

Sunday, December 13, 2009—Grace Life School of Theology—Understanding Galatians and the Law—Galatians 2:19-21

### **Galatians 2:19**

- *“For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.”*
- This is an interesting verse. This is one of those short one-sentence that is extremely profound.
- If feel the best way to attack this verse is by unpacking each idea by looking at the relevant passages and then summarizing them at the end.
- Consider the following points.
  - Romans 3:19-20—all the law can do is manifest sin.
  - I Timothy 1:6-10—the purpose of the law is to manifest sin. When we believe the gospel the purpose of the Law is over. It has caused us to realize our own sin and reach out in faith to a redeemer who paid the price for us.
  - Ephesians 2:1-4—the natural man is officially declared “dead in trespasses and sins.” All the natural man knows how to do is sin. We can try and turn from our sin all we want but we cannot turn from that which we are dead in.
  - Romans 7:7-9—the law can only kill the believer.
  - Ephesians 2:6-6—when a person gets saved their inner man is made alive while their body remains dead and subject to the curse of sin.
  - Colossians 2:11—the believers soul and spirit are cut loose from his flesh so that he can be joined with Christ (Romans 7:4, I Corinthians 6:17).
  - Romans 6:1-11—believers still carry around a corpse that was already but crucified and put to death based upon the crosswork of Jesus Christ.
- Paul’s argument here is that, through the law, he was led to recognize that he was no longer under the law. The righteousness that is of the law was depended upon a perfect keeping of the law. Since no one is able to perfectly keep the law it became a revealer of sin rather than a giver of life.
- Romans 7:10—the command that was supposed to bring life actually led to death.
- Romans 3:20—in other words, through the law Paul was faced with the fact that he was a sinner which ultimately made him see his need for Christ.

- Romans 8:2—thus we see that through the law Paul gained knowledge of sin, which in turn caused him to find life in Christ apart from the law, which freed him to live unto God.
- Do you see how the book of Galatians is correcting the doctrinal errors the Galatians had entered into based upon the teachings of Romans?

### **Galatians 2:20**

- *“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live”*
- Romans 6:3-6— Paul was crucified with Christ it would only make sense that Paul was dead. In what sense was Paul dead? Our old man was crucified and destroyed by Christ when he died on the cross on our behalf.
- Paul tells us in Galatians 2:20 that while he was dead he was still alive. This is what we already discussed; when Paul believed in the finished work of Christ on his behalf his soul and spirit were cut away from his flesh. This how Paul and therefore us can both alive and dead at the same time.
- *“yet not I, but Christ liveth in me”*
- Paul then goes on to say that the reason he is still living is because Christ is living within him. In other words, that life that Paul was experiencing is because Christ was living within him.
- Romans 7:24—so Paul is a living spirit and soul encased in a dead body that is rotting physically.
- When Paul got saved he became a new man born of the Spirit of God. But this new man that Paul became was really Jesus Christ himself living his life in and through Paul.
- Philippians 3:9
- *“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.”*
- This time the phrase in the flesh has no reference to the activity of the body, but has to do with the fact that the believer’s new heavenly life has been placed into an earthen vessel and must be lived out inside the skin and bone restrictions of a corpse.
- This creates an interesting situation for the believer:
  - Galatians 2:20—the good that a believer does is not his own.

- Romans 7:22—yet good is what real believers want to do.
- Romans 7:1-6—the good fruit comes from somewhere in the believer that is part of the new man which rose from the dead.
- Ephesians 2:10—any good that come from us is the result of the life of Christ in us.
- II Corinthians 4:8-11—the life of Christ is manifest as it lives itself out in the life of the believer.
- Notice in Galatians 2:20 that it is the faithfulness of Christ that is the means by which Paul is able to live the Christian life.

### **Galatians 2:21**

- *“I do not frustrate the grace of God”*
- The word *“frustrate”* means to cast off, despise, disannul, bring to naught, or reject. In other words, Paul did not do anything in his life that would bring question upon the issues of God’s grace.
- *“for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”*
- If we could make ourselves right with God by our own works Christ did not need to die.
- We just saw in verse 20 that the only way we are even capable of doing anything good is because Christ dwells within the believer and works his life out through us by his word working effectually in us who believe.