

Title: Two Peoples – One Way (Part 8)

Passage: Galatians 2:20-21

Theme: Union with Christ

Number: 0225Ga2.20-21(22)

Date: February 9, 2025

[i] Scripture Reading and Prayer (my translation)

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] Story about Michael Jordan

Sev. yrs ago I came across a story about BB HOF Michael Jordan (w/whom I share t/same birth mo. & yr., along w/CB)

When Jordan first landed at Chicago O’Hare airport in 1984, t/Bulls staff forgot to send someone to pick him up. Needing to find a ride of his own, he approached a local limo driver waiting in t/arrival section of t/airport. Come to find out, t/driver, George Koehler, had played 4 yrs. of HS BB w/Larry Jordan, Michael's older brother.

T/driver’s ride never showed, so he was able to take MJ where he needed to go.

T/2 immed. hit it off & have been friends since that seemingly random day at t/airport.

In a 2010 interview Koehler explained his friendship w/MJ:

“. . . 25 years later I don't drive the limo for him, but we're still really close friends. I've met just about everyone under the sun through Michael. If you picked up a book about Michael's life, it would be my life, just Michael's name on the cover. I don't know if you believe in fate, but I obviously do. My whole life could've been different if my customer had showed up that day.”

As cool as it would be to be friends w/someone like MJ, think, Xn, about what it means to know JC.

Not to press t/analogy too far, but that story reminds me of t/believer's UWX.

We, who are nobodies, have been destined, not by “fate” but by God's electing grace, to know X. As for our union w/Him – it is, like t/story, as if His life *is* our life. Certainly, had we not come to know Him, our lives would be incredibly diff

[ii] I want to pick up where we left off last time

Under the main heading of →

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

We've been spending an extended time on t/third point →

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

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.

We've broadened our study of Union w/X ==>

II. Six Implications of our Union with Christ

We covered t/first 3 last time ==>

A. Salvation (We are Justified in Christ)

We talked about t/doctrine of justification & how it differs from sanct. {explain}

We noted that we are not justified by works of any kind. It's not what we do; it's what God has done.

Key to t/recovery of t/Gospel at t/time of t/PR.

Rom. Cath. Catechism, 2068 ==>

The Council of Trent teaches that the Ten Commandments are obligatory for Christians and that the justified man is still bound to keep them; the Second Vatican Council confirms: "The bishops, successors of the apostles, receive from the Lord ... the mission of teaching all peoples, and of preaching the Gospel to every creature, so that all men may attain salvation through faith, Baptism and the observance of the Commandments."

“Any church which puts in the place of justification by faith in Christ another method of salvation is a harlot church.”
[Charles Spurgeon]

B. Sanctification (We Live in Christ)

That is so evident in this verse. Note t/pronouns (I/me).

Say them to yourself

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.

1. We must understand the difference between justification and sanctification

John Piper ==>

“Justification is the gracious act of God in which, by uniting us to Christ through faith alone, God counts us perfectly righteous solely by imputing to us his own righteousness accomplished by Christ, thus satisfying all the law’s demands for our punishment and perfection through Christ’s own suffering and obedience on our behalf.

Sanctification is the gracious act of God, distinct from justification, and not part of it, by which God progressively frees us from sinning and conforms us to the character of Christ. Historic Protestant faith has always believed that anyone who is truly justified will be truly sanctified.”

2. This is the ζω (life) that we live (v. 20)!

I no longer live (why? Because I have been crucified w/X).
While I'm dead, I'm also alive (Christ lives in me).

So the life (earthly life) I live in the flesh (earthly existence)
I live by faith in the Son of God, the one who was crucified in my place.

C. Satisfaction (God is Satisfied with us in Christ)

G.accepts us & is satisfied w/us not bc of who we R but bc we R in X. G. is satisfied with us in X.

That's where we left off last time.

II. Six Implications of our Union with Christ

D. Sin (Our Battle is Fought In Christ)

1. Could call this the negative side of our sanctification: putting sin to death

2. What is sin?

“Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.” [Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q.14.]

