

Crucified with Christ

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning, everyone. Great to see you all this morning. It's great to be gathered together, looking to the Lord together.! Well, this morning we're going to really build on what Andrew shared on last week.

And that means this morning, as we continue to work our way through the book of Galatians, we're coming to Galatians chapter 2. And we're going to look this morning at verses 17 to 21. And Olive is going to come now and read our passage for us this morning.

And then we will take it from there. So thank you, Olive. Good morning to you all.

Good morning. Good morning.

Good morning.

[1 : 46] ourselves also among the sinners. Doesn't that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not. If I rebuild what I destroyed, then I really would be a lawbreaker. For through the law, I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing. Amen.

Well, thank you, Olive. I recently read a story, a true story, about a little boy who was adopted. When this little boy was born, on the day of his birth, his mother and father, I think it was just his mother at that point, gave him into an adoption shelter, you know, one of these adoption agencies. And from that point on, he actually never met his mother again or never heard anything of his father again. Well, at this adoption agency, people would obviously come in and families would come in and they would seek to try to adopt different children. But for some reason, this little boy was never chosen.

He did look a little bit different. He admitted that later in life, and he had some slight medical concerns or issues. So perhaps for that reason, he was never chosen. But for the first years of his life, this didn't really bother him, because he was too young to realize that he wasn't being chosen.

[4 : 10] So as a one-year-old, as a two-year-old, as a three-year-old, he didn't realize that he wasn't been chosen. But this would all change when he was four years old, when his good friend at the agency, same age as him, he was chosen by a family. And off he went. And with his friend being chosen for the first time at four years old, he realized that no one was choosing him. And for the first time at four years old, he said out loud to a worker at this agency, no one wants me.

He turned five. He turned six. He turned seven. Still no one chose him. Well, when he was eight years old, same age as my Isaiah, I think that's why this story kind of resonates with me. He was chosen. A Christian family went in, and they adopted this little boy. And off he went with his new family. What a moment that must have been. First night, heading off with a family, that chose you. For the first time in your life, you have felt chosen. Well, on the very first night in his new home, this little boy got a piece of paper, and he scribbled down on it a whole list of jobs and chores. Washing and cleaning, cutting the grass, looking after the dog. The list was very long, and he scribbled down everything he could think of. And he put this note before he went to bed on his new dad's pillow.

Well, his new dad found it and went into him and said, what's this?

And the little eight-year-old boy? You chose me. And I am so afraid of being unchosen that this is what I can do to earn my place and keep my place here.

The father knelt down and looked him in the eyes and said, son, you don't need to earn your place here. You are my child now. That is who you are.

And that is not something that you need to earn to keep. I share this story because I believe for us as believers, it is so easy to live having the same thought that this little boy had with our heavenly

father.

[7 : 30] As believers, we have been adopted. We have been made sons and daughters of God. We have been adopted, chosen by God. But yet, a little bit like that little boy, we can so often live having the idea that we somehow need to earn our father's continued approval or somehow we will be unchosen or unadopted. Like that little boy, we know that we're saved. We know that we're adopted.

But we add in works to continue to earn our place and his approval. And then all of a sudden, the reality is we're left in a place where as believers, we're living with a mixture of relying on Jesus and a mixture of relying on ourselves. And it all becomes a little bit confusing. And it's all a little bit exhausting as we seek to try to live earning his continued approval and earning our continued place.

Well, the church in Galatia, or at least for some of them, this all got a little bit unclear. It was a bit unclear how one was made right and how one stayed right with God.

As we've seen in our letter so far as we've been going through it verse by verse, some were essentially saying, yes, Jesus saves, but you also need these other things. You also need to be circumcised. You also need to continue with these customs, continue with these works in order to sort of be truly right and stay truly right with God.

[9 : 25] Well, again, in our verses this morning, Paul continues to deal with this very issue. In our verses this morning, Paul addresses the burning question, if you like, what makes us and keeps us right with God?

To put it another way, what saves us and keeps us saved? What justifies us and keeps us justified? In these verses and even the verses previous, Paul is dealing with this issue. Is it the law or is it grace? Is it works or is it grace?

Or as someone said, is it grit or is it grace? What makes us and keeps us right with God?

This is something that at least some of the Galatians were fuzzy on. They were unclear about this issue.

[10 : 32] And maybe it is something that some of us are unclear about. But folks, if we are going to be unclear about anything in our Christian walk, may it not be this.

If we are going to be clear on anything in our Christian walk, let us be clear on this. Of all things, let there be no confusion in what makes us and keeps us right with God.

Because really the answer to this question has a massive impact on our lives. Our view, our answer to this question is the difference between an exhausting life spent continually trying to earn and keep our place in heaven and earn and keep our Father's approval.

that's exhausting and there's no freedom in that. Versus a life of peace and joy and freedom, knowing that it's already ours in Christ and there's nothing that can take that away from us.

