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Sermon Notes

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Crucified with Christ, Alive in Christ

Galatians 2:20

“Is there anything for me?”

In 1845, Danish author Hans Christian Andersen wrote a touching short story entitled “The Little Match Girl.” It was about a poverty-stricken little girl sent out into the city streets in the freezing weather of a New Year’s Eve by her cruel father. She has no hat, no shoes, and carries in her apron a bundle of matches to sell. As she walks through the darkened and frozen streets, she sees through the window of a mansion a lavish feast of roast goose; she can smell the warm aroma, and imagine what it would be like to sit at table with that family and partake of the feast. But she is unknown, poor, an outsider... with only her bundle of matches to sell. But there are no customers on this night. So she finds an alcove between two houses and huddles there. With numbed hands, one by one she lights her matches and looks into the glow of the brief flame... temporarily warmed, temporarily lightened... but one by one, each of those matches is lit, flares, burns for a moment or two, then goes out. As she looks at the brief flickering flame, she imagines herself to be sitting at a rich table and feasting on roast goose.

As tragic and pathetic is that picture, it is nothing compared to the plight of sinners who stand on the outside of the banquet hall of Almighty God, looking in at the table laden with the delights of his bounty... but on the outside looking in

God’s assessment of us in our natural state:

Revelation 3:17 ...you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.

Simply put, it doesn’t matter at all if God and all the Holy Ones will sit at a lavish banqueting table in the Kingdom of Heaven IF THERE’S NOTHING FOR ME!!

Christianity is a marvelous religion... it moves seamlessly from an intense concern for a single individual to an intense concern for a multitude greater than anyone can count from every tribe, language, people, and nation

In Eastern religions, like Buddhism and Hinduism, the vision of heaven is one of emptiness... of total loss of self-identity... like a single drop of water losing itself in an endless sea

But the Christian view of heaven starts with a complete AFFIRMATION of the INDIVIDUAL... it is INDIVIDUAL PEOPLE who will each be called by a new name and have a seat at the banquet table; each individual person will have his or her own portion and cup and will enjoy the lavish table that God spreads; moving out from that, however, Christianity is delighted in being part of a worldwide family of God with INDIVIDUALS from every nation on earth.

The marvelous balance of this is the culmination of Paul's incredible writing in Galatians 2

Galatians 2:20 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.

Context:

Galatians 2—two aspects of the challenge to the gospel, both coming from the Judaizers

Galatians 2:1-10—the Jerusalem Council and CIRCUMCISION (“compulsion”)

Galatians 2:3 Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek.

Galatians 2:11-21—the love-feast at Antioch... COMPELLING GENTILES to follow Jewish customs (dietary regulations)

Galatians 2:14 You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force (COMPEL) Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?

In both cases, Paul saw the issue as a threat to the TRUTH of the gospel

Titus' circumcision:

Galatians 2:5 We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

Dietary regulations and segregation in Antioch:

Galatians 2:14 When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all...

Paul Rises to Challenge Peter

Incredible moment in redemptive history!!

Two of the greatest leaders in church history going face to face, head to head, over a matter of eternal consequence

In this case, Peter was WRONG and Paul was RIGHT... and Paul had to confront him IN PUBLIC!!

Galatians 2:14 When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?"

Difficult Exegetical Question: Where Does the Quotation End?

Clearly Paul is speaking to Peter in verse 14... but is that all?

Does it end at 15? 16? 17?

Probably best to see Paul's statement to Peter going all the way through verse 21! An amazing theological development and passionate appeal

The theology of justification by faith WORKED OUT into PRACTICAL LIFE... table fellowship at church meals... no segregation, Jews and Gentiles eating together

Paul makes some amazing statements here, one after the other...

This verse is the second verse I ever memorized

This verse covers so much theological ground, it is staggering

This verse is a treasure box of truth... with profound insights we heirs of God can lift out one phrase at a time!!

Galatians 2:20 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.

I. I Have Been Crucified With Christ, and I No Longer Live

A. Paul's Intensely Personal Confession: "I" "Me"

B. Deep Mystery: Union with Christ

1. The Judaizers had a faulty view of salvation... basically, Christ enabled you to save yourself by the Law
2. The biblical view of salvation is that Christ is the Savior COMPLETELY!!
3. There is no salvation apart from Christ
4. From before the foundation of the world, God had chosen us IN CHRIST
5. Once we have faith in Jesus, God includes us IN CHRIST
6. For all eternity, God will accept us IN CHRIST
7. Our spiritual union with Christ is everything!!