Sin is t/violation of a standard – G. (would be no sin / evil if G. didn't exist).

Sin is t/creature in rebellion against G. /against his expressed commands, those things that are in keeping w/His nature.

R.C. Sproul ==>

"In the least transgression I set myself above the authority of God, doing insult to His majesty, His holiness, and His sovereign right to govern me. Sin is a revolutionary act in which the sinner seeks to depose God from His throne. Sin is a presumption of supreme arrogance in that the creature vaunts his own wisdom above that of the Creator, challenges divine omnipotence with human impotence, and seeks to usurp the rightful authority of the cosmic Lord." [R.C. Sproul. Ethics

and the Christian [1989], p. 20]

3. All comes down to the heart (heart issue)

Sin is internal in nature.

a. This is where Jesus take us (Matthew 5)

27 “You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY’; 28 but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Same for murder. You’re not innocent just because you haven’t committed t/act.

1 John 3:15a Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer...

4. We are in a war

When G. called you to salv. He called you to spiritual battle.

a. We fight on three fronts

World / Flesh / Devil .

World: Don't be conformed to it, but be transformed by t/renewing of your mind. Can only do that if we are “in X”

Flesh: take no provision for the sinful desires of self; rather, clothe yourself w/X. We can only do that if we are “in X”

Satan & his Minions: You have an adversary, the devil, who prowls around like a lion, seeking to devour you. Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Resist him, firm in your faith.

Can only do that if we are “in X”

5. How can I overcome besetting sin?

Those behaviors that I most easily fall prey to?

a. Be involved in the life of a good church

CH is indispensable to healthy Xn living.

b. Develop and nurture good relationships

Accountability.

c. Be disciplined

Discipline of reading Scripture, reading good books, prayer. Keep fighting. You may lose some battles, but you won't lose t/war. Stay in t/race. Learn more and more about what it means to be saturated w/sound doctrine.

d. Live out the reality of your position in Christ

The reality of 2:20 . . . / Reality of 5:16 . . .

Position / Practice in Colossians 3:1–5

1 Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. 5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.

e. Keep fighting / Persevere in the Race

(1) Oswald Chambers

“Perseverance is more than endurance. It is endurance combined with absolute assurance and certainly that what we are looking for is going to happen.

Perseverance means more than just hanging on, which may be only exposing our fear of letting go and falling. Perseverance is our supreme effort of refusing to believe that our hero is going to be conquered. . . . there is a call to

spiritual perseverance. A call not to hang on and do nothing, but to work deliberately, knowing with certainty that God will never be defeated.” [Oswald Chambers, “My Utmost for His Highest,” Feb. 22]

Persistence: like chopping down a big Oak tree w/an ax. 1st blow just cuts bark. 10 blows would not do much damage. Each blow in itself seems w/o consequence. Yet t/accumul. of blows will eventually cause t/tree to fall.

D. Sin (Our Battle is Fought In Christ)

E. Suffering (We Endure Suffering in Christ) {restate}

1. To live is to suffer

Trials, Afflictions, Sickness, Death – can't be avoided.

For man is born for trouble, as sparks fly upward. [Job 5:7]

“Good people [God's ppl] must never expect to escape troubles; if they do, they will be disappointed, for none of their predecessors have been without them.” [C.H. Spurgeon, Morning and Evening, Morning: March 8]

2. My wife and I know unimaginable suffering

9 yrs ago this past Xmas Eve. I took our daughter, Giana, w/me to find a Xmas tree. In an instant our lives were turned upside down by a drunk driver. Giana endured tremendous suffering as a result of her injuries; G. called her home 6 mo. later.

We were in AZ over Xmas & a friend of mine made t/remark that I have “blood on my tunic.” I suppose I have lots of blood there, much of it from an unending stream of tears.

If you've lived for any length of time you get bloody.

Become a grizzled, blood-stained warrior for X.

