

~ HAVE YE SUFFERED SO MANY THINGS....

## GALATIANS 2:19 – 3:5

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II

***19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.***

~ Our Spiritual Safari concluded our previous report with Paul proclaiming Christ died for us, in our stead, because the law condemns us. We all stand guilty before the law. The Mosaic Law is a ministration of death; it does nothing except condemn. That condemnation is why Jesus died for us; because the law declares us guilty, punishable by death. Under the letter of the law, God would have had to destroy Israel; but He provided them the sacrificial system. All five sacrifices in Leviticus: the Burnt Offering, the Peace Offering, the Sin Offering, the Trespass Offering and the Meal Offering — all pointed distinctly and directly to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Only by the marvelous grace of God has anyone ever been saved at any time throughout the ages of mankind's history. Christ, as our Mercy Seat, presents our Throne of Grace. Christ is the only place any individual or nation can ever find forgiveness of sins. So, if I am dead to the law, I have no obligation or responsibility to the law. The law has *already* arrested me, tried me, rendered its verdict on me, incarcerated me — and has issued its final judgment of death. The end of me. Christ can now give me life; whereas, the law had left me dead on the side of the road....

***20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.***

~ Verse twenty states a fact that is true of all genuine children of God. We are *NOT* seeking to be crucified with Christ; because we have *ALREADY* been crucified two thousand years ago. This passage has no reference whatsoever to the so-called "*crucified life.*" Presently, we are to *live* by faith in the Lord Jesus – the Son of God. See, Jesus' death on the cross was

penal, but it was also substitutionary. Christ was slain as the sacrificial Lamb, but also died a death in place of all who believe.

Paul says we were crucified with Christ when He died on the cross. It is simply foolishness to think we can crucify ourselves today. We may be able to commit suicide in many different ways; but crucifixion isn't a one-man show. Christ was crucified; and because Christ is alive today, we are alive today. Christ is glorified at the right hand of God. See, Jesus isn't walking around the shores of Galilee today. We also know we are *IN* Christ – and Him in us – and when Christ is living in and through us, we cannot improve on that. Saved by faith; live by faith – and that is exactly what it means to walk by faith in the Spirit of God today.

I believe Saul of Tarsus, the apostle Paul, was present when Christ was crucified. Paul was a rich young religious ruler at the time of Jesus death, and he was a leader in the persecution of the church. Paul hated Jesus with a passion. Paul was in Jerusalem around that time; attending the school of Gamaliel, so, I seriously doubt Saul would have had other engagements when the crucifixion came. The Pharisees ridiculed Jesus and told Him to come down off of the cross. It may have been Saul who said that. Then, they sat down to watch Jesus die and, my friends; it doesn't get any lower than that. But that's when Jesus said, *“forgive them, for they know not what they do.”* It's possible Jesus was looking right at Paul when He said that.

I believe that is why Paul called himself the *'chief of sinners.'* That wasn't hyperbole by Paul; it wasn't sentimental rot, or an empty pious gesture. I think Paul reflected on the crucifixion every day. Well, either way, while Paul was watching Christ die on the cross, Jesus loved Paul. When we ignore the Lord Jesus, or turn against or away from Him, we trample underfoot His precious Blood. While we were busy hating God, He loved us; while we were dead in our trespasses and sins, Christ gave Himself for us....

***21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.***

~ If the law, religion, or a ritual could have saved sinners – or if there had been *any* other way – then I am sure God would have used that method. Apparently, even for our infinite God, there was only *ONE* way to save you and me. God was willing to do that — by making the supreme sacrifice. I feel that God could have also simply gone to another place in the universe, pulled the switch on the sun, and let us all freeze over until some other time. He would have been perfectly just and righteous for doing that. Well, He didn't, friends, because God just happens to love us....



