

Newness of Life in Christ

Paul continues to tell the story of what he said to Peter on the famous occasion when Paul felt he had to question him publicly. He took the opportunity to re-state the gospel then; and he is restating the gospel now to the Galatians. No one is justified (declared righteous in God's sight) by keeping the law of God. Rather we are justified exclusively by trusting the Lord Jesus Christ ¹. After a basic statement, Paul asks the question, 'Does the gospel lead to looseness of living?' The answer is: No! ², but it would be wicked for Paul to go back to preaching the Mosaic regulations ³. Freedom from the Mosaic law leads to newness of life ⁴.

We pick up the thought at that point. Paul explains how he comes to have this newness of life. It is because the old life has ceased. He says, '*I have been crucified with Christ*' ¹.

¹ 2:15-16

² 2:17

³ 2:18

⁴ 2:19a

¹ 2:19b, 2:20
in some translations

1. Crucified with Christ

1. It is not a spiritual 'experience'

1. The 'old' person ceases to exist because we are united with Christ in His crucifixion. What is this being 'crucified with Christ'?

(i) It has nothing to do with any spiritual 'experience'. It is not a feeling or an emotion.

2. It is not something I do – not a matter of 'growth'

(ii) It is not parallel to Galatians 5:24. That is referring to something I do. Galatians 2 is referring to something that has been done to me. Galatians 5:24 is referring to sanctification or spiritual growth. Galatians 2:1 9b is referring to something different. There is no 'growth' in it.

3. It is something that happened to Christ – and therefore to me

(iii) It is not so much something that has happened to me; it is more something that has happened to Christ. I have been crucified with Christ. It has happened to Him, and so because I am 'in Christ' it has happened to me. But it is more about Him than about me. When a man becomes a king, his wife becomes a queen. But the 'promotion' is not hers; it is his. She is promoted only in the king.

So what is this being 'crucified with Christ'? Christ finished with this world when He was crucified. He never came back to His old position, not even after His resurrection. Something similar happens to the Christian. We are in a different position forever. The old position we were in has gone. It is a fact! It has happened. I have died to the realm of sin. I have finished with condemnation. I no longer belong to Adam and the fallen human race. I shall never really die. The person I once was has gone forever! It has nothing to do with sanctification or growing in grace. It is something that happened to me the second I became 'in Christ'. It is part-and-parcel of what happened at the time of my justification (which is the theme here, at present).

2. The Lord Jesus Christ living within

2. The Christian has the Lord Jesus Christ living within. Paul goes on, '*It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me*' ¹. There are three stages in the thought here.

¹ 2:20a

Part 1, as we have seen is: the old 'me' has ceased to exist.

Part 2 is: there is a new 'me' because Jesus is within 'me'. This is a mysterious subject. Christ and 'I' are somehow interwoven. He is the

tree; I am a branch. The Christian and Jesus are like husband and wife; they are one flesh and one spirit. Like a limb in a body, so I am in Christ and Christ is in me^{□2}. It is profound and amazing and mysterious teaching.

□2 see also
Romans 8:10;
2 Corinthians
13:5;
Colossians
1:27;
Ephesians
3:17

3. The Christian lives on the faithfulness of the Lord Jesus Christ

3. The Christian lives on the faithfulness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Part 3 of Paul's logic comes next. Paul goes on to say, '*And the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faithfulness of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me*' ^{□1}. Again the translations vary. Paul's Greek may best be translated (in my judgement) 'I live by the faith of the Son of God' or 'I live by the faithfulness of the Son of God'. It is not by something in myself that is the source of my strength. It is something in Jesus. My little faith is faith in His great faithfulness!

□1 2:20

I live on Him!

I know who He is – the divine Son of God. I know that He loves me – me personally. Because He loves the whole world and I am part of that whole world. I know what He has done. He has died for me. His death upon the cross is the pledge of His love. I know He is present with the Father and has perfect faith and perfect faithfulness. And so I live on Him!



4. To live any other way is to resist God's grace

4. To live in any other way is to resist God's grace towards us. '*I do not set aside the grace of God. For if justification were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose*' ^{□1}. To try to stand before God in any way but by the blood of Christ is to resist God's grace. To go back to the Mosaic law is unbelief. It is trusting in the flesh (as Paul is about to say in 3:3). If justification were by the law Christ did not need to die. Christ only died as the sacrifice for our sins because there was no other way. Jesus Himself prayed that if there were any other way for the human race to be saved He might be allowed to go the other way! ^{□2}. If we could somehow be justified by something **other than** the cross of Christ, then the cross of Christ would have been avoided. But there was no other way. The cross is the only ground of salvation. Faith is the only way to receive it. A straightforward faith-plus-nothing in the-cross-of-Christ-plus-nothing is the one and only way of salvation.

□1 2:21

No other way!

□2 Luke 22:42 and elsewhere

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