

Galatians 2:20

Space and time constraints on the daily lesson plan prevent us from plumbing the theological depths of this significant verse. Consider these reflections from Max Anders:

2:20. Now Paul expands upon verse 19. He **died to the law** (v. 19) by being **crucified with Christ**. He lives **for God** (v. 19) because **Christ lives in him**. Believers are in union with Christ. We are united with him in his death, burial, and resurrection. Thus, we died with him to the law (see Rom. 6).

Again, we are uncertain as to what Paul meant by **I have been crucified with Christ**. It certainly did not mean that he was physically crucified. Dead people don't write letters. In what sense was he crucified? He may have used the sentence as a figure of speech, referring to the effects of Christ's death which every believer experiences. It might be reworded, "I have been as good as crucified, since the results of Christ's crucifixion count for me." Or he may have referred to a sense in which every believer is required to endure a similar experience of spiritual crucifixion to the desires of self. We put to death our own plans to follow Jesus. It might be reworded, "I have crucified my right to self-control in life, in the same way that Christ was crucified physically. He gave up his right to physical life; I gave up my right to self-life."

Or he may have referred to some sense in which the believer, because he is "in Christ" is seen by God as having actually died. He may have been referring to the union between the believer and Jesus, when the believer in Jesus experiences, spiritually, everything Jesus experienced. More will be said of these options in the "Deeper Discoveries" section of this chapter.

Whatever Paul meant about having died in Christ, the point is that his death severed him from the requirements of the law. Therefore, for Peter and the Judaizers to go back to the law is to visit the graveyard. Paul goes on to say that he can live for God because **Christ lives in him**. Finally, Paul says that **faith** is the principle that unlocks the life of Christ in the believer. The more we exercise **faith in Christ** the more he is free to live through us. The more we are obedient to the Scripture and the leading of the Holy Spirit, the more our life approximates what Jesus would do if he were in our shoes. In that sense, the life he lives, he lives by faith in the Son of God.¹

"When you affirm others, you give them wings to fly!

- One of the greatest needs of your family, friends, and coworkers is appreciation.
- Submission to authority is a sign of spiritual maturity.
- Confrontation is hard but often necessary.

APPLICATIONS

- Look for opportunities to affirm others.
- Express your gratitude to God and others for the good they do.
- Submit to spiritual authority which God places over you.
- Have the courage to confront someone over his sin if God shows you it is necessary.²

¹ Anders, M. (1999). *Vol. 8: Galatians-Colossians*. Holman New Testament Commentary; Holman Reference (24–25). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.