will happen if we encounter Jesus Christ, are born from above, and begin to come into the knowledge of the Truth. We will not put confidence in ourselves in any way because we see – not simply that we should not – but we see that there is nothing in us in which to put

confidence. We will have our entire faith and motivation based in Christ.

Now, this is all preliminary to the rest of the passage. Paul is about to go on to describe his personal experience as to how he came to be, "the circumcision," and how he came to rejoice in Christ rather than put faith in himself. He is going to tell us in greater detail what he means by these words. In short, Paul is going to tell us what it actually meant for him to lose his life for Jesus' sake so that he could find true life in the Lord.

The Basis of Righteousness

We briefly discussed the necessity of RIGHTEOUSNESS a bit earlier. As we read Philippians 3 we must explore it further. First, we need to see that righteousness is not merely being RIGHT WITH GOD. It is also to be RIGHT FOR GOD. True righteousness will enable us to fellowship and be one with God forever – which is necessary because God is righteousness personified.

You will note that in this passage from Philippians 3, as well as in so many of Paul's other epistles, there is the theme of RIGHTEOUSNESS. Paul continually contrasts, "self-righteousness," which he calls, "righteousness by the law," to the true righteousness that is by the faith of Jesus Christ. We have to grasp what he is getting at regarding this important issue if we are to understand the passage in any depth.

Most believers who know Christian doctrine can likely explain what is known as, "the doctrine of

justification by faith." Earlier we saw that this doctrine states that if we put our faith in Jesus Christ, that God imputes to us His righteousness, because God has imputed to Christ our sin. But we also saw that this does not go far enough in explaining how God MAKES the believer righteous. If you examine this doctrine of justification by faith, it is really is nothing more than a LEGAL justification. God accepts the death of Jesus as OURS, and imputes to us the righteousness of His Son. We are therefore LEGALLY imputed as righteous. But the question still remains: Does any of this actually MAKE us righteous? And where in this is an actual NEW BIRTH with NEW LIFE from above?

The answer here is that God does more than merely IMPUTE to us the righteousness of His Son. What really happens is that God IMPARTS to us Jesus Christ Himself. In short, God does not give us a THING called righteousness, or give us our own righteousness because of Christ. Rather, God give us Christ and CHRIST IN US becomes the righteousness of God to us.

That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glories, let him glory in the Lord. (I Cor. 1:29-31)

Can we see that Jesus Christ in us IS the righteousness of God? That Jesus is the ONLY righteousness that exists? That we are wasting our time looking to ourselves for any righteousness at all – whether it be our works or our character? No. Jesus Christ is the

righteousness of God. And when He comes to dwell in us He is made unto us righteousness.

How many see that this is utter in its ramifications? If Christ is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption – then Christ in us is EVERYTHING God has to give, everything we need, and IT IS FINISHED. Our lives, therefore, are to be defined by the IMPACT of Christ upon us, rather than defined by us trying to achieve these matters that are already in the Christ who dwells in us.

So we see that God does not merely legally IMPUTE to us righteousness because of Christ. Sure, that is included. If something is moral it is always legal. But God does more. He IMPARTS to us Jesus Christ Himself. And when that happens, Jesus is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption – indeed, Jesus Christ IS OUR LIFE. And His life is righteousness personified.

Now note: Jesus Christ is the entire basis of righteousness. There is no righteousness outside of Him. Thus, when we put our faith in Christ, and He comes to dwell in us, we are declared righteous IN HIM. This is as certain and as final as His life.

Christians like to compartmentalize Truth into doctrinal systems and line them up. But Christianity is Christ in us – and this speaks of a growing relationship – not merely about theology. Because we like to create doctrine systems it sometimes results in not seeing the relationship between some of the great Truths of the Bible – such as righteousness and salvation.

From what we have already discussed, it ought to be clear that righteousness and salvation are inseparable. Both are Christ in us. Salvation means LIFE – the life of Jesus Christ in us. But Christ is also the righteousness of God. Thus, if we are one with Christ, He is our righteousness. In short, all of these things are in Him. They are aspects of His life.

Self-Righteousness

The question is never whether you and I are self-righteous. By nature, WE ARE. All who are born in Adam are born with no life in Christ and with no knowledge of God. The default is trust in self; self-righteousness. And frankly, you can see that in everyone – from little kids to older adults. You don't have to work at it. It is our nature.

There are many people, of course, including many Christian people, who are more than aware of their failures. In fact, many professing Christian people are so aware of them, and constantly lament their failures and sins. If you would suggest to them that they are self-righteous, they would protest on those grounds.

But it is here that we need to understand what it means to be self-righteous. It really means to TRY to be righteous in our selves – through works, or any other means. Thus, if you continually fail, and continually lament those failures, you are trying to establish a righteousness in yourself, but failing. You are frustrated. But it is still a self-righteousness nevertheless.

There are two sides to the same coin of self-righteousness. These are represented by two kinds of people – although surely there is a mix in us all. The first group includes those who actually believe that they are righteous because of something about themselves. They might never say that, or allow themselves to think that, but their confidence is in their flesh; in themselves. Thus, they may seem to have peace, be joyous, and can have impressive personalities. But their peace is based in their self-confidence, and they are rejoicing in themselves, not Christ. And even the worst unbeliever can attract others through personality and temperament. None of this means anything. It is all a lie built out of the flesh.

Now, I emphasize that those who are deceived by thinking they have achieved being right with God through something about themselves are deceived. They would never admit any of the truth about themselves. Read the epistle of Paul to the Galatians. They were saved people who, "had begun in the spirit," but were trying, "to be made mature by the flesh." In other words, they weren't trying to earn salvation, but were trying to achieve and maintain a right-ness with God through works. And they were good works. They weren't living in sin like the Corinthians. They were actually trying to follow God's law. Yet there were under, "another gospel." Paul said they were, "bewitched," that is, mesmerized by false teaching. He needed to wake them up.

Paul told them that he was in travail until CHRIST was formed in them. He told them that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision was of any value – but only becoming a new creation in Christ.

