

Title: Two Peoples – One Way (Part 6)

Passage: Galatians 2:20

Theme: Union with Christ

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**** JOY ** JOY ** JOY ** JOY ** JOY ** JOY ** JOY ****

[i] Scripture Reading and Prayer (my translation)

15 We [are] Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles. 16 Yet we know that a man is not justified by works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have believed in Christ Jesus so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the Law, since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified. 17 But if while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be! 18 For if I rebuild what I once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor. 19 For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ – and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. 21 I do not nullify the grace of God: for if righteousness [comes] through the Law, then Christ died for no purpose.

[ii] It's been a month since we've been in Galatians . . .

I promised last time that I would revisit t/topic of t/Law in t/Bible. Back then, we noted t/word “Law” (Grk νομος) is used 6 times in t/verses we just read. (6/7)

I counted 32 instances of t/use of that word (νομος) in t/entire book. I think only Romans uses t/word more.

Key topic.

As I said last time ==> Simple word with profound implications.

1 of those implic. is that it can be hard to define.

[iii] Biblical Words

Grk νόμος (law) & it's Heb. equiv. תּוֹרָה (instruction).

Can refer to law in a number of ways.

Not monolithic in meaning. If you don't understand that, you are paving t/way for some bad theology.

Law in general could be defined as God's righteous standards as it relates to the attitudes and actions of men.

It is revelatory: comes by way of t/conscience (Rom. 2); Script.

[iv] As it relates to the latter: sum this up 3 different ways

In t/Bible, t/word "law" can refer to:

1. Script. in gen. (partic. t/OT),
2. Laws that apply to all people everywhere at all times,
3. T/Mosaic Law given to Israel.

When it's used of t/Law given to Israel, Engl. translations usu. capitalize t/Word w/the def. article: "The Law."

Can be tricky when it comes to translation because it's not always clear whether t/word refers to The Law or law in gen. (orig. MSS don't help here).

But . . .

[v] When it comes to the Mosaic Law we can look at in one of two ways

1. Universal. Reflects t/immutable char. of God. Ontological.
2. Provisional. Laws given for a given time and situation.

Universal laws cannot change (grounded in God's nature).
Provisional laws can change.

That's true in our everyday experience. We have universal & provisional laws that we are confronted w/every day.

Speed limits change. The federal speed limit was lowered in 1974 to 55. That was done away w/in 1995. Now states can set their own speed limits & in some states you can drive 80 on certain highways.

That's a provis. law. No moral harm is done by changing it. Some provisional laws can be done away w/entirely — our government would operate much better w/less regulation.

Point is: provisional laws are given for a certain places & circumstances. They can be adopted, changed or done away with entirely & no moral harm has been done.

Universal laws on t/other hand cannot change.
Laws against things like murder; child abuse; idolatry — are universally wrong — at any time / any situation / culture.

[vi] While I think this is clear biblically — I can also prove this logically thru the doctrine of alternate worlds
This relates to God's middle-knowledge, His knowledge of everything hypothetical & t/ensuing results.

We're talking about t/mind of G. & what He freely could have done. For example, it wasn't logically necessary for G. to create at all. He didn't need to do so, as if there were any lack in Him. We call this His aseity — self-suff. in Himself.

In t/mind of G. there are innumerable possibilities as to what He could have done. So an alternate world is any world He could have created that differs from our own & ea. other.

Examples: In one alternate world t/grass could be blue // Or I may not exist // Run a 3 min. mile.
Israel or t/CH could be absent from an alternate world.

G's nature is not contingent on t/existence of anything other than Himself.

However, there are some things that cannot change in any alternate world. There could be no alternate world where it's okay: to blaspheme t/sacred name // child abuse // cheat/steal
Laws of logic would remain the same in any alternate world.

Why? Because those things reflect t/immutable nature of G.

The color of grass is provisional; God's character is universal. Therefore, laws that directly reflect his unchanging nature cannot change.

[vii] Bring this back to t/O.T. Law . . .

Think about t/dietary restrictions given to Israel. They were forbidden to eat certain foods like shellfish & pork.

Is there anything inherently wrong w/bacon?

Are pigs ontologically evil. No.

In any alternate world G. could have said, "don't eat chicken."

Even something like the Sabbath had exceptions.

