

REPLACING SELF WITH CHRIST

TEXT: GALATIANS 2:20, 21

Introduction:

1. Last week I spoke on the problem with selfism. Man's biggest problem is making self the center of his life. The Bible teaches that Christ must be the center of our lives.
2. Colossians 1:18 says, "That in all things He might have the preeminence."
3. For most people, self is on the throne, not Christ.
4. The Christian life involves much replacing. We replace our worldly friends with godly Christian friends.
5. We replace worldly places with church. We replace our worldly habits with godly habits.
6. We replace worldly music with "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." We replace our worldly books and literature with the Bible and good Christian literature.
7. And most importantly – this all begins at the cross. We replace love of self with love of God (Gal. 2:20; 6:14).
8. I referred several times last week to the great holiness preacher FB Meyer. (Please do not misunderstand me; I am not speaking of denominations. FB Meyer was a Baptist pastor. But the greatest Baptists have always been holiness people.)
9. In replacing self with Christ, FB Meyer said, "The epistle to the Galatians is my battle-axe. Luther used it for justification, but I think it is for sanctification" (*The Christ Life for Your Life*.)
10. The book of Galatians teaches we are saved by faith, and we are sanctified by faith. Christ died to save us from the penalty of sin, and Christ died to save us from the power of sin (Gal. 1:4; 3:1-3).
11. This is taught all throughout the Bible. Ephesians 3:17 says, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."
12. Meyer noted that the cross not only stands between us and our past, and us and the world. **The cross stands between us and ourselves.** We have been "crucified with Christ" (2:20; cf. 5:24, 25).
13. Galatians 5:25 follows verse 24 because the Holy Spirit makes this real to us. "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16).
14. It is only by the power of the Holy Spirit that we can live the Christian life (cf. Galatians 3:1-3).

I. WE REPLACE SELF BY PREACHING CHRIST (1:6—14).

1. Paul put it this way in II Cor. 4:5, “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord...”
2. Unfortunately there are too many preachers “preaching themselves.”
3. And there are too few preachers preaching the true Gospel (Gal. 1:6-9).
4. In the early days of Christianity, the Christians would rather be thrown to the lions than to deny the true Gospel. But today popular preachers are selling out the true Gospel.
5. Back in 1994, Chuck Colson, Bill Bright, JI Packer, and other big-name evangelicals got together with some RC priests and they wrote a document entitled, “Evangelicals and Catholics Together.”
6. This document calls for Christians to stop “proselytizing” Roman Catholics because according to Mr. Colson and his friends, RC’s are already Christian.
7. But what does the Bible teach? “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8, 9).
8. We are not saved by our good works, or our baptism or church membership. We are not saved by sacraments or rituals.
9. We are saved by Christ and Christ alone (John 3:16).
10. The pope will arrive here in NY this week. Pay attention to some of his statements and you will notice he preaches a false gospel (Gal. 1:6-9).

II. WE REPLACE SELF BY REVEALING CHRIST (1:15, 16).

1. “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen...” (1:15, 16).
2. It pleased God “to reveal his Son in” Paul. This means God was working in Paul and through Paul to “reveal” Christ to the world.
3. First, the Lord graciously revealed Himself to Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-8).
4. Then God used Paul to reveal Christ to the “heathen” (Gentiles).
5. The word “reveal” (Gal. 1:16) literally means to “unveil.” It is used quite often in the NT to describe how God graciously reveals Himself to men.
 - “At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes” (Matt. 11:25).
 - “And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 16:17).
 - “Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you” (Phil. 3:15).
 - “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (I Cor. 2:9, 10).
6. These Scriptures all teach us that God graciously reveals Himself to us “by His Spirit” (I Cor. 2:10).
7. God reveals Himself to the humble, not to the proud and arrogant.

8. One of the most wonderful stories in the Bible is the story of how the resurrected Lord met the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24).
9. Luke 24:16 says, “But their eyes were holden (could not see) that they should not know him.” Then later on we’re told, “And it came to pass, as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him” (Luke 24:30, 31).
10. The Lord opened their eyes. He revealed Himself to them.
11. There are multitudes of lost sinners who are spiritually blind. After the Lord revealed Himself to the apostle Paul, Paul set out to reveal Christ to others (cf. Acts 26:1-19).
12. Christian friend: are you revealing Christ to a lost and dying world?

III. WE REPLACE SELF BY GLORIFYING CHRIST (1:24).

1. The apostle Paul – known as Saul of Tarsus – had been a persecutor of the church. But he was gloriously saved on the road to Damascus. And he went on to become a great preacher of the Gospel (1:23, 24).
2. Throughout history there have been many other wonderful conversions. Thank God, the power of the Gospel is just as strong today as it was in the days of the apostle Paul.
3. John Newton was born in London, England and spent most of his early life out at sea.
4. John Newton’s tombstone reads, “John Newton, Clerk, once an infidel and libertine, a servant of slaves in Africa, was, by the rich mercy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the faith he had long labored to destroy.”

5. After he was gloriously saved, John Newton became a pastor and a hymnwriter. He wrote one of the most popular hymns of all times:

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me,
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

6. Many people have glorified God through the testimony of John Newton (cf. Galatians 1:24).
7. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to glorify Christ. Our Lord said, “Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you” (John 16:13, 14).
8. When the Holy Spirit is working in the life of a believer – Christ is glorified.
9. When the believer’s prayers are answered, God is glorified. Our Lord said in John 14:13, “And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”

CONCLUSION:

In her book, *Life on the Highest Plane*, Ruth Paxson writes:

In a city in north China there was a girls’ school. The students grew in numbers which necessitated more buildings. Adjoining the school were just the buildings needed, the property of a Chinese family. After much bargaining a sale was effected. The papers were drawn up and the purchase price paid. In the autumn the school fully expected to open work in the new buildings. But they were unable to do so. Why not? *The Chinese family had not moved out.* Purchase gives title but only delivery gives possession.

Christ has the title deed to your life. The price was paid nearly two thousand years ago. It is His by the right of purchase. Have you moved out that He may move in and occupy what He already possesses?

Christ has the right to exempt you from His property; He *is* Lord and He has the right to command you to yield. But Christ's way is to constrain by love rather than to conquer by force. So He beseeches us by the innumerable mercies of God of which we are daily the recipients to yield ourselves to Him.

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