Thus, the answer to our unrighteousness is not law-keeping. The answer is not a better religious system. It is not to try harder. Rather, the answer is death to all self-effort and to become a new creation in Christ, who is our only righteousness.

It is never wrong to do good works. But it is unbelief to do them in order to make myself righteous. God's will is for us to do good works completely apart from becoming righteous, and completely apart from any rewards or punishments for those works. ALL of that is to be put away. We are to know that Christ alone is our righteousness – totally divorced from works. But then, if we know Him, we will do good works out of love – out of wanting to do them.

This is impossible unless we are born from above and know Christ. Yet for the mature Christian there is no relationship between our works and our righteousness before God – because Christ is solely our righteousness apart from works. But the mature Christian does good works anyways, free of charge, and because they have received from God His love. The Truth is, we are saved by grace through faith UNTO good works. Mess up that order and you are in error and under another gospel.

So the first kind of person – the first manifestation of self-righteousness – is found in those who think they have achieved right-ness before God through their own efforts. They are deceived. AND – they are sinning. They are living in unbelief, trying to do for themselves what only Christ has done.

The second group are those who, like the first, are trying to establish their own righteousness before the Lord. Except they live in the constant realization that they are failing. They live under condemnation and guilt. And they continue to try harder. Someone might doubt that a person who is aware of their failure to be righteous could be self-righteous. But they are. All of their efforts, failed efforts or not, come out of unbelief. Their self-righteousness may be a frustrated one, but it is a self-righteousness nevertheless.

Self-righteousness need not be a success. Simply trying to establish it through my own working and doing is enough – it is unbelief and comes from wanting to be righteous in myself. Thus, whether I am of the first group or the second, it is the same problem. I don't believe. My faith is NOT in Christ.

How much do we think it means what our faith is in, or whether our efforts are working, if our faith is not in Christ? The result is always going to be the same. Christ will be of no effect for us. He will not be formed in us. And we will stagnate. The only solution, regardless of the problem, is that we come to the end of ourselves and put our faith solely in Christ.

After Adam sinned and he discovered that he was naked – and now NOT completed by God – he was ashamed. He tried to fix his nakedness with fig leaves. Today God simply wants to show us we are naked, and that Christ will be our righteous covering. But if we won't believe, we are going to spend our lives trying to cover up the Truth about ourselves with fig leaves of every shape and size. But in the end, every fig leaf is self-effort and a

form of self-righteousness. They are all lies and a substitute for Christ Himself.

Separation of Soul and Spirit

There is the common belief among the saints that God has given us the power to obey Him. But if how we commonly understand this is true, then why are Christians such failures. I mean, did you wake up one morning with some kind of power to obey God? No. In fact, you don't get far in the Christian life before it almost seems like you are a bigger failure than ever.

One of the reasons we get this wrong is that we think of power as a THING God gives us. Like He someone empowers us. But the Truth is, God never gives us a THING called power. He gives us Christ. And Christ IS the power of God – in Him is all the power of the Cross and of His resurrection.

Thus, if Christ is in me, He is the only power I will ever need. But you see, most of us don't have our faith in Christ. We still have it in ourselves – and then we try to use some power over sin to overcome sin. No. We have to be broken, through the work of the Cross, of all self-effort. Only then will we put our faith in the Christ who dwells in us – and we will find that He really is the power of God.

Before we continue, we have to talk a little about the reality that Christianity is CHRIST IN US. Do we know what this means? A Christian is one who is IN CHRIST. Everything that the NT saint has, and everything that the NT saint IS, finds its source in the Person of Jesus Christ who dwells within.

It is here that we must see the meaning of Jesus Christ in us. What does that mean? Where does that occur in us? Christ is in us through the union or joining of our human spirit with His own spirit. Paul said, "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him." (I Cor. 6:17)

This means that the resurrection union of our spirit with the Spirit of the Lord is what constitutes the new creation in Jesus Christ. It constitutes the new man. It is where we are saved. Indeed, to illustrate, if we could mechanically draw a circle around our union in spirit with Christ, everything within that circle would be saved, eternal, and from above. It would be so, not because of anything we bring to that union. It would be so because Christ brings all – this is HIS LIFE in us – and we are merely the recipient or vessel.

Likewise, if we could somehow draw a circle around our spiritual union with Christ, everything OUTSIDE of that circle would continue to be natural. It would be of the FLESH. It would not be of Christ, but of the old creation in Adam.

This is the division of soul and spirit of which the Bible speaks. It is the warfare of flesh vs. spirit. On the one hand, we have our resurrection union with Christ (inside the imaginary circle), and on the other hand, we have the flesh or natural man (all that is outside the circle.) The new man is from above, and the old man is from below. The two are contrary one to another. Now, of course, it is the will of God for Christ to grow to be Lord of all. But again, that is the warfare throughout our lives.

Now, what all of this means as it pertains to Paul's teaching in Philippians 3 is that all of the faith and confidence of, "the circumcision," rests in Christ – the Christ who lives within – and no faith or confidence is to rest in any part of us that is outside of that circle. The same is true regarding righteousness. Our righteousness is not based upon anything outside of Christ – it is based solely upon HIM.

Now note – this is a bit mechanical, but hopefully helpful – that all sin in the life of the believer finds it's source in that which is OUTSIDE of that circle. Sin certainly does not come from our resurrection union with Christ. No. All sin finds it's source in that which is outside of that union; outside of that circle. Thus, how are we also going to find the power to overcome sin outside of that circle? How are we going to fight and overcome the sin that is outside of that circle with the assets found outside of that circle? We cannot – but this is what we often do. We try to overcome the flesh through the efforts of the flesh. But we can overcome sin only if all of that is finally at an end. Our faith must be in Christ. Only then can the life that inside of the circle begin to govern us, and sin will eventually fall away.

An Inventory of Assets

Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinks that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: 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; Concerning zeal, persecuting the

***church; touching the righteousness which is
in the law, blameless.***

Paul has told his readers that he has become one who has seen and accepted the Truth that there is NOTHING in himself in which to take confidence. He says that he has NO faith in anything about himself. But then he goes on to list the things that he might have used as a basis for such a faith. Paul lists out a number of assets that might have given him cause to consider himself righteous before God – had he not seen the Truth.

