

The Discipleship Wheel Illustration

Chapter Three Christ, The Center

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Scripture Memory

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ; and 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 delivered Himself up for me.

Review

- Draw the Discipleship Wheel Illustration
- II Corinthians 5:17

I take, O cross, thy shadow for my abiding place;
I ask no other sunshine than the sunshine of His face,
Content to let the world go by, to know no gain or loss,
My sinful self my only shame, my glory all the cross.

Elizabeth C. Clephane

Christ, The Center

I am crucified with Christ The verb is in the perfect tense which speaks of a past completed action having present finished results. Paul uses it to show that his identification with Christ at the cross was a past fact and that the spiritual benefits that have come to him through his identification are present realities with him. By this statement he also shows how he died to the law, namely by dying with Christ who died under its penalty. The law's demands were satisfied and, therefore, have no more hold on Paul. But thus being crucified with Christ meant also to Paul death to self. When Paul died with Christ, it was the Pharisee Saul who died. What he was and did up to that time passed away so far as he was concerned. Saul was buried and the old life with him. The dominating control of the Adamic nature had its power over him broken." (Wuest, Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, Volume I (Galatians), Eerdmans Publishers, 1972, page 81.)

Crucified with Christ

Crucifixion was a very real thing to the early Christian church. Paul, no doubt during the many years of his imprisonment, witnessed his share of military and political executions, the majority of which would have been crucifixions. The early church would immediately relate to this description, having no doubt seen the bodies of crucified men on the hi-ways and public execution grounds of the Romans. Consider the following description from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary.

"At a crucifixion the victim usually was nailed or tied to a wooden stake and left to die.

"Crucifixion was used by many nations of the ancient world, including Assyria, Media, and Persia. Alexander the Great of Greece crucified 2,000 inhabitants of Tyre when he captured the city. The Romans later adopted this method and used it often throughout their empire. Crucifixion was the Romans' most severe form of execution, so it was reserved only for slaves and criminals. No Roman citizen could be crucified.

"Crucifixion involved attaching the victim with nails through the wrists or with leather thongs to a crossbeam attached to a vertical stake. Sometimes blocks or pins were put on the stake to give the victim some support as he hung suspended from the crossbeam. At times the feet were also nailed to the vertical stake. As the victim hung dangling by the arms, the blood could no longer circulate to vital organs. Only by supporting himself on the seat or pin could the victim gain relief.

"But gradually exhaustion set in and death followed, although usually not for several days. If the victim had been severely beaten, he would not live this long. To hasten death the executioners sometimes broke the victim's legs with a club. Then he could no longer support his body to keep blood circulating, and death quickly followed. Usually bodies were left to rot or to be eaten by scavengers." (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)

In the context of the culture and politics of the first century do you think early Christians would wear the cross of crucifixion as a piece of jewelry?

What would be the equivalent of this in our culture?

This does not mean, however, that to wear a cross is wrong. For the Christian the cross does not symbolize death. Rather, what is the “message of the cross” that is sought to be conveyed when we, as Christians, wear or display it in our home?

When we, as Christians, speak of the “work of the cross,” we generally equate it with our salvation. When we think of the cross, we generally think of the benefits we derive from Christ’s crucifixion. What is the primary benefit most Christians equate with the crucifixion of Christ?

Read Galatians 2:10 in the translations below.

New American Standard Bible: *I have been crucified with Christ; and 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 delivered Himself up for me.*

New International Version of the Bible: *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

The King James Bible: *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

In this passage what does the Holy Spirit equate crucifixion with for the Christian in terms of his relationship with Christ and the Christian life?

Answer the following as you consider the metaphor or example chosen by the Holy Spirit to illustrate the process of sanctification and lordship whereby the flesh dies and the life of faith takes over:

Was death by crucifixion quick or slow and drawn out?

Given this reality, can we expect the transition from our life in the flesh to be quick or drawn out?

Was death by crucifixion clean and simple or messy?

Given this reality, can we expect the transition from our life in the flesh to be clean and simple or messy?