C. Paul's Mysterious Assertion: "I have been crucified with Christ"

1. By faith in Christ, Paul is UNITED WITH CHRIST spiritually
2. So Paul asserts "I have been crucified with Christ" by his spiritual union with Jesus
3. This does not refer to how Christians should deny themselves and take up their crosses and follow Jesus
4. This does not refer to a daily dying to self in suffering or in service to others

5. It is a ONCE FOR ALL event, never to be repeated again!!!
6. When Christ died on the cross, He did not die alone, but spiritually united with all His sheep from every generation and from every nation

D. How Did this Come About? (verse 19)

1. Paul asserts that this death in Christ came about by the Law bringing him to Christ

Galatians 2:19 For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God.

2. The Law's relentless demands for perfection and the terrifying death penalty KILLED PAUL and brought him to Christ for salvation
3. Without the Law's killing work, Paul would have continued to try to earn his salvation by self-effort
4. But the Law acted as a schoolmaster to bring him to Christ

^{KJV} Galatians 3:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

5. Through the Law, Paul died to the Law when the Law KILLED HIM spiritually and made him despair of all righteousness

Romans 7:9 Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died.

6. The Law brought him to the cross
7. As Paul looked by faith to Christ crucified, he realized that Christ was not dying for his own sin, but for HIS

John Stott: "Before we can begin to see the cross as something done FOR us, we have to see it as something done BY us."

Not only is it true that I have been crucified with Christ

It is also true that Christ has been crucified because of ME!

8. The Law brought Paul to be crucified with Christ... the believer sees the bloody, dying, suffering Lamb of God and realizes this truth

2 Corinthians 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Isaiah 53:5-6 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. ⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

9. So, Paul realizes that the death Christ died, He died for Paul personally... taking on the punishment that Paul's sins deserved

E. Parallel Passage: Romans 6

Romans 6:1-11 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ² By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³ Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. ⁵ ¶ If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. ⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin-- ⁷ because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. ⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. ¹⁰ The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹ In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

1. We should not go on sinning that grace may increase
2. Why? WE DIED TO SIN!!! When? When we trusted in Christ, by faith, we were united with Him in His death on the cross

3. Paul speaks of baptism... total immersion into Jesus by our faith in Him, by the power of the Holy Spirit
 4. Jesus baptizes not in water but in the Holy Spirit; the Spirit immerses believers in Jesus by spiritual union
 5. United with Christ by faith, we are seen by God to have DIED with Jesus and also to have RISEN with Him... God sees the person we were in Adam as DEAD and that we are now a new person IN CHRIST
 6. Romans 6:6 says “our OLD SELF” (literally “old man” or “old person”) was crucified in Christ... that is our POSITION IN ADAM... born into sin, born into a sin nature, born into condemnation and death... that person is DEAD FOREVER
 7. Romans 6:6 also says that the “body of sin” must be “done away with” or “rendered powerless” little by little; that’s SANCTIFICATION
 8. But the death of the OLD MAN is once for all, united with Christ in His resurrection
 9. Simple statement: ANYONE WHO HAS DIED IS FREE FROM SIN... also FREE FROM THE LAW (in its power to condemn us)
- F. Dead to Self, Dead to Sin, Dead to the Law
1. Paul makes it very clear that he DIED in Christ... by union with Jesus, Christ’s crucifixion
 2. What does this mean? It means that the man Paul was before is DEAD FOREVER
 - a. We are each one of us born in Adam as sinful rejects... part of a cursed race
 - b. More than that, we have committed individual, personal sins in direct violation of God’s Holy Law
 - c. The Law stood opposed to us; it condemned us; it demanded our execution, so that God’s righteousness might be vindicated

3. But now, through faith, Paul was CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST...
Dead forever to the man he was... dead to the Law's power to condemn him; dead to sin and to every temptation
4. ONCE FOR ALL... never to be repeated!! But the implications are lived out DAILY in the next statement

G. "I No Longer Live"

1. Day after day, Paul says this to himself
2. This is the DEATH KNEEL to the selfish way of life Paul used to live
3. He used to live every day for himself—for his pride, his plans, his pleasures
4. Now he has died to that selfish way of life forever
5. Now he lives a life of self-denying love for God and for others

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

George Mueller: There was a day when I died, utterly died — died to George Müller, his opinions, preferences, tastes, and will; died to the world, its approval or censure; died to the approval or blame even of my brethren and friends — and since then I have only to show myself approved to God.

DEAD to HIS OWN AGENDA:

Acts 20:22-24 "And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. ²³ I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. ²⁴ However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me-- the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.

Most people awake every day and decide what they'd like to do with the day... what fits their own desires, their own plans; Paul had considered his life worth nothing to him from that point on... he was living only for the mission God had for him

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

Illus. Caring day after day for an extremely needy family member... every day, these people get up and have only one thought: "What does _____ need today?" They don't ask, "What do I want to do today??"

This is the hardest daily discipline there is...

Christians first and foremost ask: "What does my Lord and King Jesus want me to do today??"