Now, the lesson for us here is that each of us have a similar list. We may not have actually written it out, or even given it much conscious thought. Yet, perhaps in a subtle way, we do have things about ourselves that we think can form the basis of righteousness before the Lord. Maybe we do good works, or serve at church, or have passed through a great trial, or perhaps we even, "take faith in our faith." Regardless, there isn't a human being alive that is not self-righteous. It comes with being born in Adam.

Again – this is why Paul continually pushes the Truth on this matter of righteousness. He knew that, by nature, we are moral creatures. We have a conscience. There is no escape from this – we MUST deal with it. Add to that the fact that we are sinners and you have a bunch of people who are incapable of doing right and of being righteous, and yet know they need to be. So we create some form of self-righteousness.

This is true even if people don't know God, want God, or have a false religion. All religion, and

indeed, lack of religion, is nothing more than people dealing with the fact that they are naked and ashamed. We try to cover ourselves with fig leaves. We try to fix what ails us with some form of self-righteousness or self-justification.

There are only two options on this matter of righteousness. They are SELF-righteousness or Christ as the righteousness of God. We are going to put our faith in one or the other.

Paul lists some of his natural assets – being a Jew was one of them. The Jews were God’s chosen people – and in that day, they certainly considered this an automatic ticket to righteousness – if you were under the Old Covenant. But Paul was more. He was also a Pharisee. He says that concerning the law of God he was BLAMELESS.

That is an incredible statement. Paul is saying that at one time – before he saw the Truth – that he kept every law and every ordinance that God had given. He did this willingly.

There are many professing Christians today who do the same thing. They keep their religion to near perfection. They have principles to follow, laws to keep, and a pattern to direct their lives. All Bible based, of course. And if you listen to them, you can hear them say, if not in words, then through other indications, that the reason God has blessed them, and the reason they are in His grace, is based upon what they have done.

Now, I will guarantee you that not one of these people would consider themselves to be self-righteous. They would probably think of

themselves as merely obedient to God. Surely, those who were at Galatia would have said this. Yet Paul said they were under, "another gospel." Think about that. It is quite serious.

I have never met someone who was under the law, self-righteous, or a legalist, who would admit it. That is because the problem with self-righteousness is NOT primarily a false system of religion, or bad theology. No. The root problem is that they have not seen the Truth about themselves, and certainly not about Jesus Christ. They are blind and don't know it. But the first step to curing that condition is to show people they are blind – only then will they desire to see. This will usually require that they stumble and fall in their darkness. But even then some will not turn to Christ.

Paul had everything going for him as far as righteousness based on himself. He was absolutely convinced that he was righteous before God – and he could give you a list of reasons about HIMSELF that this was true. He would have done this without blinking an eye. He was just that blind.

Loss for Christ

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

What is Paul talking about when he refers to those, "things that were gain to me?" Well, he is talking about all those assets that he just listed. Those were the assets that were GAIN to him. Gain, in what sense? In context, Paul is talking

about what would be gain to him in establishing self-righteousness.

Paul does not include in his list SINS. There are not sins listed. Rather, he includes only GOOD things – he lists all of those assets that he might have used before God to stand as righteous. Everything on his list is something about HIMSELF, and everything on his list is RELIGIOUS. Paul is saying that these are some of the things about me in which my faith rested, and which I thought made me righteous before God.

Now, we are also seeing that if we can be righteous before God, then we are also saved. The two go together. Indeed, the Pharisees, because they did not believe that man had a sin nature, did believe that you could earn your way into heaven through good works and the study of the law. Sure. If we are blind to our true condition, and blind to the Savior -- that is pretty much going to be the means by which we will think we can become righteous.

Christians do the same thing today. They do good works according to law, and study the Bible. And we think this is what makes us right before God.

It is here that once again we have to see that salvation and righteousness go together. I may say that I did not earn my salvation, but if I am trying to keep right with God through my own doing, then I am actually trying to KEEP SAVED – because I am trying to keep righteous. To try to keep righteous or keep saved is absolutely equal to trying to earn – you are just trying to earn on a continual basis. Acceptance by God unto salvation requires a perfect righteousness, and

thus, how we enter into righteousness is exactly how we enter into life.

But lets go back to Paul. He listed out all his assets for righteousness and then tell us that he had to LOSE those assets. Can we see what he is saying? He had to lose those THINGS, yes, but Paul is really saying that he had to actually lose the SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS that he built in himself through those things.

Can we wrap our minds around this? Paul had to lose his self-righteousness. He had to see the Truth that there was no righteousness in himself, and embrace that fact. That is the only way in which he could come to where he had no confidence in himself – indeed, this is what Paul said was essential for him to win Christ and be found in Him.

I don't know how many of us realize what it means to lose our personal sense of righteousness. To be exposed before God as being NOTHING. We tend to think of self-righteousness as something that pertains only to religious people. But self-righteousness is faith in self – it is a quest for SELF RIGHT-NESS. It is a striving for a self-esteem based upon ME. it is fundamental to the sin nature. It does not need to manifest itself in a religious way. Thus, to lose ones self-righteousness is really basic to losing one life to Christ.

How could we think otherwise? If Christ is to be our life, and if Christ is to be our righteousness, we obviously have to lose OURS. Jesus clearly stated that, "If anyone would come after Me, let him deny self, and pick up his cross daily. For

whoever would lose his life for My sake will find it. But whoever would seek to save his life will lose it." (Matt. 16:24-25)

If we are to lose ourselves to Christ – lose our lives – then how could then not include losing all self-righteousness? It will not only include it, but losing a righteousness based in self is actually fundamental. Indeed, that loss will be the place to which God will bring us if we want to follow and fellowship with Christ.