Jesus noted that t/"priests of the Temple break the Sabbath."
(Matt. 12:5). Conditions / exceptions that aren't true of universal laws.

Dietary restrictions can change or be done away w/entirely (as under t/N.C.). They're provisional.

Yet, t/universal aspects of t/Law always remain. They were in effect B4 t/nation of Israel; they are in effect today, not only for t/CH but for all men everywhere.

While all law is law, not all law is universal.

So we can look at law as universal (eternal and unchanging) & provisional (bound by time & circumstances).

[viii] Focus your attention on verse 20 . . .

20 I have been crucified with Christ – and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

“Probably no verse in the Letter of Galatians is quoted more frequently by evangelical Christians than this one. Much harm has been done to the body of Christ by well-meaning persons who have perpetuated erroneous interpretations of these words. Properly understood, Paul’s words give sanction neither to perfectionism nor to mysticism.”
[Timothy George, 200]

As is all-to-often t/case in Bible memorization we learn a single verse & don't learn t/context. Sometimes our understanding of that verse isn't as accurate as it should be.

We want to look at it in context.

Title: **Two Peoples and Only One Way** (Part 6)
Jew/Gentile -there's only one way to be justified before G [^]

From that central theme →

I. Essential Elements of the Gospel in Galatians (vv. 15-21)

Particularly in these 7 vv.

A. The Universal Nature of Sin (v. 15-16a)

Sin is universal in scope. Doesn't matter if you are a Jew or Gentile . . . Rom. 3:23.

B. Justification Is by Faith Alone (v. 16)

{expand on this point}

Spending t/past few weeks on our 3d pt →

C. The Believer's Union With Christ (vv. 17-20)

Union with Christ describes a life that is Christ –
“to live is X, to die gain” (life/death - everything in between)

That phrase in v. 17 introd. us to t/doctrine

17a **But if while seeking to be justified in Christ . . .**

For the believer - everything is about being “in Christ” - in union with Him.

Rem. t/Apostle Paul, at t/end of Rom 7 cries out “wretched man that I am! Who will free me from this body of death?”

2 vv. later He concludes “. . . there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

If you are a B.A. believer, you are in X & X dwells in you.
Powerful truth.

a. Three good quotes

“Not only do we only know God through Jesus Christ, but we only know ourselves through Jesus Christ; we only know life and death through Jesus Christ. Apart from Jesus Christ we cannot know the meaning of our life or our death, of God or of ourselves. Thus without Scripture, whose only object is Christ, we know nothing and can see nothing but obscurity and confusion in the nature of God and in nature itself.”
[Pascal]

Old Westminster theologian, John Murray → “Why does the believer entertain the thoughts of God’s determinate counsel with such joy? Why can he have patience in the perplexities and adversities of the present? Why can he have confident assurance with reference to the future and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God? It is because he cannot think of past, present or future apart from union with Christ.” [Cited in Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, 840]

"We are in mind and meditation to consider Christ crucified and first, we are to believe that he was crucified for us. This being done, we must go yet further, and as it were spread ourselves on the cross of Christ believing and withal beholding ourselves crucified with Him." [Puritan William Perkins, 1558-1602]

C. The Believer's Union With Christ (vv. 17-20)

1. To be "In Christ" is not to be "In Sin" (17)

2. To be "In Christ" is to have died to sin and the Law (18-19)

3. To be "In Christ" is to have been crucified with Christ (20)

1. To be "In Christ" is not to be "In Sin" (17)

17 But if while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners [i.e. like Gentiles], is Christ then a minister of sin?

a. Here's the accusation

Judaizers

(1) This is against Paul — an argument he anticipates

“You have abandoned the Law as a means to righteousness. Therefore, you are like t/Gentiles who have no Law. If this is where X leads you, then He is a minister of sin.”
False accusation.

Yes, to rest in t/assured hope of our justif. solely because we are in X (that by faith) is to abandon t/Law (or any works) as a means to that end.

Yes, for t/Jews, this puts them in t/same category as Gentiles (v. 15) "sinners" who do not live by the Mosaic Law.

No, that's not going to lead you into sin.

(a) But: this is the common refrain of the legalist

Anyone who would add works into t/equation of what it means to stand justified b4 God:

“Grace alone will lead you to sin. Need law . . . ”

I've said it before, but it bears repeating: this was t/accus. of Rome against t/Prot. Reformers.

