

Happy Father's Day to all of you fathers here and on-line. Godly fathers are the bulwark against the rising tide of the disintegration of the family. This message today is especially applicable to us fathers. Our prisons are full of men who grew up without fathers. One organization that gave out Mother's Day and Father's Day cards to inmates found prisoners wanted Mother's Day cards but there was almost no demand for Father's Day cards. This is evidence that fatherless homes are a great detriment to society.

Marriage requires a death to self and a commitment to serve one another in love. That is a gift of grace that only comes from being in Christ. Couples can stay together out of co-dependency, or because they share the same desires, or they mutually have some need met in their spouse. Only Christians can die to their own desires to serve one another with godly love. That is what our culture is rapidly losing today, fathers who sacrificially love their wife like Christ loved the church. And with that loss we find our youth are even more self-centered and unmotivated than previous generations. The number of homeless youths is a tragedy. Jesus is the only answer to our cultural decline.

What we are slow to realize is that true joy is found in setting aside our own desires and serving others with the love of Christ. As Francis of Assisi said, "It is in giving that we receive. It is in pardoning that we are pardoned." Of course, he took the idea from Jesus' teaching (Matthew 16:25<sup>i</sup>;6:14,15<sup>ii</sup>). While the message today is for everyone who hears it, men, we are the ones who most need to live it out every day. Please take it to heart and consider how living it will make your life richer and fuller as you surrender your will to Jesus.

Congregation, would you stand in honor of God's Word and read our passage for today out loud with me? *I have been crucified with Christ,<sup>20</sup> and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me, and that life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.* Galatians 2:19b,20 We covered this verse in the context of Paul's message to the churches of Galatia last week, but today I felt led to really focus on the transformational power of what Paul was declaring in these verses.

From sharing with many believers in Christ, I have concluded that most of us feel like we are waiting for God to show us the purpose He has for us. We wait for some big revelation of how we can lead people to Jesus or save those who are in bondage to addictions or deliver people from some other enslaving sin. We want God to use us for His glory. That desire is the result of the Holy Spirit in us and gratitude for our salvation. But I think in that good desire we can put the wrong thing first. In these words, from the Apostle Paul, we have the right order and God's desire for our lives. After all, if our desire is to please God, then His desires should take priority over our own. He wants you to join in His death so that you can join in His life.

*I have been crucified with Christ,* Can you identify with that statement? What does it mean? How can we know we have been crucified with Christ? Our body was not nailed to the cross with Jesus, but what Paul is referring to as crucified with Christ is his life before He knew Jesus as his Lord. That is all that he once took pride in, his genealogy going back to Benjamin, his training under Gamaliel, his fervor to keep Judaism pure, his advancement and respect from his culture, and his obedience to every detail in the Laws

of Moses, as well as his sinful nature (Philippians 3:4-6<sup>iii</sup>). Everything he once valued he realized was misguided zeal. That person he once was, he let die with Jesus on the cross. He recognized it was all sin, rebellion against the very God he thought he was serving. He wanted nothing to do with it every again (Philippians 3:8<sup>iv</sup>).

Just as the dead body of Jesus could no longer see this world, so Paul wanted to see nothing of this world. He wanted His heart and soul and his vision only upon Jesus and the sacrifice He made to set him free from his misplaced zeal that he had lived in ignorance. He no longer cared about his reputation, for his new message was a stumbling block to Jews and folly to the Greeks (1 Corinthians 1:23<sup>v</sup>). In that Corinthian culture that honored making a name for yourself, he was determined to know nothing among them except Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2<sup>vi</sup>). What happened to his pride in his reputation? It was crucified with Jesus. What happened to his trust in the wisdom of his famed teacher? It was crucified with Jesus!

I am crucified with Christ! While we long to do something to glorify God and be of service to the kingdom of God, we must realize that it starts by putting our reputation, our ego, and our own desires that led us astray on the cross with Jesus. Our desire to do some great thing for God can have the selfish motivation of wanting others' respect. **We must distinguish between the old life that goes on the cross and the new, and one way to do so is to ask if God gets all the glory.** To be seen and recognized for an act of service is a sure sign that it was done in the old nature that should be on the cross with Jesus (Matthew 6:18<sup>vii</sup>). The more we take spiritual pride in our actions or position, the more certain we can be that we are acting in the nature that should be crucified.