Now, we are here not talking about simply agreeing with the doctrine. Rather, we are talking about actual LOSS. Paul is talking about being brought to the place where he SAW and HAD absolutely nothing about himself in which he could put his faith. Most of us might think that would be awful. Paul said it was something in which to rejoice. Why? Because It was the TRUTH – and because it was the doorway through which he walked to WIN CHRIST and BE FOUND in Him.

Losing to Find

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, 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:

If you carefully read what Paul is saying in this passage, you will see that the possibility of, "winning Christ," and, "being found in Him," is

basely entirely upon LOSING everything about ourselves that we thought was righteous. The ONLY way in which I can win Christ and be found in Him is as one who no longer has his own righteousness – but instead, is resting in Christ as his righteousness.

We MUST see this. I must lose my own righteousness in order to be found IN HIM having HIS righteousness. Or, if you will, I am found in Him BECAUSE and only because, He is my righteousness. Just like Jesus said – I have to lose my life in order to find His. You cannot win Christ or be found in Him as long as you stand before God only the basis of anything about yourself.

This ought to tell us plenty about what God is doing in our lives. If what Paul is describing is the will of God, then what God is doing in our lives is stripping us of our own righteousness. If Jesus wants us to lose our lives for His sake, then God is working towards that end.

If we do not see this Truth we could actually be walking in a way that is contrary to the purposes of God. How many of us do this and that in order to try to please God and garner His blessings? How many of us have believed that if we follow certain principles that God will honor us and bless us and make our lives turn out the way we want or expect? And what happens when things do not turn out that way? We either blame God, or we assume that we must not be good enough, or maybe have missed the boat somewhere. And so we try harder to get into God's good graces. There is teaching like everywhere. It is nothing

but a disguised way of maintaining a stand before God based on our own merits and righteousness.

God is not forever going to allow those who are serious with Him to continue on under such deception. Rather, He will work to bring us to where we see the Truth about ourselves, and in doing so, relinquish all self-ownership to Him. Primary to how we own ourselves is through self-righteousness. We are going to have to see that self-righteousness is a LIE. We are going to have to see that it is SIN – it is unbelief. And we are going to have to LOSE all of it. Some will NOT. But for those that will lose it, the possibility then opens up to win Christ and be found in Him.

God is going to be guiding us into all Truth. And one Truth into which He will guide us is that there is no righteousness in us. No possibility of it. And only if we embrace this Truth, and then turn to Christ by faith, can Christ become our righteousness. Make no question about it, I absolutely have to lose myself and my own righteousness if I want to win Christ and be found in Him.

Everything Paul is writing in Philippians leads up to this Truth. Indeed, it is a verification of what he wrote to the Galatians:

Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; you are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. (Gal. 5:4-5)

In both Galatians and Philippians, Paul is writing to SAVED people. He is teaching about how to

come into the fullness of all that Christ is. If we try to walk with Christ on the basis of ourselves then Christ will be of no effect for us. If we will not lose our own righteousness then we will never win all that Christ is or be found in Him. Why? Because we will remain in deception. We will not be in the light as He is in the light. We cannot know the Truth Himself if we live in error.

This is brought home when Paul said, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." This is a poor translation. It ought to be translated, "I have counted all things as lost BECAUSE OF and THROUGH the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." In short, if we truly come to know Him, we are going to WANT to lose everything into His hands. If we come to know Him, we will no longer be able to live in the delusion of our own righteousness. We will lose it – because we are seeing the Truth in Christ.

What Does This Mean?

The necessity of losing ourselves – including all self-righteousness – in order to win Christ and be found in Him, ought to now be apparent. But what exactly does it mean to WIN CHRIST? Or to be FOUND IN HIM?

Again, there could be a better translation. "To win Christ," means to GAIN. What Paul is saying is exactly what Jesus said: I must lose my life in order to find true life in Him. I must lose everything about myself; my self-ownership, in order to realize the fullness of the Christ who dwells in me. John the Baptist said something that applies here: I must decrease that He might

increase. Losing our own righteousness is a huge decrease. But it is the only way to experience an increase of Christ in us – a gain of Christ.

"To gain Christ," is equal to the FORMING of Christ in us. Paul said to the Galatians, "I travail until Christ be formed in you." (Gal. 4:19) The Greek word translated, "formed," means, "to be inwardly realized or expressed." This is what Paul is also talking about here in Philippians. He is saying that if Christ is to be formed in us – if we are to gain Christ – His life will expose, push out, and replace ours. But this means we have to LOSE ours. We have to allow God to replace our righteousness with that of His Son.

Paul also wrote to the Corinthians: "Always bearing about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus so that the life of the Lord Jesus might be made manifest." What does it mean to bear about the dying of the Lord Jesus? It means that whatever died in Him must die in us. Christ brought an end to the Adam race – to all of the workings of man. If you will, He died for the sin of self-righteousness. Thus, to bear in ourselves His death – to be made conformable to His death – all self-righteousness must come under His Cross and die. Only then can the life of the Lord Jesus be released and be made manifest in us.

This is actually remarkable, and quite contrary to much Christian teaching. We think that if we strive to obey God and stay right with Him that this will result in other seeing our good works – to us this equals Christ being made manifest. But often this is nothing but the manifestation of human self-righteousness, rather than Christ. No. Only if the self-life – our own righteousness being

primary to that – only if that self-life dies can Christ be seen. It is a terrible testimony to the spiritual state of affairs in the body of Christ today that few seem to be aware of this simple Truth.

"To be found in Him," could be translated, "to be discovered," or, "proved to be," in Christ. The whole verse ought to read:

Yes doubtless, I have counted all things as loss because 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 gain Christ, and be proven to be in him, not having any righteousness which can be called mine, which is of the law, but having only that righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

Thus, we can now ask: What is the only way to be found in Christ? Answer: Not having any righteousness that I can call my own. But with Christ AS my righteousness through faith. If I am not found in that relationship with Christ, I am not yet truly found in Him; He is not yet formed in me. This is why Paul travailed to the Galatians that Christ would be formed in them. They were under a false gospel wherein they were seeking to stand before God on the basis of themselves. Christ was of no effect for them.

