

*We aim to reconcile people unto God through Christ*

<b>SERMON TITLE:</b>	<b>BE LIKE CHRIST – CRUCIFIED WITH HIM</b>
<b>PREACHER:</b>	<b>ROELOF KWANT</b>
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Reading: Gal 2: 15-21

<sup>15</sup>"We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' <sup>16</sup>know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

<sup>17</sup>"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! <sup>18</sup>If I rebuild what I destroyed, I prove that I am a lawbreaker. <sup>19</sup>For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. <sup>20</sup>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. <sup>21</sup>I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"

Text: Gal 2:20

<sup>20</sup>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.

Justified = to be declared in the right

Paul says I have died to the law so that I may live for God. Do not confuse this with licence for disobedience. You have to differentiate between the laws given to Moses, the laws given by God to the Jews only, in order to show them as separate from the Gentile nations and the laws pertaining to the Jewish customs given to them by their leaders.

In Galatians 2:14 Paul takes peter on and says "are you trying to make/force the Gentiles to follow Jewish customs"

Read Gal 4:8-11

<sup>8</sup>Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. <sup>9</sup>But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? <sup>10</sup>You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! <sup>11</sup>I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you.

We are not called to obey the laws regarding Jewish customs and traditions but are also not set free from obedience to the laws that govern our process of sanctification. Then he goes on to says as we who have followed Christ as Jews know that man is not justified by observing the laws but by Faith in Christ. We are talking about justification by no other means than by faith in Christ. By the grace of God we have been justified and Paul warn us in v21 to be careful that we do not set aside this grace by believing we can be justified, (saved) by keeping the law. It was clear to the Old Testament believer that they could not keep the law and if they could not keep the law they needed a sacrifice in order to remove the guilt and condemnation that the law brought on them.

It was never God's intention to give man a set of laws to keep in order to be saved. It was His intention through the law to show us our shortcoming in comparison with His great and awesome holiness. In fact Isaiah 64:6 says "all our righteous acts are like filthy rags"

Rom 7:7

What shall we say then is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law.

The purpose of the law was then to show us that we are sinners in need of a Saviour who will redeem us from the curse the laws has placed on us and when we have found this justification through faith in Christ we are no longer condemned (Rom 8:1) but we walk in freedom.

This freedom as we have already discussed is not freedom to live life the way I want to, it is not freedom **from** obeying the laws of God, it is freedom from the condemnation that disobedience brings. We know we cannot fulfil the righteous requirements of the law, we know we cannot earn justification because we are sinners who fail. What sets me free from the condemnation my inability to be perfect brings is the knowledge that Jesus died for my sins and I have been justified. The life I now live is a passionate desire to be obedient, because I love the Father, appreciate the Son and have the indwelling Spirit in me.

A believer in love with God the Father and the Son and filled with the Spirit has a desire to be more like Him, Not because I am trying to be saved but because I am grateful I am. I live in total debt to God for the rest of my eternity.

This is the context in which Peter wrote the words that someone put music to "I have been crucified with Christ and

"It's no longer I that liveth but Christ that liveth 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".

Justification means it is not obedience to the law that makes me right with Christ but because of faith in Christ I am right with Him and therefore I have a passion produced by the indwelling Holy Spirit, to be obedient to Him.

- It is not obedience to law that drives me to Christ but is Christ that drives me to obedience to the law
- Walking in legalism says obey to be justified – walking in grace says I am justified therefore I want to obey.
- Walking in legalism says I have to – walking in grace says have to and I want to and I will because I have met with the grace of God.
- Walking in legalism results in condemnation - walking in grace and understanding of Justification as a gracious act of God results in Joy and Freedom.
- A person who fights and argues about whether they should obey has forgotten the unmerited favour of God.

Pauls says we have been crucified with Christ therefore I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

The question is what a person looks like and how they behave who has been crucified with Christ and how does such a person live from day to day.