In his book “Written in Stone” Philip Graham Ryken quotes Martin Luther's response to a student who heard Luther's discussion of free grace and asked, "Then we may live as we want?" Luther replied, "Yes. Now what do you want?"

(2) Grace can't lead you to sin because Christ can't!

This is what our union w/X is about!

Freedom from sin; freedom to know, serve, & love JC!

Grace can't lead you to sin because X can't lead you to sin.

Think about it – if you are spiritually joined to JC; His life & yours are connected, inseparable – so much so that it can be said that you are “in Him” and He is “in you” – if that's true, can He lead you into sin? No!

Or as Paul puts it at t/end of v. 17 →
17d . . . **May it never be!**

1. To be “In Christ” is not to be “In Sin” (17)

Rather →

2. To be "In Christ" is to have died to sin and the law (18-19)
18 For if I rebuild what I once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor.

I'm not going to rebuild that which I have died to.

To go back to t/Law is to leave t/arms of X in order do embrace Moses. It's to reject t/benefits of X's death (v. 21).
It's to prove yourself a transgressor.

3:9–10 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer. 10 For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM.”

To go back to t/Law is to go back to “the bondwoman”(4:22)
It's to climb Mt. Sinai & be enslaved all over again (4:25).
It's to put yourself under a dead covt. (Heb. 8:13).

2. To be "In Christ" is to have died to sin and the law (18-19)
19 For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God.

**b. We asked the question – what does this mean?
“Through the Law I died to the Law”?**

(1) Two basic options:

(a) The Law lead Paul to Christ where he died with Christ to the Law

T/Law lead Paul to t/Cross. It demonstrates that we cannot keep it perfectly; we're sinners unable to save ourselves. Only hope is to be found "In Christ."

Jesus is t/seed of t/OT & t/fulfillment of t/promise (3:19).

3:23–26 23 But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. 24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. 26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

(a) The Law lead Paul to Christ where he died with Him to the Law

(b) “Through the Law I died to the Law” may be referring to the work of Christ who put an end to the Law by keeping and fulfilling it

i. As we read in 4:4-5 ==>

X was born under t/Law that He might redeem those condemned by it.

He lived in fulfillment of t/Law // perfectly keeping t/Law.
Thru His death/resurr. he put an end to t/Law. N.C.

Romans 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for
righteousness to everyone who believes.

“end” = τέλος — “to bring to its intended ends” /
“logical conclusion”

ii. Oft debated Matthew 5:17

“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets;
I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

Craig Blomberg’s words are helpful here ==>

“Now Christ makes clear that he is not contradicting the law,
but neither is he preserving it unchanged. He comes “to
fulfill” it, i.e., he will bring the law to its intended goal. . . .
Both the Law and the Prophets together (v. 17) and the Law
by itself (v. 18) were standard Jewish ways of referring to
the entire Hebrew Scriptures (our Old Testament).” [Craig

Blomberg, Matthew, vol. 22, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman
Publishers, 1992), 103]

iii. Two relevant verses from the book of Romans

Rom. 6:14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are
not under law [law in general] but under grace.

Rom. 7:6 But now we have been released from the Law,
having died to that by which we were bound, so that we
serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

(2) This is a death unto life →

19a **For through the Law I died to the Law . . .**
why?

19b **. . . so that I might live to God.**

Living to God comes by way of our Uw/X.

C. The Believer's Union With Christ (vv. 17-20)

1. To be "In Christ" is not to be "In Sin" (17)

2. To be "In Christ" is to have died to sin and the law (18-19)

(3) We noted that the verse divisions are different in the Greek as opposed to the English

(a) The first part of v. 20 in most English versions is the last part of v. 19 in Greek

19 For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ –

(b) Brings out an important emphasis

How did Paul die to the Law? By being crucified w/X.

Ancient Roman law applied a macabre form of punish. for those guilty of capital murder. After conviction t/officials would bind t/criminal face to face w/his victim. He would be fastened to t/rotting corpse until he himself died as a result.

Jesus was no murderer; we are t/murderers.

He is t/innocent Lamb of God who died for us.