2. The abhorrent theology that promises a pain-free life for Christians is a lie from hell

The G. who called us to faith also called us to suffering.

Why? Why does G. allow His children, those He loves, to suffer—sometimes horrendously?

I can't begin to tell you how much I struggled w/this ?

I have cried out to G asking “why?” Telling Him that I wouldn't wish what we've gone thru on my worst enemy. Recently struck me, as if G. said to me: “I submitted my Son to much worse for My enemies. Even for you & Giana.”

Thru t/death of Jesus we live // Giana lives.

3. Why do we suffer? What's going on?

a. We suffer as a direct result of living in a fallen world

(1) We live in a post-Genesis 3 world

When our first parents sinned they brought t/entire creation down w/them.

We're subject to sin at so many diff. levels. We're subject to a fallen creation that brings about disasters, disease & death. We're subject to t/sin of others, like drunk-drivers.

We all will experience times of great sorrow & pain. Life hurts.

John 16:33 “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, |||| but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

(2) God remains on His throne

His sovereignty & His glory & His faithfulness are not trumped by tragedy. He remains sov. // glorious // faithful.

When tragedy strikes many people ask, "What's wrong with God?" "Where was He when this happened?" As if t/fault were His.

(3) Remember Luke 13:1-5?

Some people came to Jesus & asked him about some fellow Galileans whom Pilate had murdered, mixing their blood w/their sacrifices. Jesus, no doubt knowing their thots ==> “Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered this fate? “I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”

He brings up another tragic accident w/which they were fam: “Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? “I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”

What's t/point? It's not always about personal sin, it's about living in a fallen world. Suffering & death is inevitable. Just a matter of when.

If you die in a tragic accident at t/age of 14 or you die of natural causes at age of 85 you still die & have to face an

eternal destiny in either heaven or hell. So, repent that you don't likewise perish.

b. Personal Sin

Sometimes we bring about our own suffering.

Don't be surprised if you suffer a bad marriage when you've neglected it year after year. // wayward children.

Many health woes result from years of irresponsible behavior. Petting your favorite sin will bring about spiritual suffering.

You reap what you sow. Later in Gal. (6:8):

. . . the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life.

1 Peter 4:15–16 15 Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; 16 but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.

Years ago, I read a story about a Civil War soldier named George Wyatt. During a battle George Wyatt was drawn by lot to go to the front. He had a wife and six children.

So another man named Richard Pratt offered to go in his place. His superiors agreed. He joined the ranks at the battlefield, actually bearing the name and number of George Wyatt. Pratt ended upon being killed in action.

Later, the authorities sought again to draft George Wyatt into service.

He protested, entering the plea that he had died in the person of Pratt. He insisted that the authorities consult their own records as to the fact of his having died in identification with Pratt, his substitute.

Wyatt was thereby exempted as beyond the claims of law and further service. He had died in the person of his representative.

W.E. Maxwell, past president of Prairie Bible Institute (Alberta, Can.) from whom I drew this story, goes on to comment:

"George Wyatt did not find deliverance by fighting the law or endeavoring to please the authorities. He took his death-position according to the Government record. He acted on the basis of 'it is written.' He had died in the person of his representative. Even so, I, too, have a Substitute and Representative. He entered a deadly combat and died my death. I have been 'crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me' (Gal. 2:20). That is a great fact. No amount of struggling on my part can make it more true. I am an actual partaker of Christ, and, therefore of His death and resurrection. Christ actually liveth in me. His is a life of death to sin and aliveness to God; it is mine to yield my all to Him—to believe and rejoice and rest in Christ."

Maxwell adds:

"Each time I come up against some particular sin, let me there say: I died to that in Christ. If it be a worldly attraction: I am crucified to the world and the world unto me. If it be

proud, haughty self, again let me reckon: One died for all, all died. Then I should not, and need not, live unto myself—I am dead to my selfish pride and conceit and haughtiness." [Born

Crucified, 25]

c. God's Hand of Discipline

We're told in Heb. 12 that God deals w/us as his sons, his children. He disciplines us as a wise and loving father. In fact, if God isn't disciplining you then, acc. to Heb. 12:8, you are an illegitimate child.