Gal 6:14

<sup>14</sup>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.

To a person in the first-century, the cross meant one thing and one thing only: death by the most painful and humiliating means human beings could develop. In Jesus' day, the cross represented nothing but torturous death. Because the Romans forced convicted criminals to carry their own cross to the place of crucifixion, bearing a cross meant carrying their own execution device while facing ridicule along the way to death.

*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

*John 3:16 NKJV*

Therefore, when Jesus teaches us to be crucified and to “Take up your cross and follow Me” means willingness to die in order to follow Jesus. May be not always a physical death but always a absolute surrender to Christ. A few times in the New Testament Jesus commands us to bear our cross. After each time Jesus commanded cross bearing, He said,

Luke 9:24-26

“For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of Me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels”

Although the call is tough, the reward is matchless. Wherever Jesus went, drew crowds. Although these multitudes often followed Him as Messiah, their view of the Messiah was distorted. They thought the Christ would usher in the restored kingdom. They believed He would free them from the oppressive rule of their Roman occupiers. Even Christ’s own inner circle of disciples thought the kingdom was coming soon

Luke 19:11

<sup>11</sup>While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once.

When Jesus began teaching that He was going to die at the hands of the Jewish leaders and their Gentile overlords

Luke 9:22

The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised the third day.

His popularity sunk. Many of the shocked followers rejected Him.

John 6:60

On hearing this many of His disciples said, this is an hard teaching, who can accept this

Following Jesus is easy when life runs smoothly; our true commitment to Him is revealed during trials. Jesus assured that trials will come to His followers

John 16:33

<sup>33</sup>“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Discipleship demands sacrifice, and Jesus never hid that cost.

In Luke 9:57-62, three people seemed willing to follow Jesus. When Jesus questioned them further, their commitment was half-hearted at best. They failed to count the cost of following Jesus. None was willing to take up his cross.

Luk 9:57-62 As they were walking along the road a man said unto him, Lord, I will follow you wherever you go. And Jesus replied “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has no place to lay his head. And he said to another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, first let me go and bury my father. Jesus said to him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and proclaim the kingdom of God. Still another also said, Lord, I will follow you but first let me go and ay good-by to my family. Jesus said to him, No man, who puts his hand to the plough, and looks, is fit for service in the kingdom of God.

Jesus appeared to dissuade them. How different from the typical Gospel presentation! How many people would respond to an altar call that went, “Come follow Jesus and you may face the loss of friends, family, reputation, career, and possibly even your life”? False converts would likely decrease! Such a call is what Jesus meant when He said, “Take up your cross and follow Me.”

*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

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If you wonder if you are ready to take up your cross, consider these questions:

- Are you willing to follow Jesus if it means losing some of your closest friends?
- Are you willing to follow Jesus if it means alienation from your family?
- Are you willing to follow Jesus if it means the loss of your reputation?
- Are you willing to follow Jesus if it means losing your job?
- Are you willing to follow Jesus if it means losing your life?

Let's see how dead we are

- How do we react when someone else gets the promotion you wanted
- How dead are we to criticising someone else
- How dead are we to anger
- How dead are we to lustful thoughts
- How dead are we to being offended
- How dead are we to self?????
- Why can't we say we are sorry or that we are wrong?
- Why do we have to be right,
- Break others down

Commitment to Christ means to take up your cross daily, giving up your hopes, dreams, possessions, even your very life if need be for the cause of Christ. Only if you willingly take up your cross may you be called His disciple.

Luke 14:27

<sup>27</sup>And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple

The reward is worth the price. Jesus followed His call of death to self ("Take up your cross and follow Me") with the gift of life in Christ: "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it" (Matthew 16:25-26).

Paul wrote to the Elders of the Church in Ephesus and in his farewell notes recorded in

Acts 20:19-20

<sup>19</sup>I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews.

<sup>20</sup>You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house.

God owes us nothing; we owe him more than everything.