What is the cruciform life? It is as Jesus declared, "Not my will but yours be done" (Luke 22:42<sup>viii</sup>)! That is the continual response from those living the crucified life. Paul demonstrated it when he stood against Peter, Barnabas, and all the Jews from Jerusalem (2:11,12<sup>ix</sup>). He knew he would be and had been falsely accused of sin, just like his Savior. He knew his reputation would be dragged through the mud, but he was crucified to the world. The only thing he would boast in is the cross of Christ that ended his confidence in his flesh (Galatians 6:14<sup>x</sup>). If we are going to live the crucified life, we must do the same. The Gospel will bring rejection. The world (lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and the pride of life (1John 2:15-17<sup>xi</sup>)) must be crucified to us.

A dear brother was struggling with shingles and fighting addiction to pain killers. He asked me for a word from the Lord. He wanted me to hear from God for him. I don't normally do that. I know you can hear from God in His word and prayer all on your own, but I told him I would pray. I'm not your priest. Jesus is your Great High Priest (Hebrews 4:14<sup>xii</sup>). I was surprised that God did speak to my heart. It was a tough saying that I was reluctant to share with him. The word was, "Embrace the suffering." It was confirmed to me when I heard it in a sermon a short time later. How can you do that unless we are crucified to the world, unless you are crucified with Jesus who bore the reproach of the world against God (Psalm 69:9<sup>xiii</sup>).

I am not saying we seek out pain or suffering, but when it comes, the crucified life will embrace it as a gift from God, for all things work together for the good of those who love God (Romans 8:28<sup>xiv</sup>). And that is what Paul did with his eye affliction. When God

told him it was to keep him humble and that His grace was sufficient for him, he quit praying to be healed (2 Corinthians 12:7-9<sup>xv</sup>).

There is suffering that comes from attachment to this world and our unmet expectations of life. We will all suffer in some way, but why would we choose to suffer for temporal things? **The invitation of Jesus is to place your attachment to this fallen world on the cross with Him.** He can replace it with joys that are richer and fuller. And when suffering for Christ comes, it will reap eternal rewards waiting for us in heaven (1 Timothy 6:18,19<sup>xvi</sup>). If we have a clear picture of the difference, the choice should be obvious. Are you crucified with Christ? It isn't a popular message. But it is a message that resonates in the heart of the follower of Jesus. It isn't some morbid gloomy message, but an adventure of deeper joys than the world can know.

*And I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.* The old has gone and the new has come (2 Corinthians 5:17<sup>xvii</sup>). The "I" that Paul is referring to is his old life. When it is crucified with Christ, it should no longer enslave us with its desires. That does not mean you will not have to wrestle against it, for Paul also declared the flesh fights against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh (Galatians 5:17<sup>xviii</sup>). But the thing that is different is the real you, the new you, does not want to yield to the old life. When you do, you feel miserable and regret it. It still calls to you. I liken it to the mythical zombie. It is dead but it still wants to creep out of the grave and tries to take charge. However, that is not your life. Your new life is Christ living in you. And Christ in you has the power to stuff the zombie back in his or her casket. Hallelujah!

*Christ lives in me!* The popular culture today claims that is true for everyone. Oh my goodness is that ignoring reality! If I believed that then I would have to say Christ is sometimes a pedophile, murderer, thieving, and a rapist! The very thought is blasphemous and absurd. Christ wants to live in every person, but the world wants the power and respect due Him for themselves without dying to themselves. They want a Christ in them that enhances self. They want to boast in who they are instead of dying to who they are. This passage is the opposite of that idea. Jesus isn't who you want Him to be. He is an historical figure who grew up in a Jewish culture fulfilling Jewish prophecies of saving mankind from sin and making us right with God through His sacrificial death. Any other interpretation of Jesus separates us from the reality of the man from Galilee in His Jewish culture.