If we are coming into the reality of Jesus Christ, and He is being formed in us, what will the impact be upon us? We will lose our own righteousness. We will come to the place where Christ alone is our righteousness, indeed, to

where Christ alone is our life. Our loss of ourselves is the only way to gain Christ and be found to be in Him – and if we this happens – we will have no righteousness which can be called our own. Our faith will solely rest in Christ.

Continual Ramifications

It is important the we see that Paul continues his thought at the end of verse 9 into the subsequent verses. He says:

...Not having any righteousness which can be called mine, which is of the law, but having only that righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.....that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Can we see that all that is mentioned from verse 10 through 14 is predicated on the very same Truth -- that we must have no righteousness we can call our own? That we must be found in Christ with Christ as our righteousness?

Note the outcomes of being found in Christ because He is our righteousness: To know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, to be made conformable to His death, all unto an increase of His resurrection life in us. All of these things are based upon, and are the outcome of, having Christ as our righteousness.

Can we possibly see how important this issue of righteousness is? Can we now see why the NT continually addresses it? Often we think of such matters as elementary doctrinal tenants. But we must come into the reality of Christ as our righteousness.

Israel in the OT could not enter into the promised inheritance except it be by faith. Hebrews 3 and 4 reveals that this was a lesson for us – that we cannot enter into the fullness of Christ except we rest from our works as the basis and enter solely on the basis of Christ. Thus, this is foundational. It is actually the gospel.

Paul concludes the passage with these words:

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. 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, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling (upward calling) of God in Christ Jesus.

This passage proves Paul is speaking of things within salvation – he is speaking NOT about how to be saved, but about the inheritance and fullness of Christ once saved. Paul certainly knew and taught that he was already RISEN WITH CHRIST. But he is talking about attaining to the fullness of what that means. And foundational to doing so is this matter of righteousness.

Those who live from out of the righteousness of Jesus Christ are not focused on themselves or upon their righteousness. They are focused, by faith, on HIM. Someone once said that those who manifest Christ the most are those who are the least aware of it. That is true. And we might add that those who are trying to project a righteousness out of themselves are the most conscious and have to make the greatest effort to do so, and are the most aware of it. A branch that is abiding in the Vine needs to do nothing to bear fruit but live in the Vine. Everything else falls in place.

God is already working in the lives of those who are serious with Him towards this great Truth of the righteousness of Christ. He is showing us we have no righteousness we can call our own – sometimes by simply letting us fail. But all of it is to finally bring us into our full inheritance in Christ. God is faithful to do for us what we don't know needs to be done. Thus, we ought to ask Him to do whatever it takes to bring us into this upward calling of Jesus Christ.

Faith Solely in Christ

As noted, Galatians 2:20 – “Yet not I, but Christ” -- has a starting place. That place is, “I am crucified with Christ.” But from a practical standpoint, what this requires is faith that is solely in Christ – and in nothing else. It requires, as is taught all through Galatians, that all faith in ourselves, in our working, in our works, and in our righteousness, be crucified. This is the work of the Cross. And it is, in large part, what Paul means when he says, “I am crucified with Christ.” Paul is saying, “Everything about me that I might

have used to work righteousness must die in Christ crucified."

I realize that we are all in some process of learning faith. But despite the diluted faith that we all seem to have, the goal of God is clear: Faith that is solely upon Christ. This is what makes Galatians 2:20 possible, and it is really what makes possible all that God has for us in Christ. It is therefore what God is seeking to bring to pass in our experience – that our entire faith might be entirely in Christ.

Perhaps the most fundamental Christian Truth is the one that states that upon CHRIST ALONE do we stand before God. Many Christians will tell you that this is the Truth, and they would be right. But as is the case so often, once we have the Truth settled, the question then becomes, "Do we believe it?"

What does it mean to BELIEVE – or, in this case, what does it mean to believe that in Christ alone we stand before God? Well, certainly we must start by believing it as a fact. We must see and believe that this Truth is found in the Bible. But that is only the beginning. From that point, God wants to take this Truth – God wants to take every Truth – and bring us into conformity with it. He wants it to live in us, and He wants us to live in it. Or, to put it another way, God wants to take the Truth and MAKE US TRUE. If God does that, then we will be walking in absolute fellowship and harmony with Him in THE LIGHT.

Now, of course, all of this is really just another way of saying that God wants us to see and know Jesus Christ. And then, He wants Christ to live

through us. If you think about that, to see and know Jesus would equal seeing and knowing the Truth as it pertains to all things in this life. And to have Christ live through you would absolutely require that you be TRUE TO GOD so that the life of Christ – Christ is the Living Truth – so that the life of Christ could be manifested through your will and your conduct.

Paul said, "Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives through me." (Gal. 2:20) Well, Christ never lives through us by, "by-passing," our will. No. But this presents a big problem. Christ lives only TRUTH. Yet there is so much about us that is UNTRUE – that is not according to the Truth. Therefore, if Christ is to live THROUGH US, we must KNOW the Truth – and yes, this is a progressive unfolding of Christ to us – and then, once we begin to know the Truth, we must embrace it – and be MADE TRUE by the Truth. That is the only way in which the Christ who dwells in us can live through us.

How does this happen? Paul tells us how in the same verse. He says, "I am crucified with Christ." There it is. It is only through the work of the Cross that the way is paved in us for Christ to be able to live through us. But again – we are not obliterated. Rather, we are MADE TRUE to God. Thus, the Truth Himself has a vessel through whom to live – a vessel that voluntarily moves with Christ. This is freedom.

What is the work of the Cross in all of this? The Cross crucifies the SELF – and all of the control of the flesh – and because of this, the resurrection life of Jesus Christ is able to be released and manifested. Not to the disregard of us. Not

through any kind of by-passing of us. No. If we have come under the work of the Cross we will be one with the purpose of God in Christ. Christ can then live through us because there is no SELF trying to control God for our own interests.