Writer to Hebrews also says that ==>

All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

For t/moment it certainly doesn't seem to be joyful does it? I'm not saying that there can't be a silver lining of joy on t/clouds of despair, but as Heb. 12:11 says, it's sorrowful.

Yet, suffering is teleological . . .

“Every adversity that comes across our path, whether large or small, is intended to help us grow in some way. If it were not beneficial, God would not allow it or send it, “For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to the children of men” (Lam. 3:33). God does not delight in our sufferings. He brings only that which is necessary, but He does not shrink from that which will help us grow.” [Jerry Bridges, *Trusting God*, 1988, p. 177]

G. is in continual process of molding us into t/image of X. In order to mold His children, God sometimes has to melt them down.

Because of t/sin w/i us we rebel, we fall back into old patterns, old molds. So again, God breaks us & remakes us again and again to look more like that perfect image of JC.

C.H. Spurgeon who was well-acquainted w/suffering, asked his own congreg. in an 1881 sermon:

`Were you ever in the melting pot, dear friends? I have been there, and my sermons with me. . . . The result of melting is that we arrive at a true valuation of things [and] we are poured out into a new and better fashion. And, oh, we may almost wish for the melting-pot if we may but get rid of the dross, if we may but be pure, if we may but be fashioned more completely like unto our Lord!

d. Demonic Attack

Peter tells us in his 1st letter that we have an adversary, the devil, who “prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” Therefore, we are to be on t/alert.

Luke 22:31-32 31 “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; 32 but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”

There are times when we walk t/same road as Peter. When t/forces of hell demand permission to rail against our souls. Like Peter we can have t/confidence that our Lord intercedes for us that our faith not fail.

So, here's my list==>

1. Suffering as a Result of Living in a Fallen World

2. Suffering as a Result of Personal Sin & Foolishness
3. Suffering as a Result of God's Discipline
4. Suffering as a Result of Demonic Attack

Again, These aren't hard-&-fast categories. There may be overlap in that t/categories can sort of bleed into each other in t/mystery of God's providence.

Keep in mind that this side of heaven we may never know all of t/reasons // behind t/scenes activities that surround our lives. Rem. Job. There's no indication from Script. that Job ever learned about why he was put to the test t/way he was // knew about Satan coming to God asking permission to try him, taking away all he had w/the exception of his life. In t/end G. doesn't tell him "Why?" He tells him "Who."

E. Suffering (We Endure Suffering in Christ)

We endure suffering by virtue of being "in Christ"

Rom 8:17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.

Thru blessing & suffering, Paul said

"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."

J.C. Ryle, t/19th c. Anglican:

"The day may come when after a long fight with disease, we shall feel that medicine can do no more, and that nothing remains but to die. Friends will be standing by, unable to help us. Hearing, eyesight, even the power of praying, will be fast failing us. The world and its shadows will be melting beneath our feet. Eternity, with its realities, will be looming

large before our minds. What shall support us in that trying hour? What shall enable us to feel, "I fear no evil"? (Psalm 23:4). Nothing, nothing can do it but close communion with Christ. Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith. Christ putting His right arm under our heads. Christ felt to be sitting by our side. Christ can alone give us the complete victory in the last struggle."

F. Security (We make it safely home in Christ)

Good news / best news of all.

How could it be otherwise? If you were chosen in X, crucified w/Him & raised w/Him; & if you are seated w/Him in t/heavenly places –
how can your destiny be anything other than X?

John 10:27–28 27 “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.

Romans 8:38–39 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

F. Security (We make it safely home in Christ)

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

“Upon a life I did not live, upon a death I did not die; another’s life, another’s death, I stake my whole eternity.”
[Horatius Bonar, 19th c. minister in the Church of Scotland]

That brings us to v. 21 – t/last v. in this chapter.