“. . . Christ fastened me to Himself by cords of a love stronger than death and carried me to the Cross where, with him, I was 'jointly crucified.'" [Thomas Brooks in Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices, 50]

Martin Luther ==>

“By [faith] you are so cemented to Christ that He and you are as one person, which cannot be separated but remains attached to Him forever.” [Galatians]

Brings us to v. 20 & our 3d point under that heading →

3. To be "In Christ" is to have been crucified with Christ (20)

a. You can see the progression →

1. To be "In Christ" is not to be "In Sin" (17)

2. To be "In Christ" is to have died to sin and the Law (18-19)

3. To be "In Christ" is to have been crucified with Christ (20)

20a I have been crucified with Christ –

c. What does that mean? {review from last time}

What does it mean for t/believer to have been crucified w/X?

(1) Perfect Passive Verb

Perfect tense ("I have been c. w/X"). {Ramifications}

Passive voice → the subject (you who believe) has been acted upon by someone else (God). {Ramifications}

(2) Words "crucified with" come from the Greek verb σσταύρωω

(a) Paul uses it twice in a spiritual sense (Rom. 6:6)

Rom 6:6 . . . our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin;

(b) Word is also used literally—to literally be crucified along with someone else

Used that way in t/Gospels of t/two thieves cruc. w/Him. They were c. w/Him physically (literal cross // nails).

1 of t/2 was also crucified w/X spirituality (as he died he confessed Jesus as Lord & was granted eternal life).

Not one of us will ever be crucified w/X physically. That only happened once in history. However, every born-again believer has been crucified w/Him spiritually.

(3) This is a spiritual reality

That is a reality that our naturalistic culture denies.

(a) It's good for us to understand what sorts of worldviews inform our secular culture

i. We live in an age where the philosophy of Logical Positivism rules the day

LP is a school of philosophy that emphasizes materialism, empiricism, philosophical naturalism & t/scientific method as t/highest pursuits of rational thought.

IOW - only t/material/matter exists & we know that by empirical evidence & t/scientific method.

Remember my box illustration {explain}

A famous principle of LP is that any statement not inherently verifiable is meaningless & can be safely ignored.

“The pulpit is made of wood” ==> verifiable.

Statement: “God exists” or “I have been crucified w/X” acc. to LP cannot be verified & can therefore be ignored as meaningless.

ii. Problem: Logical Positivism is self-refuting

It asserts that a statement that can't be empirically tested is meaningless. However, how do you prove LP?

It's a philosophy that cannot itself be empirically tested.
By its own criterion, logical positivism is meaningless.

(b) Spiritual reality is real!

Spiritual or non-material concepts are every bit as true as material ones..... Laws of logic / Existence of other minds.

Marriage (“two become one flesh”).

Reckon it as true, believer: When JC was put to death on that cross 2k yrs ago, a fact of hist., you were spiritually crucified there w/Him. You died w/Him in order that you might be resurr. / live w/Him.

d. But as we've said before – this is a death unto life:

20b . . . **And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.**

(1) A life of faith ==>

“I have died, yet I live! T/life I live in t/flesh (in my human existence) I live by faith. Not just any faith – faith in t/Son of God who loved me! Who gave Himself up for me!”
Emphatic. Context of Paul to Pet.

It's not about observing t/Law; it's not about a religion of works. It's about dying & living & pursuing t/joys of knowing JC – by faith. A life lived in t/power of t/Spirit!

(a) This is how we are to live!

To live & learn what it means to die to self.

To put t/axe of t/cross to t/tree of selfishness.

An anonymous poet:
*God harden me against myself,
The coward with pathetic voice
Who craves for ease, and rest, and joys:
Myself, arch-traitor to myself;*

(b) It's what we pursue in life (known by our pursuits)

Our life in t/flesh cannot be driven by a pursuit of t/flesh. Or, to put it another way: As followers of JC we follow Him, not t/world or our own selfish ambitions.

If we are united w/Him then there are no other viable options

This is what it means to live by faith in t/SOG.

This is all of life: what I say is no longer to be directed by my flesh, but by JC // I see . . . // I hear . . . desire . . .

As t/16th c. German Reformer Martin Luther observed:

“I cannot teach, write, pray, or give thanks without the instrumentality of the flesh; yet these activities do not proceed from the flesh, but from God.”

