

## What Paul Didn't Say in Galatians 2:20

### I. Introduction:

- A. The well-known Greek expert A.W. Robertson says of this verse – *“One of Paul's greatest mystical sayings.”*
1. I'm not sure what he means by the word *“mystical,”* but I have to agree that this is a wonderful statement.
  2. I hope you have it memorized and can quote it to yourself when you need it.
  3. *“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.”*
- B. I have preached from this verse two or three times, and I have read dozens of other messages.
1. One common outline is to point the apparent contradictions – which aren't contradictions at all.
  2. *“I have been crucified, **NEVERTHELESS** I live.” “I live, **YET NOT I**, but Christ liveth in me.”*
  3. These statements make no sense to the unbeliever.
  4. But to Paul they were clear, because as he said, *“I live by the faith of the Son of God.”*
  5. Paul understood, through the Spirit, that his life was hid with Christ in God (**Colossians 3:3**).
  6. I hope that is something you understand to some degree as well.
- C. Then he concluded his thought – *“I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, & gave himself for me.”*
1. Perhaps the greatest conundrum of the verse is in this last clause.
    - a. The Son of God *“loved me, and gave himself for me.”*
    - b. *“Why should He love me so? Why should He love me so?”*
    - c. *Why should my Savior to Calvary go? Why should He love me so?”*
  2. *“I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”*
- D. Rather than rehash any of my earlier messages, or to follow another man's outline, I'd like to venture out onto some Biblical thin ice.
1. It is dangerous territory, because we should never argue Bible truth from what the Scriptures do **NOT** say.
  2. That is one of the cardinal rules of hermeneutics – Bible study and interpretation.
  3. Don't assume that since the Bible doesn't speak out on some subject, you have liberty to insert your opinion into the void.
  4. In this case, I'm not actually going to do that sort of thing.
  5. But my intention is to insert some things which **Paul DOESN'T say** into the context of **what he DOES**, in order to draw some contrast.
  6. In the process I hope to highlight a few principles which should apply to you and me.

### II. Paul said, *“I am crucified with Christ.”*

- A. Of course, Paul was not one of the two miscreants who died on crosses beside the Lord Jesus that day.
1. If Saul of Tarsus was even there as a witness to the crucifixion, it raises some interesting conjecture.
  2. But it's unlikely that he was, because I think at some point he would have said so.
  3. He was **not literally** with Christ at **Golgotha**, and that is the primary reason why **he DIDN'T say**, *“I WAS crucified with Christ.”*
  4. He said *“I **AM** crucified with Christ,”* not *“I **WAS** crucified with Him.”*
  5. What he was saying was that in Christ's death, those whom the Saviour chose to save were as dead to the penalty of the law as Christ Himself.
  6. Christ's death was vicarious – it was on behalf of those He intended to save – like Paul, and like you.
  7. But let's lay that aside, because that is not my primary consideration at this point.
- B. Notice the tense of the verb – *“I **AM** crucified with Christ.”*
1. It is probably a *“mystical”* thing to say – but there is a sense in which God's saints are **STILL crucified**.
  2. Theologically and practically, we are still hanging there between heaven and earth **with** our Saviour.
  3. Whatever other scriptures might say, this verse **does NOT say**, *“we **WERE** crucified with Christ.”*
  4. **AND** we may some day be severely persecuted, but Paul doesn't say *“we **SHALL BE** crucified with Christ.”*
  5. We **ARE** crucified, and in a very special way **we continue** to be crucified with Christ.

- C. I know that you believe this next thought.
  - 1. You are not like those who merely asked the crucified Jesus to come into their hearts never to think of Christ or the cross again.
  - 2. On the other hand, I'm not sure that any of us consider often enough or meditate deeply enough on the fact that we should spend our days as dying men and women – crucified with Christ.
    - a. Our time on earth is short – obviously.
    - b. And in that light we should live every dying moment in the strength of our Saviour who is life itself.
  - 3. *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live."*
- D. Just in passing, consider the grammatical construction of a similar verse from this same book of **Galatians**.
  - 1. **Chapter 6, verse 4** – *"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world **IS crucified** unto me, **AND I** unto the world."*
  - 2. Paul, a representative Christian, lived in his day as though the world was dead to him, and he was dead to the world.
  - 3. Crucifixion wasn't a past tense event or a future event – it was now for Paul, and it should be now for us.
  - 4. *"The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."*

