

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

AFTER SALVATION, TOTAL SURRENDER MUST FOLLOW



This website's major theme is God's love for man. However, if we go back to the main page of the website, right at the top, the introductory verse paints a picture that even devoted Christian believers find hard to comprehend – the agony and brutality of the cross. Yet this verse somehow shows **me** as crucified. Let us look at it again:

I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So, the life I now live in the body, I live because of the faithfulness of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. – **Galatians 2:20**

We think that God sent Jesus Christ to the Earth so that we may not die, but live. Yet here Paul states to the Galatians that it is no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me. What does he mean by this?

We must understand that the eternal life that God gives is the first step. You repented of your sin as part of the process towards salvation, but the nature to sin is still there. The devil will ensure that he lures you away from God's Word as often as he can. To fully protect ourselves from his onslaughts, we need to fully immerse ourselves in Jesus. We need to see ourselves as **crucified with Christ**. For many believers this is a difficult concept to understand. Was the purpose of Christ's death on the cross not to die for us, while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8), and spare us the agony? How could I be on the same cross?

The real meaning is that as believers, we should have put to death the old life and crucify it in a brutal manner so that it can never return. The old life should not be given any chance to regain a foothold as the old life does not accommodate the saving grace of Christ. Those who now have a new life should have so much of Christ in us that we no longer live to make our own decisions, but Christ who now lives in us, makes the decisions for us. In fact, the text makes it clear that Christ lives **in** us. Just consider this for a moment:

It is no longer I who live, **but Christ lives in me**.

The process of salvation should be so complete that when people see you, they will not say, "Look! There is the man who gave his life to Jesus". Instead, they must say, "Look, there is Jesus, in the form of a man we knew before". The transformation should be so dramatic that there is no doubt that this person is a new creation. Look at what the new creation is:

Therefore, if anyone is **in Christ**, he is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come! – **2 Corinthians 5:17**

The text is very clear – if you are **in Christ** as a believer, you are **new**. The old life is **behind** you. You now live a new life. The text does not need any more human explanation.

In the same way, Christ is **in me**. There is a reciprocal process going on here. John describes this beautifully:

1 I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.

2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.
 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.
 4 **Abide in Me, and I in you.** As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.
 5 I am the vine, you are the branches. **He who abides in Me, and I in him,** bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.
 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.
 7 **If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you,** you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.
 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. – **John 15:1-8, New King James Version**

As you can see, the process requires input from both sides. Jesus says that we must **abide** in Him. This means to **wait** in Him, and it can further be translated to mean to **stay** in or **dwell** in Him. He will then do the same for us.

Jesus is very clear that when we abide in Him and He in us, we will grow spiritually (bear fruit) and we will be successful. Here is a psalm that conveys the idea of being bearing fruit:

1 Blessed is the man
 Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
 Nor stands in the path of sinners,
 Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
 And in His law he meditates day and night.
 3 **He shall be like a tree**
Planted by the rivers of water,
 That brings forth its fruit in its season,
 Whose leaf also shall not wither;
 And whatever he does shall prosper. – **Psalm 1:1-3, New King James Version**

The man who does not walk, stand and sit with the ungodly, sinners and scornful, will be like a tree planted next to a river full of water, from where the tree gets its sustenance. More importantly, this person prospers – he is successful in what he does.

If we return to John 15, verse seven and eight, we find the same idea. As the tree next to the water in the psalm brings forth fruit, we will bear much fruit. However, there is a small bit of detail that we often (conveniently maybe) forget or not notice:

7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.
 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; **so you will be My disciples.** – **John 15:7-8, New King James Version**

If we abide in Christ and He in us, then we will bear fruit, so that we can be His disciples. We must not forget this last part. We are called to be His disciples first and foremost, but we cannot do this without the power we have received from the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).

Step one of your salvation process was the acceptance of eternal life as a gift. Step two is total surrender to Jesus, so much so that you will trust Him to become part of your entire being, including all your desires, pleasures, fears, and ambitions. He cannot only be on the outside, He must be inside! If you have Him outside of your being, you may feel that you can go out alone, leave Him behind and seek your own desires, pleasures, fears and ambitions, and then come back to Him when your plans have failed. If you are going to allow Him inside your being, you commit to having Him present wherever you go, and whatever you do. In this case there is little chance that what you do will not be successful.

If Christ lives in you, He becomes the driving force in your life. It is no longer you that live (your desires, pleasures, fears, and ambitions) but Christ and His ambitions for your life! I leave out desires, pleasures and fears are these are three aspects that do not go hand in hand with the life of a Christian believer. You have to denounce your own worldly desires and pleasures, and where fear is, love is not, as love drives out fear, as John writes:

17 Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.

18 There is no fear in love; **but perfect love casts out fear**, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

19 We love Him because He first loved us. – **1 John 4:17-19, New King James Version**

As a believer, fear is something that simply cannot be in your vocabulary. Of course, we are not talking about phobias – if you have a fear of heights, then that is a fear you are unlikely to overcome. The fears we talk about here are those things that you need to let Jesus control.

How do we manage to make this relationship, with Christ in us, work? We can only do it with the power of the Holy Spirit that also resides in us:

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the **Holy Spirit who is in you**, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? – **1 Corinthians 6:19, New King James Version**

This is an amazing concept: Christ in me, the Holy Spirit in me!

What are your ambitions for your life? We plan things, sometimes to the last detail, and then something like COVID-19 comes along and just ruins what we planned so carefully. Were we wrong in having ambitions? No, but maybe God has something else in store for you right now. When we look around us and see the devastation that COVID-19 has brought, we also see fear of the unknown, disappointment that ambitions are not being realised, and worse, we see dejection (loss of hope) and humiliation (loss of income and possessions).

Now is the time your faith in God is put into action. Maybe your ambitions were driven by yourself and are not His ambitions for your life. Maybe the direction you were heading into was not the direction He wants for you. It is now that, despite the situation around you, you must focus on Jesus who is walking on the water and is calling you to put your faith in Him on the line even though the odds seem heavily stacked against you. When Peter jumped out of the boat, there was a storm. You could be in the storm as well today. The problem for Peter was that he looked around him, took his eyes off Jesus, and saw only the mighty waves.

It was then that he started sinking. Did he drown? No, Jesus stretched out his hand and pulled Peter up until he was above the water again. He then took Peter back to the boat with Him.

Let us read the text:

29 So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.

30 But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

31 And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

33 Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God. – **Matthew 14:29-33, New King James Version**

When Jesus is with you in the storms of life, He will ensure you do not sink but can overcome incredible odds. However, it requires you to put your trust in Him and trust Him in your life. Together you will make it. On your own you stand no chance.