



## Sermon for April 25, 2021, “My old self has been crucified with Christ”

**SCRIPTURE: Galatians 2:11-21** <sup>11</sup> But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood self-condemned; <sup>12</sup> for until certain people came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But after they came, he drew back and kept himself separate for fear of the circumcision faction. <sup>13</sup> And the other Jews joined him in this hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. <sup>14</sup> But when I saw that they were not acting consistently with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?” <sup>15</sup> We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; <sup>16</sup> yet we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law. <sup>17</sup> But if, in our effort to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have been found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! <sup>18</sup> But if I build up again the very things that I once tore down, then I demonstrate that I am a transgressor. <sup>19</sup> For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; <sup>20</sup> and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who 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 for me. <sup>21</sup> I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.

### Introduction: The gospel of Jesus Christ

Justification by faith is the core doctrine of Christianity. It is a confession that salvation cannot be achieved by human effort. For a Christian, justification is the act of God not only forgiving the believer’s sins but imputing to him the righteousness of Christ.

Today's text clearly shows us what the true truth is. Also, today's text clearly shows our desire for truth. We must decide whether to live in pursuit of the true truth and freedom of the gospel or remain trapped in the law.

The gospel of Jesus Christ has been given to us by grace. However, just because the gospel is given to us by grace it does not mean that it is cheap. Rather, the Gospel has been given to us by grace at the most expensive price! Only the gospel of Jesus Christ can give us true freedom and salvation.

The book of Galatians is a short Bible with six chapters. The book of Galatians covers three important points. **First**, the Apostle Paul emphasizes that the gospel he preaches was revealed directly from the risen Christ. **Second**, the Apostle Paul clearly explains the truths of the gospel that he received. That is, all human beings are justified by faith in Jesus Christ alone. It is that salvation cannot be obtained through human effort alone. **Third**, the Apostle Paul talks about practical ways how a person saved by faith should live.

I hope that through today's sermon, we will deeply meditate on the true freedom and meaning of salvation that the Gospel has given us and enjoy the riches.

### Body: Unity in Jesus Christ

#### 1) Peter's hypocrisy (Galatians 2:11-14)

Today's text corresponds to the introductory part of Paul's doctrine of justification by faith. The Apostle Paul tells of an incident he experienced while serving the first Gentile church, the Church of



Antioch, before explaining the doctrine of justification by faith. The incident is directly related to the Apostle Peter.

The Apostle Peter came to the Antioch and was having a meal with Gentile Christians who were not circumcised. However, some of those who followed the Apostle James in Jerusalem visited the Church of Antioch. These were people like the itinerant preacher. And they were conservative people who thought they should be circumcised according to Jewish law. When Peter heard the news that they had arrived, he hastily drew back and separated himself from Gentile Christians. The rest of the Jewish Christians who were eating with Peter then left the table, and even Barnabas, Paul's co-worker, left the table.

When Paul met Peter again, speaking of this incident, Paul rebuked Peter for not following the truths of the gospel. **Let's look at Galatians 2:14. "But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas (Peter) before them all, 'If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?'"**

However, there was a reason for Peter's actions. It was because he was afraid of the accusations of the circumcised Jews. So, even though Peter believed that he could reach salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, he still acted like a Jew who followed the law in front of the circumcised Jews. Therefore, the Apostle Paul saw it and rebuked his hypocrisy.

Has our faith ever been similar to Peter's attitude? We believe and know that we are justified by faith, but are there any times when we find ourselves unable to be free from the bonds of the law?

## **2) Grace of the cross (Galatians 2:15~18)**

The Apostle Paul explains what is wrong and rebuking peter' hypocrisy. The Apostle Paul says that it is not an act of the law that a person is justified before God, but only through faith in Christ Jesus.

Conservative Jews who are circumcised have questioned these thoughts of the Apostle Paul. They claim that if people are saved by faith in Jesus Christ, rather than by acts of the law, people will be more sinful by neglecting to keep the law.

The Apostle Paul's answer to this claim is clear. **Galatians 2:17-18 says, "But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly not" (v.17), "But if I build up again those things which I tore down, then I prove myself a transgressor" (v.18)**

The meaning of these words is that it is too premature to accuse Christ of being a helper for sin; those who seek to establish a right relationship with God through Christ are not fully virtuous. It means it's like trying to build again an old barn that's been demolished.

The Apostle Paul says that we are saved only by faith. He pointed out the false doctrine of salvation in Judaism. However, conservative circumcised Jews from Jerusalem insisted that in order to be saved, faith alone was insufficient and that they had to observe the laws of conduct such as circumcision and cleansing.

However, these teachings of conservative Jews do not bring us true salvation and freedom. This only has the effect of making us all transgressors. Because the act of the law cannot satisfy God, it only convicts us of our sins.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters! Please answer my questions:

Can you live in keeping with all the words of the Bible?



Can you truly love your enemies?

Also, can we avoid sinning in our hearts?

None of us are free to answer these questions. Only Jesus alone can answer these questions with yes. That is why we can find true freedom only in Jesus Christ.

### **3) Oneness with Christ through faith (Galatians 2:19-20)**

**So the apostle Paul says in Galatians 2:19, "For I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God"**

The truth is, the more we try to keep the law, the more it makes us realize that we are sinners. No one but Jesus can fully satisfy all the demands of the law. Therefore, we have to take another path in order to be recognized as righteous by God. That is the way to be saved through faith in Jesus Christ.

**Therefore, Galatians 2:20 says, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who 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 for me."**

This phrase refers to our union with Christ accomplished by faith. Therefore, another meaning of justification by faith through Jesus Christ is that we are fulfilled unity with Christ by faith. In other words, we who believed in Jesus Christ and were baptized died on the cross with Christ, and now we do not live in ourselves, but Christ lives in us.

Also, Christ lives in us means that the Holy Spirit dwells in us forever and leads our lives. That is why the Holy Spirit is with those who confess Jesus Christ as our Savior and are baptized by faith and change our lives. So, a person with true faith experiences a fundamental change in life through the power of the Holy Spirit.

In conclusion, the Apostle Paul says in Galatians 2:21 that if a man needs the law in order to be justified before God, it is meaningless for Christ to die on the cross.

### **Conclusion: I die every day**

Now let's summarize today's sermon. **Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:31, "I die every day."** The beginning of experiencing the kingdom of God on this earth is for us to die every day. We must not die only once, but we must die every day as the Apostle Paul said.

If we try to live our selfish way, we have no choice but to face death. But if we allow our selfish hearts to die, then we can experience the Lord's power.

We must die thoroughly to make our life changed. We must die to be resurrected. Like this, Christians are beings who live by faith. Faith overcomes the world. May everyone enjoy the grace of overcoming the world through faith.