### III. Taking that a small step farther, Paul said, *"I am crucified WITH Christ."*

- A. He didn't say, *"I am crucified BY Christ."*
  - 1. One reason people refuse to repent before God and worship Him through Christ Jesus, is due to their love of sin.
  - 2. Most people don't naturally reach the point of hating their sins until later in life – if ever.
    - a. So throughout their days, they love their addiction to alcohol, sexual immorality, meth or marijuana.
    - b. They love the thrill of stealing from people, bullying people, hating people.
    - c. They refuse to give up those poisons upon which their souls flourish in their youth.
  - 3. And with this corrupted mind-set, they think – or they are told by false religions – that Christ wants to crucify them to all that makes them *"happy."*
  - 4. They don't see their addictions as sins, but rather as part of their lives and things which make them happy.
  - 5. So they turn away from the blessedness which is in the Saviour, continuing to wallow in those sins.
  - 6. And then, seeing so many unhappy Christians, just intensifies their resistance to the gospel.
- B. But Paul didn't say, *"I am crucified BY Christ to my sins."* He said, *"I am crucified WITH Christ."*
  - 1. God's saints are not ***injured, molested, persecuted*** or in any way ***harm***ed by their Saviour.
  - 2. In fact, they join the Saviour, and are joined with Him, in every part of God's blessed salvation.
  - 3. They share in ***mutual glory***, although in different degrees.
  - 4. They share in the ***same eternity***, in similar ***rewards***, in mutual ***fellowship***.
  - 5. There is no greater joy than to be crucified with Christ as Paul means it in this verse.
  - 6. Paul was not *"crucified BY Christ"* but *"WITH Christ."*
- C. And in the sense in which Paul is using the term, no Christian is *"crucified FOR Christ."*
  - 1. The Lord is in no way ***made more blessed*** through the ***things we suffer*** in this world.
  - 2. The Saviour doesn't earn points when any of His people are crucified or martyred.
  - 3. Yes, He is glorified in us, but the Lord is magnified as much by our joys as by our sufferings and death.
  - 4. If it is the God's will that we be crucified upside down, burned at the stake, run through with darts or shot with 9mm or 50 caliber bullets, since we should already consider ourselves to be crucified with Christ, it should be all good.

### IV. Paul says, *"I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth IN me."*

- A. He didn't say that *"Christ lives BESIDE me."*
  - 1. It is blessing to have a *"paraclete"* – a comforter.
  - 2. The primary reference of *"parakletos"* is to someone who comes along side to help and support us.

3. Christ is that paraclete, and He has prayed to the Father, giving us *“another Paraclete or Comforter, that he may abide with us for ever;*
    - a. *Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but we know him; for he dwelleth with us, and shall be in you.*
    - b. *I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.”*
  4. Consider the **apparent contradiction** in **John 16**.
    - a. It is the same contradiction we have in **Galatians 2:20**.
    - b. *“The Spirit of truth... ye know him; for he dwelleth **WITH** you, **AND** shall be **IN** you.”*
  5. Despite the definition of the word, in this case, the paraclete isn't walking along side, He dwells within us.
- B. And by the way, *“Christ does not live **THROUGH** us,”* either.
1. Even though Paul was a servant of God, he was not a vicar of Christ on earth.
  2. He was an ambassador for Christ, as we should be, but he wasn't the personification or humanization of Christ.
  3. Even though Paul was empowered by the Spirit of Christ in his service, what he did to honor the Saviour really was Paul's own service.
  4. He chose to live his life for the glory of his Saviour – as should all of us.