***1 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?***

***2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?***

***3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?***

***4 Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.***

***5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?***

~ This is another doctrinal section of justification by faith and, let me say this kindly: if you don't think doctrine and theology are important, then your best bet would be to throw your Bible in the garbage can, and renounce Christianity; because doctrine and dispensation form a theme throughout the Bible. Anyone who tells you otherwise is simply not worthy of thoughtful consideration – make a note of that. Here we have the experience of the Galatians.

Personally, I believe in experience in the Christian life. I went down to an altar when I was seven years old, in little white church, in the middle of an

orange grove in Orlando, Florida; and I accepted Christ that day as my Savior. The experience I had was so strong and so real that if I told you about it, you would suggest I be placed in a rubber room for a very long time. I didn't know anything about the Bible that day, and I don't think I ever went back to that particular church; but my heart and mind were open, and I was ready to be saved. I definitely believe in experience.

Paul takes the Galatian's back to the time they were saved. They knew they weren't saved by law. This is all rhetorical and facetious. They understood completely how they were saved by faith in Jesus Christ. It's important for us to remember that, too. Paul was wondering what in the world could have possibly gotten into the Galatians that they were "*bewitched.*" That means they weren't thinking right, friends. Paul had previously painted a picture with prose for these people; and used a literate mental illustration to form their understanding. It's possible that Paul had actually drawn pictures for them. That's purely speculation.

We need to be very careful because the Gospel of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is true; irrespective of whether or not we have said experience. Any experience we have can only corroborate the Word of God. Many people today reason from experience to truth. Well, the Word of God *ALWAYS* reasons from truth to experience. Experience must be tested by truth; and, in order to be qualified to conduct that test, we *MUST* know Scriptural truth. Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth and the light.*" We're going to have to know Him. Everyone has a different experience, but we all have the same truth. I hear different teachers speak of different experiences, and they try to make that experience their truth. They ultimately contradict themselves; but multitudes will follow them. Paul calls them fools. God calls them fools. Andrew Hunt calls them — fools.

Many people dismiss these problems by saying, "*there's another way to interpret this passage of the Bible.*" They go on to say they all love each other and respect each other's opinions and perspectives, and insist they don't want to cause any problems but, interestingly, they don't respect *MY* "*opinion*" — which is really sound doctrine originating in the Word of God. Those who pervert this section of Scripture and attempt to assign it a

meaning other than it has won't fare well dealing with Andrew, friends, I can assure you of that. If you base truth on your experience, you'll come up wrong every single time. Our experience *MUST* corroborate the Word of God.

The Gospel is something we *HEAR*; faith cometh by *HEARING*, and hearing by the Word of God. Did *YOU* get saved by hearing the law? No. The law only revealed you were a sinner. We have to hear truth before we can be saved; because we have to accept it. I understand there may be certain limited and extremely rare exceptions, but those people still hear God, my friends. The Gospel is about something God did for us. We have to incorporate that as a premise. Paul asks six questions relating to the experience of an individual. I can only suggest you read through Galatians entirely in one sitting. And, after you have done that – do it again.

The law was given to show us that we could never keep it. Now that you have been indwelt by the Holy Spirit, why would you ever want to go back to the law that was given to control the flesh? You will never live on a high plane attempting to keep the law. That said, when we live for the Gospel, we are going to pay a *very* high price. If following Christ hasn't cost you something — and if that something isn't everything — then you just aren't following Him, friends; because that would be impossible. Attempting to live under the law will totally negate and neutralize grace. There is simply *NOTHING* as deadening in a religion as legalism. Most churches have reinvented their own brand of legalism; and that is the reason the church is so utterly ineffective at saving the lost. And it is the reason the church is irrelevant in the community today.

We have liberty in Christ — I have the liberty to bow down to Him and do what *HE* wants me to do! My liberty is also in doing the will of God. I can't do those things in my own strength, though; only the Spirit of God can do them through me. Let me be perfectly clear as we conclude this report: I won't be coming to Christ your way, unless this report is your way. I am joined to the Living Christ, and I report directly to my Father in Heaven. Not to you. Are you in Christ — or are you in your self-imposed slavery of legalism? ~

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