

Did not have a manuscript. Preached from PowerPoint notes:

"Crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:17–21)(11.24.19)

Picture of Calvary with Jesus and the two thieves crucified displayed on screen.

Galatians 2:17–21 (NIV84)

17 "If, while we seek to be justified in Christ, it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners, does that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not! 18 If I rebuild what I destroyed, I prove that I am a lawbreaker. 19 For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. 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. 21 I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"

The word of God for the people of God.

Title: Crucified with Christ

LET US PRAY.

INTRODUCTION:

This small portion of scripture embraces the big issue of the Christian religion. There is no way for you to satisfy the requirements of God's law on your own strength and desire. Only through your relationship with the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, can you be right with God the Father. Your trusting in Jesus and what Jesus has done for you, is called faith. This trust, this faith, results in a life that is immersed in the life of Christ. It is a matter of heart, mind, and soul. It is a complete makeover, changing the way you look at the world and at yourself.

On a first reading it seems quite confusing. Paul's teaching seems filled with paradoxes. We are Christians and yet we discredit Jesus as we continue to sin. So, how do we respond? Some people redouble their efforts, trying under their own power to live righteously. This is going back to the old life we lived before proclaiming our faith.

Instead, Paul tells us that we need to commit completely. We must depend on God's grace alone as we die to self and live for Jesus. There is a lot of living and dying going on in these five verses. That is exactly what is happening in our physical bodies as cells die and new cells are formed. The same thing happens in our spiritual life. Christ died on Calvary, but lives through His faithful followers. Obviously, I am not ignoring that Jesus lives and sits at the right hand of the Father; but, through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is also manifested in us.

BODY:

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ignoring that Jesus lives and sits at the right hand of the Father; but, through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is also manifested in us.

Tell the story about getting interviewed to work at the gas station.

While telling the story, be cutting up the apples.

Distribute apple slices. After they eat their apple slice, ask if they feel any smarter?

Humankind has eaten a piece of forbidden fruit from The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. God our Father, created the whole tree, all the fruit, the complete root system of this tree; even the earth, water systems, and nutrients that feed that tree. Only our Creator has the full extent of the knowledge of Good & Evil. We have only had a tiny sample at the crafty serpent's suggestion. And now, we presume that human knowledge of good and evil is somehow on par with the Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty's knowledge. How vain an idea that proves within itself the futility of our self-knowledge. We presume to tell God what is right and wrong.

We believe we are self-sufficient and able to be good. In fact, contrary to God's word, we believe that we are good. If it was possible for us to be good on our own then we don't need a Savior. God's law demonstrates to us that we have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

How do we know that an apple was the forbidden fruit?

Ask congregation.

Art and literature, and nowadays modern entertainment as time and again depicted the forbidden fruit has the apple.

But it is nowhere specified in scripture.

Genesis 2:9 (NIV84) And the Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:16–17 (NIV84) And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

7,500 varieties of apples are grown throughout the world.

Justification

Justification is the biblical teaching about how believers are declared to be right before God even though they are not actually righteous in themselves.

Acts 13:38–39 (NIV84)

38 "Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. 39 Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses.

Two Criminals

Have you ever wondered why there happened to be two criminals crucified on either side of Jesus? They represent all of humankind. One chose Christ and was promised Paradise. He said, "Lord remember me when you come into your kingdom. And Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.",

The other disdained Christ and received eternal death. There could have been 10 others crucified that day representing 10 different belief systems. But in fact, there are only two belief systems: those that believe Jesus is the Son of God who died for our sins and those that deny this truth.

Revelation 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

The only way

How can Jesus be the only way? John 14:6 (NIV84)

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. Acts 4:12 (NIV84)

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

John 3:16–18 (NIV84)

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. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

What about?

What about that person in a remote place in the world? What about someone who is sincerely faithful in another religion?

What are the motivations of these questions?

A good motivation relates to the Great Commission:

Matthew 28:18–20 (NIV84)

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

If you know about Jesus, these questions don't pertain to you. These types of questions are looking for an "out," a loophole, an exception.

But the Bible was written by men...(something the serpent would say: Did God really say? You won't surely die. You will be like God, knowing good and evil.)

Jesus, time and again, quoted the old testament scriptures...written by men. Oh, but you are using the Bible to validate the Bible. Yes, that is true.

Crucified with Christ

Hand out nails: These nails are to remind you that as a Christian you have been crucified with Christ.

Crucifixion is complete. Crucifixion is death.

I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

Calvin comments: "We now understand what is meant by abstaining from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; namely, that Adam might not, in attempting one thing or another, rely upon his own prudence; but that cleaving to God alone, he might become wise only by his obedience.

Is the cross of Christ the center of your life?

Romans 6:11 (NIV84) In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

The cross of Christ is where the love of God meets the justice of God.

If the cross of Christ is the center of your life, it keeps you humble and grateful.

The intertwining of our life with the life of Christ:

Christ lives in me

Ephesians 2:1–10 (NIV84)

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were

dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Did Jesus die for nothing?

The obvious answer is of course not.

He died that humankind may once again live in paradise.

Revelation 22:1–2 (NIV84)

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

The Fruit of the Spirit

This is one way we know that we no longer live but the Christ lives in us: Galatians 5:22-23

The barometer of the Christ pressure in our lives is how much fruit we are producing.

CONCLUSION:

Video of waterfall:

We are going to reaffirm our faith by remembering our baptismal vows. Please turn to page 50 in you hymnals.

As the Holy Spirit leads, come forward. I will wet my hand in the baptismal fount; make the sign of the cross on your forehead; and, call on you to remember your baptism.

Amen and amen. Let us pray.