Jesus stands before us every day and says, "Remember, you DIED with me, and now you only live FOR me!!"

Luke 9:23-24 Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price.

So, I NO LONGER LIVE = I no longer get to decide what I want to do today

DEAD TO THE WORLD:

Galatians 6:14 May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

The world, with all its allures and pleasures should now seem DEAD to us... we have no interest in it; dead also to the opinions of the

world... we seem FOOLISH and WEIRD and DEAD to the world... and world is not appealing to us at all:

Psalm 73:23-25 I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand. ²⁴ You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory. ²⁵ Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you.

Illus: Imagine a dying Christian man, lying on his death bed, surrounded by his family; he's been informed that he will almost certainly die today, and he knows in his heart it is true. God gives him a foretaste of heavenly joy, of sweet peace flowing into his heart, of the warm welcome he's about to experience into heavenly joy. WHAT COULD THE WORLD POSSIBLY OFFER HIM at that moment?

- A spectacular mansion in Malibu overlooking the Pacific Ocean? NO!
- A lucrative investment portfolio rich with stock in Google and Microsoft and Wal-Mart? NO!
- An all-expenses paid trip to the French Riviera? NOT INTERESTED!
- A cover story in Time Magazine? NO!!
- A year's supply of his favorite ice cream? NO!!
- A private jet? A red Italian sports car? An evening with his favorite athlete?
- HE IS ALREADY GONE!!! Already in heaven, even though still alive... like Stephen, surrounded by his own murderers, but in a sense, ALREADY GONE:

Acts 7:54-56 When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. ⁵⁵ But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶ "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

H. Implications

1. Number 1: Christ was crucified because of our sins, so we should be continually overflowing with thankfulness and HUMBLED DEEPLY
2. Number 2: We are DEAD to the Law's power to condemn us, so we should live free from fear of hell and condemnation
3. Number 3: We are DEAD to sin, meaning we never need to sin again! The power to say NO!!! to every temptation comes from this profound statement
4. Number 4: Every moment of every day, we must say again and again... "I no longer live" meaning I cannot live to my own agenda today

II. Christ Lives in Me

Galatians 2:20 I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

A. A New Life of Freedom!

1. If all we had were the death part, we would be lost while we still live in this world
2. Paul shows the deep, powerful, mystical union between himself and Jesus extends beyond the cross to the empty tomb!!
3. Christ's resurrection gives Paul daily POWER to live a whole new kind of life
4. Freedom forever from sin, Satan, death, hell, guilt, condemnation!!
5. Picture a man escaped from a death camp, slipping away in the night... heart beating wildly, crossing the border into a free country... looking left, looking right... where shall I go now?? I am a free man!! But what shall I do with my freedom??!!"
6. Well, Christ not only liberates us from death; He also gives us a whole new life to live in union with Him
7. CHRIST LIVES IN ME!!!!

B. Mysterious Spiritual Union

1. Words cannot accurately describe this spiritual union
2. On the Road to Damascus, Saul of Tarsus died and Christ raised a new man from the dead... Jesus Christ entered Paul's soul in some mysterious way, living INSIDE HIM... taking up an infinitely powerful residence in Paul's soul—a new living being WITHIN HIM, inside him
3. “Christ lives IN ME...”
4. Actually, Jesus promised that the Father and the Son would come and dwell inside a true believer:

John 14:23 Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

5. This happens only by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who also comes to dwell inside a true believer

C. The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

1. The Promise of the Spirit's Indwelling Presence:

John 14:16-17 I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever-- ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

2. By the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ lives IN US... we have the indwelling presence of the Triune God
3. Where once God was far off, aloof from us, and we from Him, now we are in perfect intimate fellowship with God
4. The indwelling Holy Spirit is the power for a whole new pattern of life that Paul was now to live
5. “By the Spirit”
 - a. we walk with Christ

- b. we put sin to death
 - c. we pray to the Father
 - d. we are assured that we are adopted
 - e. we think new thoughts... holy thoughts
 - f. we are gifted, empowered, and do the works of the Christian life
 - g. we make progress every day in the Christian life
6. But the Spirit is the SPIRIT OF CHRIST... and it is Christ who is living IN US His perfect resurrected life, free from sin and death forever

D. An Infinitely Superior Life to that of the Moralistic Paul Was

1. The Christ-indwelt, Spirit-empowered life is the best possible life a human being can live
2. Infinitely superior to the life of the arrogant moralist that Paul was before... trying to win God's favor by his diligent lawkeeping
3. By the Spirit of Christ, we now live a life of obedience to the moral laws of God