The burning question is what makes us and keeps us right with God? Well, in verse 20, the stunning reality is, the stunning answer is, it is all Christ and nothing of ourselves.

[12 : 25] As Andrew shared last week, it's all Jesus and what he has done for us. I'm going to read verse 20 and 21 again.

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing.

Paul, in these verses, he brings the Galatians and he brings us back to the very heart of the gospel that Jesus paid it all. He loved us, he gave himself for us, he paid the price in full so that when we turn to him in faith, we could be adopted as his precious children and as his precious children, he lives in us and we in him and we are his forever.

And there is nothing we need to do to earn that or continue to earn it. Jesus did it all for us.

[13 : 50] You know, our old self, the one obsessed with performance and striving and earning and looking and appearing good, really has been nailed to the cross with Christ.

We as believers, we leave behind that sense of needing to earn and strive and perform. we don't need to make a list of, so to speak, washing and cleaning and cutting the grass.

We don't need to leave it on our father's pillow trying to earn our continued place. We are his and we will be his forever.

All we need to do is rest in him, abide in him, enjoy the union that we have with him. As believers, our life is no longer defined by what we can do, but by what Christ has done.

As believers, we're not defined by what we can do or how we look or our performance. We're defined by who we are in Christ. So, unlike that little boy, we don't need to earn our place.

[15:15] It has been done. Our old self is gone, crucified with Christ. Our new place, our new standing, our new position is we are his forever. And that is that.

No earning needed. Well, in light of the stunning reality that we do not need to earn God's approval or our continued place, in light of the reality that we are his forever, the freeing call is let us as believers live in grace and by grace and true grace and not performance.

A pastor once asked a young Christian, but this could be asked to any Christian, are you living for God's acceptance or are you living from God's acceptance?

And there's a world of difference between the two. There's freedom in one, there's chains in the other. That's the difference between, if you like, religion and the gospel.

Religion and works and earnings says, I obey, therefore God accepts me. But the true gospel is God accepts me in Christ, so I am accepted forever and it's nothing to do with me earning my place or seeking to perform to keep it.

[17:00] Paul said at the end of our passage this morning in verse 21, I do not set aside the grace of God for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing.

Just to close, I don't want us to miss that point. We are not to set aside God's grace. Another translation says we're not to frustrate God's grace.

In other words, as believers, we're meant to take hold of grace, we're meant to cling to it, we're meant to use it, so to speak, and live in it. We're not to set it aside and go back to works.

As believers, we cannot have this idea that we're saved by grace, but then we need to live by grit and live by performance. That's what it is to take God's grace and then set it aside again.

Paul says we do not set aside God's grace, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing.

[18:06] You know, when we come to Christ, we cannot gain righteousness by works. Why would we then think we go from there forward and then we can start earning righteousness?

It makes no sense. Let us not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing. Let us know as believers that we are in Christ accepted forever and then may that be the platform from where we live and serve him.

From the platform of us being accepted forever, not from the platform of trying to earn our continued approval. Gospel. No matter what way you look at it, if we're trying to earn our way so we're not unchosen or unadopted, no matter what way you're looking at it, that's a works gospel.

We're saved by grace, we're kept by grace, we'll be brought home by grace. I love that line in Amazing Grace. It starts off, of course, saying we're saved by grace.

I once was blind but now I see. I'm going to forget this now, this line. This is what happens when you, but later on John Newton says, it was grace that brought me safe thus far and grace will bring me home.

[19:43] It's not a case of grace has brought me safe thus far, my works, my efforts will bring me home. No, grace will bring us home and from that platform we live and we serve him.

And there's nothing we can do to add to that or earn it. There's nothing we can do to be unadopted or unchosen.

Once we are made right with God, we are made right with God through Christ forever. Once we are adopted sons and daughters in Christ, that is our identity for all time and even when time is no more.

Once we have received eternal life, our home will be with Christ forever and ever. All because of what he has done for us.

And if we look at it any other way, it's a works gospel. Let's pray together. Lord, we thank you so much that you have paid it all in full for us.

[20:52] What makes us and keeps us right with God, it's all you, Christ. It's all you, Jesus. So help us to live in freedom.

Help us to live in grace. Help us not to spend our Christian lives wrapped up in performance, trying to look good, trying to earn.

Lord, help us to live in the freedom that you have given us. And we need your help with this, Lord. And I pray that you would help us as a church to be an encouragement to each other as we grow to see more and more what it means to be in Christ, what it means to be your precious sons and daughters, what it means to be adopted by you for forever and ever.

So we thank you, Jesus, for all that you have done for us. And I pray just for any one of us who might have the weight of works and the weight of performance on our backs.

Lord, as we sing now, help us just to cast that off to you and help us to look to you even as we sing to walk in the freedom that you have given us. And from that platform, Lord, from the platform that you have done it all, let us live for you, let us serve you with all that we have but knowing that none of it changes our identity in you.

[22 : 23] In Jesus' name, Amen.