Now, it might seem to be TOO simple a thought, but fundamental to all of this is the work of God to bring us to where we stand upon CHRIST ALONE. Not just for salvation. But for everything. We have to come to the place where our entire relationship with God is governed by CHRIST CRUCIFIED – to where we no longer reference ourselves, but only Christ. As simple as this is to say, it is perhaps the most difficult thing to come to in the Christian experience.

The Work of the Cross

I used to wonder, and despair, because I would continually ask God to help me believe and obey Him, and yet, it seemed that I was getting WORSE, and not better. It seemed like every time I would cry out to God for power to obey, and for freedom from the flesh, that it would not be long before I would find myself in a situation that would simply make everything WORSE. I could not handle it. Bad stuff was coming to the surface. God was not helping me obey – or so I thought. He was letting things get worse! It is when things like this happen that we begin to doubt our own Christianity. How can we be such terrible creatures and call ourselves by the name of Christ?

Make no question about it. In all of these prayers, I was sincere. I did want to obey God. But in retrospect, I see something now that I did not

see then. Just this: Most of my prayers, as sincere as they were, were based in ignorance and unbelief. Does that shock you? How could prayer to God for help in obedience come from unbelief? Furthermore, why wouldn't God answer a request for help to obey Him? What is wrong with that? If God is so willing to help, and the work of the Cross is finished, then why is this stuff so hard?

My prayers were based in a basic unbelief for a couple of reasons. First, wanted help to obey God mostly so that I could stop feeling guilty and condemned over my failures to obey. Condemnation, guilt, and fear had run my life. I wanted to be free of these. So, in effect, I was praying that God would help me obey so that I would no longer feel guilty for failing to obey. Seemed right to me. But it wasn't right. Why? Because my guilt and condemnation were the result, not of disobedience, but of UNBELIEF. I was not putting my faith in Christ crucified. I was putting my faith in my works. Thus, the solution to my condemnation was not better works with the help of God. Rather, the solution was FAITH in the finished work of Christ.

There were other wrong motives, too. For example, I wanted God to bless my life, and I was certain that the only way that this was going to happen was if I broke through into some kind of high spiritual place. So I prayed that God would help me live righteously so that He could then bless the fact that I was doing so. Again – this sounded right. But it was based in error and unbelief. My faith was not in Christ crucified. It was in my works. So I prayed that God would

empower me to do BETTER works, because then, I thought, I would have greater faith. All upside down. God is never going to help us have faith in the wrong object. My faith needed to be in Christ alone.

Now, God is faithful. So while He is not going to affirm error, and help us continue on in ignorance and unbelief, He will use everything He can to bring us to see the Truth. And what is the Truth? The Truth is, and was in my case, that there is no righteousness in any of us. So God lets us continue on in our error to where this is absolutely proven to us, and in us. He will allow us to utterly fail in our attempts to be good through works. Indeed, rather than answer our pleas for help to obey Him, God will allow situations that will bring out the worst in us. He has to prove to us the TRUTH – that our faith has been in the wrong place – in our works – and it must be solely in Christ crucified.

You see, this is what it means to come under the work of the Cross. It is what it means to be MADE TRUE unto God. This is NOT a matter of learning doctrine or of practicing religion. No. It is a matter of seeing and being conformed to THE TRUTH. And what IS the Truth? The Truth is, our faith has been in our own righteousness. But the Truth is also that we have no righteousness. Thus, in order for God to reveal to us the Truth in a way that will MAKE US TRUE, He must allow the Truth to be proved out IN US by experience. He must allow our own righteousness to be exposed for what it is: A lie. He must show us that we have been putting our faith in a lie. It would seem that it is only then that most of us will be

set free to put our faith SOLELY in Christ crucified.

What this tells us is that if we are crying out to God for help, and yet seem to be getting worse, that this is the work of the Cross. It is the work of the Cross to get us to stop putting our faith in ourselves, and to begin putting it in Christ. This is so simple. Yet faith in self is so ingrained in us that few of us have any idea as to just how deeply we are in bondage to it.

If we wanted to summarize the work of the Cross in a sentence – as it pertains to the Christian life – the work of the Cross is to bring us to the end of self-ownership. Self-trust, self-rule, and self-ownership are all the same thing – these are terms that describe THE FLESH. But for most Christian people, the flesh is not some immoral power. Rather, it is quite religious. The most common, "work of the flesh," at work in Christian lives is that of FAITH IN SELF. Faith in our works – faith in our own working to produce something that pleases God. Self-righteousness. Self-trust. These are not of God. They are a primary work of the flesh. And God will bring the Cross to set us free from them.

Self-righteousness, or faith in my own working, is the result of not seeing the Truth, or is the result of seeing it, but rather trusting in myself instead of in Christ. But self-righteousness is A LIE. It comes from the UNTRUTH that is in us. The only way, therefore, that God can deal with it is to expose it for the LIE that it is – He must allow us to fail. He must allow us to be exposed. And if we will see and confess the Truth about ourselves as being totally unrighteous, and confess the

unbelief of putting our faith in ourselves, we will then be able to see and understand what it means to stand solely by faith in Christ crucified.

The Righteousness of God

God cannot help us obey Him – for the reasons I mentioned earlier. He cannot help us obey Him so we can escape guilt. He cannot help us obey Him so that we can earn His blessing. Why? Because God cannot affirm a lie. He cannot help our unbelief.

It may come as a shock to most Christians, but it is possible to want to obey God – indeed, to even perform some obedience – but to do it in UNBELIEF, rather than in FAITH. Many of us want to obey God, not as the outcome of faith in Christ crucified, but because of a lack of faith in Christ. Our faith is in our works, and so we ask God to help us obey – to help us strengthen our faith in our works. God won't do it. He cannot do it. He cannot affirm our path of unbelief.

What God can do, and He is faithful to do so despite our ignorance, is to show us Jesus Christ. Then we will see that our guilt is present – not because of bad works – but because our faith is not in Christ. Blessing eludes us – not because of bad works -- but because our faith was not in Christ. In other words, we may have been asking God to make US righteous so that our faith could be in our own righteousness all the more. But God has to show us that the only true faith that is possible can be in the only Righteous One.