Walt Henrichsen: "When Cortez landed at Vera Cruz in 1519 to begin his dramatic conquest of Mexico with a pocket-sized force of 700 men, he purposely set fire to his fleet of 11 ships. His men on the shore watched their only means of retreat sinking to the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico. With no means of retreat there was only one direction in which to move, forward into the Mexican interior to meet whatever might come their way. In paying the price for being Christ's disciple, you, too, must purposefully destroy all avenues of retreat. Resolve in your heart today that whatever the price for being His follower, you are willing to pay it." (Walter A. Henrichsen, Disciples Are Made – Not Born, Victor Books, 1974, page 30.)

How does the passage below illustrate the truth that Galatians 2:20 is not an instantaneous spiritual experience but rather a lifetime process?

Romans 7:18-25

18 *For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.*

19 *For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish.*

20 *But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.*

21 *I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good.*

22 *For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,*

23 *but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.*

24 *Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?*

25 *Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.*

FAITH 4102 *pistis* (pis'-tis); from 3982; persuasion, i.e. credence; moral conviction (of religious truth, or the truthfulness of God or a religious teacher), especially reliance upon Christ for salvation; abstractly, constancy in such profession; by extension, the system of religious (Gospel) truth itself: KJV-- assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity. (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance).

FAITH *pistis* ^4102^, primarily, "firm persuasion," a conviction based upon hearing (akin to *peitho*, "to persuade"), is used in the NT always of "faith in God or Christ, or things spiritual."

The word is used of (a) trust, e.g., Rom. 3:25 [see Note (4) below]; 1 Cor. 2:5; 15:14,17; 2 Cor. 1:24; Gal. 3:23 [see Note (5) below]; Phil. 1:25; 2:17; 1 Thes. 3:2; 2 Thes. 1:3; 3:2; (b) trust-worthiness, e.g., Matt. 23:23; Rom. 3:3, RV, "the faithfulness of God"; Gal. 5:22 (RV, "faithfulness"); Titus 2:10, "fidelity"; (c) by metonymy, what is believed, the contents of belief, the "faith," Acts 6:7; 14:22; Gal. 1:23; 3:25 [contrast 3:23, under (a)]; 6:10; Phil. 1:27; 1 Thes. 3:10; Jude 3, 20 (and perhaps 2 Thes. 3:2); (d) a ground for "faith," an assurance, <Acts 17:31> (not as in KJV, marg., "offered faith"); (e) a pledge of fidelity, plighted "faith," 1 Tim. 5:12. (Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Thomas Nelson Publishers,

- I. It is a principle of Bible study that interpretation is subject to definition.** This means that our interpretation of a verse is subject to the definition of the words found in the verses.

When we check the weather on our computer and it says that the weather today will be cold and rainy, we cannot interpret that to be hot and sunny simply because we do not like cold and rainy weather. The sentence, “The weather today will be cold and rainy” has a definite meaning based on the definition of the words “weather,” “today,” “cold,” “rainy.” If we announce that to our Bible study group with the intention of canceling the class picnic and someone says, “Well, that is not what it means to me! That is not my interpretation of that phrase!” and then goes on to say he thinks it means it will be hot and sunny, will it, indeed, be a hot and sunny day?

In the same way, when we read a verse and begin to interpret its meaning, the interpretation of the verse is always subject to the delineations of the words in the verse. Just as the definitions of the words “weather,” “today,” “cold,” and “rainy” are necessary to understand and interpret the weather report, so the definitions of the words in this verse are necessary before we can begin to interpret its meaning.

II. Using a dictionary, define the following words:

A. *crucified*

B. *flesh*

C. *faith*

III. What do the following phrases mean?

A. *crucified with Christ*

B. *no longer I who live*

C. *Christ lives in me*

D. *the life which I now live in the flesh*

E. *I live by faith in the Son of God*

SALVATION

The salvation that comes through Christ may be described in three tenses: past, present and future. When a person believes in Christ, he is saved (Acts 16:31). But we are also in the process of being saved from the power of sin (Rom. 8:13; Phil. 2:12). Finally, we shall be saved from the very presence of sin (Rom. 13:11; Titus 2:12-13). God releases into our lives today the power of Christ's resurrection (Rom. 6:4) and allows us a foretaste of our future life as His children (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:14). Our experience of salvation will be complete when Christ returns (Heb. 9:28) and the kingdom of God is fully revealed (Matt. 13:41-43).