#### V. Next he refers to *“the life which I now live **IN** the flesh.”*

- A. Paul, like the rest of us, was an ordinary human being.
1. He may have had an IQ higher than any of us.
    - a. And he may have been educated by the Spirit of Christ Himself for three years out in the desert.
    - b. Yes, he was a Jew, and a Pharisee, and a Roman citizen, and a world traveler.
    - c. But other than that he was just a man.
  2. And so he had **the same sinful tendencies** that you and I have, although we each have our own peculiar weaknesses.
  3. He knew how to get **angry**, and he appears to have **held grudges** far too long.
    - a. There were times when he seemed to **lack the faith** we'd expect from an apostle.
    - b. I think there may have been some **poor choices** in his life.
  4. And why? Because he lived in the same kind of flesh in which you and I live.
  5. And he acknowledges that – *“the life which I now live **IN** the flesh.”*
- B. But notice that he didn't say, *“the life which I now live **BY** the flesh.”*
1. Paul was a man of prayer – whether he was always surrendered to it – he always sought God's direction.
  2. He was led of the Spirit, which is one of the characteristics of a child of God.
  3. *“They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh;*
    - a. *But they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit,”*
    - b. And Paul, being a spiritual man, followed and minded the Spirit of Christ.
  4. He didn't cast the evil spirit out of the woman at Philippi by the power of the Devil, or some medical concoction, or some psychiatric formula.
  5. He didn't flip a coin to determine which should be the next city in his preaching tour.
  6. He didn't depend on contemporary Christian music to get his congregation all worked up for the preaching.
  7. Sure he fed his natural flesh, bathed his flesh and rested his flesh, just as did also the Lord Jesus, but he depended on the Lord to take him to another day of service.
  8. He lived his *“life **IN** the flesh,”* but not *“**BY** the flesh.”*
- C. And it goes without saying that *“he didn't live **FOR** the flesh.”*
1. In his ministry he wasn't seeking fame or fortune.
  2. He didn't have a palatial palace in every city – purchased by the proceeds of his preaching.
  3. He wasn't all about pleasure, happiness, lots of friends or political power.

## VI. Paul said, *"I live BY the faith OF the Son of God."*

- A. Don't be confused the potential misdirection of this verse.
  1. In the way we speak English, it sounds like Paul is saying that it was the faith which the Son of God had which fueled Paul's life.
  2. The tiny word *"by"* is one translation of the equally small Greek word *"en."*
  3. *"En"* is rendered *"by,"* as it is here, **163 times** but fifteen times as often it is *"in"* – **1,902 times**.
  4. The way Englishmen spoke in 1600 was different than it is today.
  5. In today's vernacular, Paul was saying, *"I live in the faith of the Son of God."*
  6. Or *"I live by faith in the Son of God."*
  7. I hope that no one has a problem with that rendition; it is the one which makes the best sense of the Greek.
- B. Before leaving that statement – *"I live by the faith of the Son of God"* – I want to point out about whom we are speaking.
  1. *"I live by the faith of the SON of GOD, who loved me, and gave himself for me."*
  2. About whom was Paul speaking, when he said, *"he gave himself for me?"*
  3. I hope that before I finished voicing the question mark, your heart answered *"the Lord Jesus."*
  4. Humanly speaking it was **Jesus of Nazareth** who willingly gave Himself up to the mob, then to the Sanhedrin and then to the Romans.
  5. It was **Jesus** who carried His own cross to Golgotha.
  6. It was **Jesus** who could have called ten thousand angels to keep from being nailed to the cross.
  7. But Paul hasn't mentioned the name Jesus since the 16<sup>th</sup> verse, and then it was tied to Jesus' full title.
  8. *"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus CHRIST, even we have believed in Jesus CHRIST, that we might be justified by the faith of CHRIST, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."*
- C. The name *"Jesus"* is mentioned **18 times** throughout this little epistle, but it's **NEVER just "Jesus."**
  1. 16 times *"Jesus"* is identified as *"Christ Jesus"* or *"Jesus Christ."*
  2. And twice Paul adds – *"the Lord Jesus Christ."*
  3. Then here in our verse Paul mentions another very special title – *"the Son of God."*
  4. The eternal Son of God became incarnate and was known for a while as *"Jesus"* – but He was in fact, God's anointed – the Messiah, the Christ.
- D. *"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."*

## VII. The verse ends with KEY to it all – the HIGHLIGHT of it all.

- A. *"I live by the faith of the Son of God, who LOVED me, and GAVE HIMSELF for me."*
  1. Paul was delighted to be crucified with Christ, because as he said, *"He loved me and gave Himself for me."*
  2. He rejoiced to be able to live, **because** *"Christ Jesus loved me and gave Himself for me."*
  3. He endured hatred and persecution because *"He loved me and gave Himself for me."*
  4. Paul lived, for the most part, above the flesh, because *"He loved me and gave Himself for me."*
- B. The Christian life is empowered by the fact that *"Son of God loves me and gave Himself for me."*