Of course, everything I am describing is exactly what Paul teaches in Romans and Galatians. To

put faith in one's own works is exactly what it means, "to be under the law." It is what it means to try to establish, "righteousness by the law." The law by which we try to establish our own righteousness may actually be ANY law or principle. It may be an actual point of law found in the Bible, or it may be a man made law of the heart or mind. Yet the issue here is not whether the law in question is a good one. The issue is one of FAITH. Is my faith in my obedience? Or is it in Christ – fully independent of my obedience, or failure to obey.

Note once again what Paul said about it:

Now we know that what things the law says, it says to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 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. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (Rom 3:19-23)

The effect of the law is that, "every mouth may be stopped." Stopped saying what? That every mouth may be stopped talking about our own righteousness! The law will expose us as hopeless sinners. That will shut our mouth. But why God allow the law to expose all of our unrighteousness? Because Christian doctrine says it should? No. Because it is the TRUTH! We have

no righteousness. Our failure to keep the law simply exposes what has been the Truth from the sin of Adam in each one of us.

I said earlier that God will allow, indeed create, situations that will bring out the worst in us – that God may do this even as we pray for help to obey Him! Sure. If we really want God to show us the Truth, indeed, set us free by that Truth, then this is what He MUST do to answer us. God is simply showing us the Truth – that we have no righteousness. He has always known that, and has told us that in His written Word. But often God must put us in situations that prove to us, and PROVE IN US, the very Truth that is in His Word.

It is when God exposes the lie of our self-righteousness – it is then that we begin to see the LIE of our faith in it. And if we are honest, and willing, and really do want the Truth – it is then that we will see the Truth of Jesus Christ as our only righteousness. Faith solely upon Christ crucified then becomes simply. It would seem that it is only when we are completely defeated as to our own righteousness that we finally do see that what God has said from the beginning is really the Truth!

Note that Paul also says that there is a righteousness of God that exists APART from – or independent of – any law. It is the righteous who is a Person, Jesus Christ. I would submit that if the righteousness of Christ is independent of all law, then our faith IN HIM must be independent of any law-keeping. That is what Paul is teaching.

Religion vs. Reality

To most Christians, "faith," and, "righteousness," and, "Christ crucified," are merely doctrines. Many of us assume that if we learn these doctrines from the Bible, and believe them, that we have it. Well, despite the fact that we must learn and believe the doctrines of the Bible, they are but sign posts. In effect, the doctrines of the Bible tell us what we ought to believe and experience. They are not to be substituted for the Person in whom we are to place our faith.

It is possible to place your faith in a doctrine that tells about Christ, but to not have much faith in Christ Himself. It is possible to learn much doctrine, but to never learn Christ. It is possible to learn doctrine Truth, but never to actually BE MADE TRUE. I am talking here about the difference between religion and reality.

If there is one thing that will get us to stop putting our faith in our religion of Christianity, and to start putting it in Christ crucified, it is the work of the Cross. The work of the Cross will expose, destroy, and dismantle all of our own religious working. It will bring us to the place where we see the TRUTH – that there is absolutely NOTHING in any of us that is righteous. There is nothing in us that can produce life. The work of the Cross, if we will yield to God, will expose us as the untrue creatures that we are before God.

If that was the end of what God intends, it would be a sad ending. But it is not the end. The work

of the Cross is all unto freedom and life. God exposes us as the failures that we are in order to show us where we ought to be – in Christ alone. He shows us as the untrue creatures that we are so that we might live in the Truth of His Son. If you want to know what it really means to BE MADE TRUE, it is found right here. It is not a matter of God making ME better. It is a matter of ME giving all of that up and losing it in Christ. I am made true to God when I live in the Truth – that Christ is all and I am happily nothing.

Power in Christ

Christians talk much about POWER these days. We talk about the POWER of the Holy Spirit to work miracles, or to heal, or to do mighty works. Yet there is very little talk about the POWER OF THE CROSS. There is not much talk about, "Christ, the power of God." (I Cor. 1:24)

In fact, there are whole segments of the Body of Christ today that will tell you that POWER is a thing that God gives you – presumably to do things FOR HIM. People talk about, "power to serve," etc. But this is not the focus in scripture. In scripture, the power that God gives is stated clearly. It is, "power to become MY witnesses," said Jesus. In the end, it all comes down to that. It is about BECOMING, and not so much about DOING.

And yet even BECOMING is often misunderstood. Most of us think this means that God is going to act upon us and turn us into specimens that will glorify Him. Sometimes we say this means God will make us LIKE Jesus. Not so.

Paul said in Galatians 2:20, "Yet not I, but Christ lives in me." Get that. It is not US, it is Christ. I've already point out that this does NOT mean that we are out of the picture. It does NOT mean Christ somehow lives through us whether we like it or not, sort of as if He, "takes us over," or something. But it is clear that when says, "Yet not I, but Christ lives in me," that he is NOT saying that we are somehow made to LOOK like Jesus, or act like Jesus. No. He means exactly what he wrote – Christ lives in us, and Christ lives THROUGH us. It is not us – "Yet not I, but Christ."

Paul explained more clearly what he meant in II Corinthians 4:

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death works in us, but life in you. (2 Cor 4:7-12)

In the final analysis, ALL power is in Christ. He said that after He was raised, didn't He? Sure. Through His resurrection He conquer all enemies, the ultimately of which was DEATH. Thus, all power is in Christ. We must never forget that. Power is not a THING. It is a Person – it is IN

CHRIST, the Person. Paul wrote, "Christ, the power of God." (I Cor. 1:24)

Note above that Paul makes it a point to tell us that the power is NOT of us, but of God. That is made perfectly clear. We have the Treasure, Jesus Christ, in us, who are the earthen vessels. But despite the fact that Christ is IN US, Christ is NOT US. And we are not Christ. The power, and the life, and the Truth will never be OF US – are never given to us as THINGS. No. Neither do we ever become the source of power, life, and Truth. In other words, we never become LIKE JESUS. Rather, Christ lives in us and through us. Everything that is of God is OF HIM, and not us. As Paul said, "Yet not I, but Christ.

