

## Crucified With Christ

Frequently we all wonder what good we can do for Christ, what good we can be to the church and how Christ can use us. We all become discouraged at times and feel like quitting the race because our goal seems too far away and too hard to attain. But let us take courage in the fact that Christ can use each of us to accomplish his will if we will give ourselves completely to him, body, soul and spirit. The Lord does not compel any of us to work in his kingdom; it must be a willing and voluntary service on our part in every respect.

"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" (Gal. 2:20). At least three things are stated in this passage by which we are enabled to be of use to the Master in the way that pleases him. These are:

1. ***I am crucified with Christ.*** Christ cannot use anyone who persists in living the old sinful life. We must become dead to sin before we can be made alive in Christ. Christ was crucified. Paul had just said he was dead: through the law he was dead to the law (vs. 19). By the fulfillment of the law by Christ, Paul was dead to the law and sin. He had been made alive through the gospel. He had been crucified: suffered death like Christ had died, yet he lived. His death was not physical; he had died to worldly things and sin, as well as to the works of the law of Moses. Before Christ can use you, you must become dead to the old life of sin. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6:6).
2. ***But Christ liveth in me.*** Even though one may be dead to sin, he cannot be used by Christ unless Christ lives in that person. Paul said he was dead, yet he lived. Then he explains that it was not he that lived but Christ that lived in him. The effects of Christ's death on the cross had made Paul dead to the sinful life he lived before. Now this new life he had was by Christ, thus Christ lived in him. This signified that the word and influence of Christ dwelt in the heart of Paul and completely governed his life in thought, word and deed. Christ was the only source of this life by which Paul now lived. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself (John 5:26). Jesus said, ". . . I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). From these statements by John we know that Christ is the source of this new life. It is proper to speak of Christ as living in the one who is enjoying this new life that comes from him. Before Christ can use you, you must let him be the guiding force in your life. This is done, of course, by his word in the New Testament. You must be dead to the old life of sin and disobedience and let Christ rule your new life in him.
3. ***I live by the faith of the Son of God.*** The one who lives by faith lives as faith directs. It is not possible for one to please God without faith (Heb. 11:6). Faith is a condition of the mind that trusts in the Lord and responds completely to his will. The gospel is called "the faith" because it is the power that directs our obedience (Jude 3). Before we can walk by faith God must have spoken to us through His word (Rom. 10:17). Anything religious that is not done according to God's word is sinful; the doer cannot please God without faith (Heb. 11:6). One must live by faith

before he can be used by Christ in his kingdom.

Pertinent to salvation and usefulness in the church of our Lord is one's willingness to die to sin and allow Christ to live in him by obeying the faith. Some wonder why they are never able to make progress in converting souls to Christ. Perhaps it is because they have never really died to sin. Perhaps they love the things of the world to the extent that Christ can not enter their lives. Or perhaps it is because they refuse to allow the faith, which is the gospel, the word of God, to be the exclusive guiding principle in all that they think, say and do.

A few complain that physical handicaps keep them from being of service to Christ. They are crippled, can not talk, poor, but look what Christ did with a few poor fishermen! Some do nothing because they do not have the talents they think some others have. Christ does not need mental giants to do his will. He can use only those who have died to sin and are living according to his word. A humble, consecrated life is a powerful instrument for the Lord to use in converting men and women to his will. Search your own life and see if your failures may not be due to the fact that you have not really surrendered yourself to him in all things. Let us awake out of sleep and let Christ reign in our lives instead of letting sin reign in our bodies.

We can be sure that Christ will supply what we lack in ability if only we will do our best according to his word. So many today are eager to do something "for Christ," but the idea of doing what he requires of us only by faith: doing only what is revealed in the New Testament, seems never to have occurred to the masses. Christ can use only those who will walk by faith.

Paul said we are baptized into the death of Christ, and as he was raised up from the dead, "even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom.6:4). We then become dead to sin and are buried by baptism to be raised to the new life. This is when we become the servants of righteousness. This is when we are made free from sin (Rom. 6:17-18). By living a life of faith we become useful to Christ in accomplishing his will to save the lost.

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