He went on to say:

“A Christian uses earthly means like any unbeliever. Outwardly they look alike. Nevertheless there is a great difference between them. I may live in the flesh, but I do not live after the flesh. I do my living now “by the faith of the Son of God.” Paul had the same voice, the same tongue, before and after his conversion. Before his conversion his tongue uttered blasphemies. But after his conversion his tongue spoke a spiritual, heavenly language. We may now understand how spiritual life originates. It enters the heart by faith. Christ reigns in the heart with His Holy Spirit, who sees, hears, speaks, works, suffers, and does all things in and through us over the protest and the resistance of the flesh.”

This is the “normal Xn life” - for all who know King Jesus.

e. Crucifixion isn't the end of the story

(1) Jesus' mission didn't end w/the crucifixion

Resurrection! Death was swallowed up in victory!

Same for you. Being crucified w/X was t/beg. of life for you.

20 I have been crucified with Christ – and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

John Wesley describes in his journal how reading Luther's commentary on Galatians was used so greatly in his conversion to Christ: "I labored, waited, and prayed to feel 'who loved me and gave himself for me.'

(2) Freedom (John 8:32)

(a) John Piper →

"Full freedom is what you have when no lack of opportunity, no lack of ability, and no lack of desire prevents you from doing what will make you happiest in a thousand years. . . .

The freedom of opportunity to do what we can, the freedom of ability to do what we desire, and the freedom of desire to do what will bring us unending joy... Therefore, true Christians are the freest people in the world." [John Piper, Hagar and

Slavery vs. Sarah and Freedom, Galatians 4:21-31. www.DesiringGod.org]

(b) True in principle, but what about in practice?

Maybe you have been listening to t/voice of Satan "barking orders at you from across the road" even tho you are no longer subject to his authority?

There is freedom in JC from t/most persistent of sins.

Maybe you've not switched allegiances.

Maybe you are still living “in a field where Satan is king.”

May you hear t/voice of Jesus, t/irresistible voice of t/Savior calling to you from t/other side: “Believe in Me so as to be saved.”

The eleventh-century theologian Anselm wrote *Cur Deus Homo*—“Why God Became Man.” He worked out the logic of the atonement in the following way: Human beings owe a debt to God that they cannot pay, but must pay it; God, who is owed the debt and can pay it, takes on human nature in the form of Christ so that, as man, he pays the debt that we owe; this Christ takes our place and offers compensation (“satisfaction”) to God as God on our behalf.

In his book *The Cross of Christ*, John Stott reflected on Anselm’s model, noting that the essence of sin is man substituting himself for God while the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for man.

t/WOG shows us what we really need & it's t/power of t/HS that brings us to our all-sufficient Savior, t/sum and substance of all our hopes & dreams.

Last quote by Martin Luther ==>

“When we look at ourselves we find plenty of sin. But when we look at Christ, we have no sin. Whenever we separate the person of Christ from our own person, we live under the Law and not in Christ; we are condemned by the Law, dead before God.

Faith connects you so intimately with Christ, that He and you become as it were one person. As such you may boldly say: “I am now one with Christ. Therefore Christ’s righteousness, victory, and life are mine.” [Luther]

3. To be "In Christ" is to have been crucified with Christ (20)

Union with X – Grace – Grace to live // die.

End w/a song . . . Keith Green – Grace By Which I Stand
*Lord, the feelings are not the same,
I guess I'm older, I guess I've changed.
And how I wish it had been explained, that as you're
growing you must remember,
That nothing lasts, except the grace of God, by which I
stand, in Jesus.
I know that I would surely fall away, except for grace, by
which I'm saved.*

*Lord, I remember that special way,
I vowed to serve you, when it was brand new.
But like Peter, I can't even watch and pray, one hour with
you,
And I bet, I could deny you too.
But nothing lasts, except the grace of God, by which I stand,
in Jesus.
I'm sure that my whole life would waste away, except for
grace, by which I'm saved.*

“The Person of Christ is to me the surest as well as the most sacred of all facts; as certain as my own personal existence; yea, even more so: for Christ lives in me, and He is the only valuable part of my existence. I am nothing without my Savior; I am all with Him, and would not exchange Him for the whole world.” [Phillip Schaff]