SANCTIFICATION

It is the process of God's grace by which the believer is separated from sin and becomes dedicated to God's righteousness. Accomplished by the Word of God (John 17:7) and the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:3-4), sanctification results in holiness or purification from the guilt and power of sin.

Sanctification as separation from the world and setting apart for God's service is a concept found throughout the Bible. (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Thomas Nelson

F. *delivered Himself up for me*

IV. The first passage you memorized was II Corinthians 5:17 which speaks of Christ being the power source of our life. When we are born again, we no longer have to try to live the Christian life by our old nature. We are a new creature, and Christ now lives in us. The second passage for memorization—Galatians 2:20—also speaks to Christ being the power source of the Christian life.

A. First, rewrite Galatians 2:20 in your own words. (This is called a paraphrase.)

B. Read John 15:1-11 and circle the phrases which you feel would serve as cross references for the principle: “Christ, the power source of the disciple’s life.”

John 15:1-11

1 *“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.*

2 *“Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit.*

3 *“You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.*

4 *“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.*

5 *“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.*

6 *“If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*

7 *“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.*

8 *“By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.*

9 *“Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.*

10 *“If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.*

11 *“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.*

- C. Christ's crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection do, indeed, assure the Christian eternal life. This is a great and wonderful truth of the new covenant. According to I Peter 2:24 what took place on the cross of Christ which assures us our salvation?

I Peter 2:24: and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

- D. A second great truth of the cross of Christ is taught in Galatians 2:20. The cross is not simply an insurance policy which we wear on our bodies and have ready to show at our death to insure we get into heaven. What does the Holy Spirit say in Galatians 2:20 will be the result of experiencing the reality of I Peter 2:24 in the day-to-day life of the Christian?

Galatians 2:20: I have been crucified with Christ; and 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 delivered Himself up for me.

- E. Compare Galatians 2:20 and I Peter 2:24 and write below the central truth of each as it pertains to the use of the cross.

Galatians 2:20: I have been crucified with Christ; and 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 delivered Himself up for me.

I Peter 2:24: and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

1. Which of these two passages refers to our salvation?
2. Which refers to our sanctification?
3. Can we choose to embrace I Peter 2:24 while rejecting Galatians 2:20?
4. Many Christians who would violently recoil at I Peter 2:24 being an option for the Christian (“Of course you must experience the cross of Christ to be saved”) very casually present the lordship of Christ as an option (“Of course to be crucified with Christ is an option if one so chooses). Why this contradiction? Why do so many Christians think they can be Christians and yet not be disciples of Jesus Christ? What makes us believe we can choose what God does for us? What makes us believe we can tell God, “Choose us, give us Christ’s salvation, but leave His lordship and the crucified life with Him on the cross behind”?

V. Now reflect on the two passages you have studied and memorized.

- A. Could a person experience the reality of the new birth as described in these passages and, at the same time, his life go unchanged? (Explain your answer)
- B. From the scriptures used in this study establish the truth of this statement: “We do not live the life of the disciple to become a Christian; we live the life of the disciple because we are a Christian.”

Quiet Times Alone With God —Jeremiah 15:16—Chapter 3 Theme: Christ, The Center

Passage for Meditation: II Corinthians 5:17

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

Passage for Meditation: John 15:1-2

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

Passage for Meditation: John 15:3-4

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

Quiet Times Alone With God —Jeremiah 15:16—Chapter 3 Theme: Christ, The Center

Passage for Meditation: John 15:5-6

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

Passage for Meditation: John 15:7

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

Passage for Meditation: John 15:8-11

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?