And t/last point under the heading

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

D. Sola Gratia and Solus Christus (v. 21)

2 of t/5 pillars of t/16th c. Reformation

Sola Scriptura; Sola Fide; Sola Deo Gloria; and [^]

1. Defined

Sola Gratia = solely by grace – salvation from sin is totally, 100% of grace, not works or merit (goes back to v. 16).

Sola Christus = solely by Christ (salvation from sin is totally, 100% accomplished through t/Person and Work of JC).

2. We could these in the form of a biblical statement as it relates to the Gospel:

“The Bible Alone (Sola Scriptura) is our final authority on all matters pertaining to life and doctrine. Those Scriptures teach us that salvation from sin comes by God's Grace Alone (Sola Gratia) through Faith Alone (Sola Fide) in Christ Alone (Solus Christus) to the Glory of God Alone (Soli Deo Gloria).”

3. Both Sola Gratia and Solus Christus are in view in verse 21 (note the words “grace” and “Christ”) →

21 I do not nullify the grace of God: for if righteousness [comes] through the Law, then Christ died for no purpose.

4. What is Paul saying?

21a I do not nullify the grace of God . . .

a. “Nullify” = αθετεω – to do away with what has been laid down

Was a legal term, used in wills and official declarations.

3:15 warns against nullifying a covenant.

21 I do not nullify the grace of God: for if righteousness [comes] through the Law, then Christ died for no purpose.

To look at it another way, to seek for righteousness in t/Law is to nullify grace & imply that Christ’s death was meaningless. Denial of t/N.C.

No room at t/cross for works salv. // Liberal notions that Jesus' death was all about demonstrating His willingness to sacrifice for others (moral influence theory of t/atonement) - not about his substitution for sinners.

H. Richard Niebuhr, best-known for his work “Christ and Culture”, famously observed the error of Liberal theology that taught that:

“A God without wrath brought men without sin into a Kingdom without judgment through the [ministry] of a Christ without a Cross.” [H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Kingdom of God in America*]

Sums up much of t/teaching we find in so-called Xn CH's today.

c. Grace stands alone or it doesn't stand at all

5:4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

Two Peoples and Only One Way

Jew or Gentile - there's only 1 way to be justified before Gd.

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

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

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

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

D. Sola Gratia and Solus Christus (v. 21)

We can sum all of this up in a single quote by John Piper:
"Therefore since it is true that Christ has absorbed all the wrath of God that was aimed at me, and since it is true that Christ has performed the perfect righteousness that God demands of me, there is now for me no condemnation. Instead, every thought of God and every act of God toward me in Christ Jesus is mercy. The way is open to know him and all the beautiful supremacy of his Son. The cross of Christ has made the supremacy of Christ knowable. The best gift of the gospel is not the forgiveness of sins. The best gift of the gospel is not the imputed righteousness of Christ. The best gift of the Gospel is not eternal life. The best gift of the

gospel is seeing and savoring the supremacy of Christ himself. The greatest reward of the cross is knowing the supremacy of Christ." [John Piper, Sex and the Supremacy of Christ, 43]

The ECF John Chrysostom records a fascinating story. It relates to another Xn, St. Lucian who was asked by his persecutors, "What country are you from?" Lucian replied, "I am a Christian." When they asked, "What is your occupation?" His reply was: "I am a Christian." When they demanded: "Of what family?" His response was: "I am a Christian."

For t/b.a. believer, X is all, whether of country, of occupation, or of family.

In antiquity t/Jews were known as t/second race of people. T/Gentiles were the first. Gentiles (1); Jews (2).

Then came t/Xns. Those who lived apart from t/world & transcended Jew or Gentile.

They became known as "the third race."

From Rome t/cry went out among t/pagans:
"How long must we endure this third race?"

How revolutionary is the Cross! It transfixes and transforms. It's power touches everything that is our life – so much so that, for us, to live is X; to die? Gain.

2 Cor. 13:11 Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.