Now, if you read the above passage, it becomes clear what must happen for Christ to live through us. We must COME UNDER His power. We must COME UNDER the power or working of the Cross – we must, "bear in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus." Why? "So that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." Get that. It is a pivotal Truth. We are not made LIKE JESUS. Rather, Jesus is made manifest in us and through us. It is HIM and not us. It is HIM through us, yes, but it is HIM. Again, "Yet not I, but Christ lives in me."

If I put my faith IN – and SOLELY in – Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, then there is a release of life that results in Jesus living in and through me. Why? Because, at that point, I am a branch abiding in THE VINE. It is HIS life in and through me. It is NOT me being made to look like Christ.

Romans says we are to be, "conformed to the image of His Son." But a look at the Greek shows that the word, "conformed," means, "to be formed together with." So again, it is not us being made to look like Christ. Rather, it is Christ, who is in us, being manifested in and through us. We are formed – not to be like Him – but together with Him through the earthen vessel that we are.

Now, why does this matter? It matters because Christian people by the thousands are trying to look and act like Jesus – and it is nothing more than legalism. It is actually a denial – whether we realize it or not – of our need to be crucified WITH Christ. You see, if the goal is to look like Jesus, I can do that by following a bunch of rules and laws. But if Christ must live through me, then that will require the Cross. There is a big difference between, "I, who am LIKE Christ," and, "Yet NOT I, BUT Christ." Indeed, we are talking here about two entirely different gospels – which is why the Truth of Galatians 2:20 is found in Galatians.

Dependency

Faith means dependency. Contrast this to the notion that faith merely means, "to believe that God tells the Truth. " Actually, even if we want to limit faith in that way, the Truth that God tells is that we are dependent – and He wants us to be dependent upon Him.

Now note: God does not command us to be dependent – not in the sense most people might think. No. The Truth is, we ARE dependent. If we are not dependent upon God, then we will be dependent upon something or someone else. But

God made man to be a dependent creature. It is all we can be. That IS the Truth. And of course, if we are made true to God, then we are going to be dependent upon HIM.

What I am saying is this: God doesn't MAKE us weak. He doesn't MAKE us unable to supply our own need. He doesn't MAKE us dependent. No. He shows us the Truth that we have ALWAYS BEEN that way – He shows us how deceived we have been to think otherwise. And of course, side by side with this, He shows us the Truth that He is faithful and the One in which all of our faith can confidently rest.

There is only ONE TRUTH. And with regards to faith, that one Truth is that there is nothing in ourselves upon which we can depend. Nothing. We have no righteousness, and none of our own working can produce life, or that which is of God. We can merit nothing from God. And really, in the ultimate sense, we cannot even count on ourselves to provide our own temporal needs. The fact that some people do so is merely a mirage. It can all be taken away in a moment. Thus, when God allows a situation wherein we are proved to be utterly helpless and inadequate, He is simply showing us the Truth.

God allows or creates situations in which we cannot make it. We do not have what we need and have no way of getting it. The situation will bring that out in us. If God has ever allowed you to be exposed in that way – as empty and hopeless in yourself – you are liable to think everything is wrong. You may think that God has forsaken you. No. God is showing you THE TRUTH. He is showing you by experience that

there is NOTHING in you. But He is also pointing you to Himself as the only true object of faith.

We know that God must do this with regards to salvation. No one is going to be able to come to Jesus Christ solely by faith, to be saved solely by His grace, until they see that they don't have it in themselves. We have to see our utterly hopeless condition. For most of us, we must see that it is SOLELY BY the grace of God before we will put our faith SOLEY IN the grace of God. Yet this same Truth applies to everything in the Christian life. God wants us to depend upon Him for everything we need, both spiritually and materially.

Do we recognize that the REASON God wants us to depend upon Him is so that He can PROVIDE for us? God would never bring us to the place where we see we are utterly empty, only to leave us there. No. It might seem, for a time, as if God is taking everything away, or withholding everything from us. But He is simply removing all other objects of our faith so that we will turn to Him by faith.

If we do not understand this, we will probably misjudge God. We may think He is unfair. But Christ has already told us to LOSE ourselves to Him, so that we might find true life in Him. Our problem is that we continue trying to SAVE what Christ told us to LOSE, and then we even try to get God to help us! When we won't we think He is being unfaithful. No. He is being totally faithful. He is bringing us to where He can bless us – to where our entire faith will stand upon CHRIST.

God is normally NOT going to give us much, or do much in our lives, until our faith is solely in His Son, Jesus Christ. For salvation, yes, but for EVERYTHING. Everything God has for us is in His Son, and it is only full dependence upon Christ that makes it possible for us to receive Christ and that which is in Him.

The work of the Cross not only affirms this Truth, but makes it possible to experience. The work of the Cross is intended to put to death all that is keeping us from receiving the fullness of LIFE in Christ. As we read earlier from II Corinthians, we must bear the death of Christ in our body in order for Christ to be made manifest. The Cross is that instrument of death, whether it is ministered through circumstances or whatever. Death must come to that which is of the flesh. Death must come to our own working. Death must come to all that is OF US. Only then can Christ be made manifest – and only then can God bless that which is of His Son.

Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ." That is the preface to everything. The Cross must come upon all that is OF US. But then he said, "Nevertheless I live." We may LOSE everything that is OF US, but nevertheless we will find true life in the SON. Paul added, "Yet not I, but Christ lives in me." God won't make us look like Jesus. But Jesus will be seen in and through us – yes, Christ will be seen in SPITE of us. Paul concluded, "The life I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God." When our full faith and dependency is upon Christ, then the faith OF Christ – which is inherent in the LIFE of Christ – is able to join

with our faith and live the Christian life. For somewhere else, Paul said:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by (from out of His) faith. (Rom 1:16-17)

If we gain Christ and are found in Him we will be found in Him without our own righteousness, but only indwelt with Righteousness Himself by faith. And we will gladly shout, "Yet not I, but Christ!"