Christ lives in me is the reality for the person who has been crucified with Christ. We know our sins are forgiven (Acts 2:38<sup>xix</sup>). We know there is nothing we can do to make God love us more. We are accepted in the Beloved (Ephesians 1:6<sup>xx</sup>). We are adopted into the family of God. The Message translation which is really more like translation with commentary on the context puts it this way: *<sup>20</sup> Christ's life showed me how, and enabled me to do it. I identified myself completely with him. Indeed, I have been crucified with Christ. My ego is no longer central. It is no longer important that I appear righteous before you or have your good opinion, and I am no longer driven to impress God. Christ lives in me.* Galatians 2:20a (MSG)

The grace proclaimed in this letter to the Galatians is a gift from God to all who will receive the invitation to die with Jesus on the cross to their sinful lives, but then also let our new life be Christ in us, the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27<sup>xxi</sup>). That new life is

marked by the fruits of the Holy Spirit we will read about in chapter five (Galatians 5:22-24<sup>xxii</sup>). Someone recently asked how we can know Christ is in us. The fruit is evidence of the type of tree (Matthew 7:20<sup>xxiii</sup>). You can be kind and gentle most of the time, but a consistent life of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control is only the result of Christ in you. When you do not demonstrate these fruits, it is not because Christ has left you but rather that you have yielded to the zombie, that old nature you crucified with Christ. That is your warning sign that he or she needs to go back in the casket and Christ needs to be allowed back on the throne of your heart.

As I was preparing this another of Oswald Chambers devotions that day fit this perfectly. What do we do when we find ourselves flustered by the old nature? He writes, *Watch how He (Jesus) used the word 'Come.'* *At the most unexpected moments there is the whisper of the Lord—"Come unto Me." and you are drawn immediately. Personal contact with Jesus alters everything. Be stupid enough (in the world's eyes) to come and commit yourself to what He says. The attitude of coming is that the will resolutely lets go of everything and deliberately commits all to Him. "and I will give you rest," i.e., I will stay you.*

*Not—I will put you to bed and hold your hand and sing you to sleep; but—I will get you out of bed, out of the languor and exhaustion, out of the state of being half dead while you are alive; I will imbue you with the spirit of life, and you will be stayed by the perfection of vital activity.*<sup>xxiv</sup> That is Christ living in me!

*and that life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God,* Though I live in this carnal body that will perish, I am animated by faith in the Son of God! He is the reason I wake up each day. He is the first thought on my mind when I rise. I commune with Him throughout the day. Each situation I face trusting He is with me and has a purpose in all the details of life. I believe He fashioned me in my mother's womb and planned each day of my life before one of them came to be (Psalm 139:16<sup>xxv</sup>).

**Our lives are marked by our crucifixion with Christ, but they are also marked by our resurrection with Him.** In fact, the power of resurrection empowers our bodies and minds to serve Him each day (Ephesians 1:19,20<sup>xxvi</sup>). The more we live in communion with Him and His Word, the more our desires align with His. Our choices become His choices. We desire what He desires. And when we recognize that our desires are different from those we crucified with Christ, we are encouraged that Christ truly is living in us.

*I live by faith in the Son of God.* I believe what He taught. He taught that He is the one and only Son of God who is the Word made flesh (John 1:14<sup>xxvii</sup>; 3:16<sup>xxviii</sup>). He taught that He was ushering in a new covenant in His blood, a covenant based on what He would do for me, not on my ability to be good enough for God. He taught that He was ushering in a new kingdom, with Himself as the King of all who would receive Him. And He taught that He is coming again to receive those who have placed their faith in Him and will reward us for their labors (John 14:3<sup>xxix</sup>). He will judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17:31<sup>xxx</sup>). We live in faith that His words are true.

We all live by faith in something. For many it is faith in self. For others it is faith in science or a political party or a philosophy of man. For some it is another religion or

teaching. I live by faith in the Son of God. And here is why I think that it is a far superior faith to all others: *He loved me and gave Himself for me.*

*<sup>6</sup> For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup> For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— <sup>8</sup> but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* Romans 5:6-8 Why do we place our lives in His hands? Why should we trust Him and place our faith in Him as compared to all the other things we might place our faith in? Because while we were rebelling against Him, He died for us. And if he would die for us, is there any good thing He would hold back from us (Romans 8:32<sup>xxxix</sup>).