Romans 8:4 in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

III. The Life I Live in the Body I Live by Faith in the Son of God

Galatians 2:20 The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God

A. Daily Life Exalted, Not Denigrated

1. There is a real life to be lived, day after day
2. Paul calls it "the life I live IN THE BODY"... literally "in the flesh"... in this physical body—with its bones and muscles and blood vessels and digestive system and nervous system

3. That life in the physical body is real and must be lived out day after day in space and time... God created it and He wants it lived for His glory

B. Lived by Daily Faith in the Son of God

1. Moment by moment, Paul puts his trust in Jesus—crucified and risen
2. Moment by moment, Paul says “I am dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus”
3. He no longer trusts in himself but in Christ... he lives a daily life of FAITH

2 Corinthians 5:7 We walk by faith, not by sight.

4. It is a whole life of faith... of trusting in Jesus—of seeing Him who is invisible; of loving Him who is invisible
5. By the light of the risen Lord, we see everything differently
 - a. We see people differently... we see them in the light of Jesus
 - b. We see topics differently: money, time, possessions, marriage, children, aging, sickness, physical death, afflictions, pain, happiness, food, pleasure, mountains and oceans and sunsets and wildflowers... we see everything by faith in the Son of God

C. As You Began, So You Will Continue... by Faith in Jesus

Galatians 3:3 Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?

IV. Who Loved Me and Gave Himself for Me

- A. The Prize of this Passage: The Awesome Truth of the Intimate and Personal Love of Christ for EACH ONE OF HIS SHEEP!!

Vs 20 The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

- B. The Love of Christ is Identical to the Love of the Father for Us

1. The Son is the perfect reflection of the Father in everything
2. The love the Son has for us is a perfect extension of the Father's love for us

John 16:26-27 In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. ²⁷ No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.

C. The Love of God for the World Established Elsewhere

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

D. But the Love of God for Individuals Established Here

Vs 20 The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

1. It doesn't say "the Son of God, who loved US and gave Himself for US"... though it would have been true
2. Jesus knows and loves each of His sheep individually, personally, BY NAME

John 10:3 the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

3. Some struggle with this concept:
 - a. Jesus, the mighty King of the Universe, doesn't have time to know my little problems, to care about my little issues...
 - b. But that statement is a limitation of Christ's power: Jesus is ABLE both to sit enthroned over the circle of the earth ruling all nations, AND hear the prayers and feel the emotions of a single Christian... He is THAT mighty, THAT powerful!!

E. The Love of Christ for Each Christian Described

1. It is LOVE... in all the ways we use that word, but so much more

- a. The heart is able to be attracted to or repulsed from anything
- b. So we use the word “love” to refer to any strong attraction

“I love a warm, breezy, sunshiny fall day”

“I love warm yeast rolls”

“I love college football”

“I love my country”

“I love a thrilling action movie”

“I love my wife”

“I love watching my kids play”

The heart is ATTRACTED to these things, cherishes them, delights in them

So many people say “Love is not a feeling, it’s an action”

But love is a feeling that produces an action

The stronger the feeling, the greater the actions

Jesus “loved us and gave Himself for us”

- c. Jesus really LOVES each one of us... He doesn’t merely tolerate us or put up with us or reluctantly deal with us...

2. It is an eternal love

Jeremiah 31:3 The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.

3. It is an immeasurable love

Ephesians 3:17-19 And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to

know this love that surpasses knowledge-- that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

4. It is a self-sacrificial love

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

5. It is an atoning love

“... to make her holy...”

6. It is an unconditional love

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

7. It is an omniscient love

[Jesus said to his enemies] John 5:42 "...I know you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts.

John 10:14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me

Psalm 139:1-5 O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. ² You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. ³ You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. ⁴ Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD. ⁵ You hem me in-- behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me.

8. It is an unquenchable love

John 13:1 Before the Passover Festival, Jesus knew that His hour had come to depart from this world to the Father. Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

Romans 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

9. It is a transforming love

Ephesians 5:25-27 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

Revelation 3:19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.

10. It is a love that will never stop doing us good for all eternity!!

V. Applications: Come to the Table and Partake

A. Come to Him in Faith: Trust in Him for the salvation of your souls

B. Christ is EVERYTHING

St. Patrick:

Christ with me and Christ before me

Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath me,

Christ above me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit, Christ when I stand, Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me, Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me, Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that hears me.

C. Embrace Each Phrase of this Verse!

1. I have been crucified with Christ: once for all, dead to sin and to condemnation
2. I no longer live: My fanatical commitment to a selfish life died with Jesus
3. Christ lives in me: mystical union... dead with Christ, alive with Christ... Christ living in me

4. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God: a whole new way of living
 5. Who loved me and gave himself for me
- D. PARTAKE IN THE LORD'S SUPPER... each believer gets his or her own piece of bread and own cup... we eat of Him as an expression of the fact that Jesus loves us PERSONALLY... we have a place at His table forever!!