But to be honest, I also place my faith in Him because He has proven Himself to me time and time again. Faith is the main reason, but my faith is bolstered by the historical evidence of prophecy, by ancient manuscripts, by the words He spoke, and the life He lived. There is no one like Jesus! There has never been anyone who showed the power He demonstrated. There has never been anyone who demonstrated the compassion he showed. Who forgives people who are nailing them to a cross? Only Jesus and those in whom He lives (Acts 7:60<sup>xxxix</sup>).

I see Him in the details of my days. I see Him in the transformed lives of those who come to know Him. I see Him in His faithfulness to this little church and the outreach that He has done through it. We all witness Him in the beauty of the creation around us. *The life that I live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave His life for me.* Could we ask for a more glorious Savior? He will judge wicked and perfect those who are in Him. His promises are sure. Not one of them will fail (Isaiah 34:16<sup>xxxix</sup>).

I know it is asking a lot, in fact it is asking for your all, but will you be crucified with Christ? Will you allow Christ to live in you for as long as you live? Will you live by faith in the Son of God who loved you and gave His life for you?

Benediction from Galatians 1:4,5 and 6:20: To Him who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to Him be the glory forever and ever. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen!

Questions:

- 1 Why do we need godly men in marriages?
- 2 What does it mean to be crucified with Christ?
- 3 What in you needs to be crucified with Christ?
- 4 What is one way to distinguish between the old life and the new?
- 5 What is the cruciform life?
- 6 Can we say Christ lives in everyone?
- 7 Review Chamber's quote.
- 8 What should be the source of our daily power?
- 9 What faith is it that we live by?
- 10 Why should we place our faith in Christ?

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<sup>i</sup> **Matthew 16:25 (ESV)**

<sup>25</sup> For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

<sup>ii</sup> **Matthew 6:14-15 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you,

<sup>15</sup> but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

<sup>iii</sup> **Philippians 3:4-6 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: <sup>5</sup> circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup> as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

<sup>iv</sup> **Philippians 3:8 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

<sup>v</sup> **1 Corinthians 1:23 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,

<sup>vi</sup> **1 Corinthians 2:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

<sup>vii</sup> **Matthew 6:18 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>viii</sup> **Luke 22:42 (ESV)**

<sup>42</sup> saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."

<sup>ix</sup> **Galatians 2:11-12 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

<sup>12</sup> For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party.

<sup>x</sup> **Galatians 6:14 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

<sup>xi</sup> **1 John 2:15-17 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

<sup>16</sup> For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. <sup>17</sup> And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

<sup>xii</sup> **Hebrews 4:14 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

<sup>xiii</sup> **Psalms 69:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.

<sup>xiv</sup> **Romans 8:28 (ESV)**

<sup>28</sup> And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

<sup>xv</sup> **2 Corinthians 12:7-9 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.

<sup>8</sup> Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me.

<sup>9</sup> But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

<sup>xvi</sup> **1 Timothy 6:18-19 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, <sup>19</sup> thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

<sup>xvii</sup> **2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

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<sup>xviii</sup> **Galatians 5:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

<sup>xix</sup> **Acts 2:38 (ESV)**

<sup>38</sup> And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>xx</sup> **Ephesians 1:6 (KJV)**

<sup>6</sup> To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

<sup>xxi</sup> **Colossians 1:27 (ESV)**

<sup>27</sup> To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

<sup>xxii</sup> **Galatians 5:22-24 (ESV)**

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

<sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

<sup>24</sup> And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

<sup>xxiii</sup> **Matthew 7:20 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Chambers, O. (1986). *My utmost for his highest: Selections for the year*. Grand Rapids, MI: Oswald Chambers Publications; Marshall Pickering.

<sup>xxv</sup> **Psalms 139:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

<sup>xxvi</sup> **Ephesians 1:19-20 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might <sup>20</sup> that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,

<sup>xxvii</sup> **John 1:14 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

<sup>xxviii</sup> **John 3:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

<sup>xxix</sup> **John 14:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

<sup>xxx</sup> **Acts 17:31 (ESV)**

<sup>31</sup> because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

<sup>xxxi</sup> **Romans 8:32 (ESV)**

<sup>32</sup> He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

<sup>xxxii</sup> **Acts 7:60 (ESV)**

<sup>60</sup> And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> **Isaiah 34:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> Seek and read from the book of the LORD: Not one of these shall be missing; none shall be without her mate. For the mouth of the LORD has commanded, and his Spirit has gathered them.