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Conducted by  
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**"What is really meant by the expression Paul uses when he says  
'I am crucified with Christ?'"**

We had better give the whole expression from Gal. 2:20, which reads, **"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"**. We shall need to consider all the implications of this statement in detail.

#### **Crucified With Christ**

When a person had been convicted, and the death penalty passed, crucifixion was the method employed in those days for ensuring death. It is quite evident that it was the mortal body of Jesus which died on the Cross; it is equally evident that mortal man could not destroy the Divine life which Jesus had received from His Father. It then becomes clear that the Divine nature (of which Jesus never divested Himself) had within it the seeds of the Resurrection. It is this fact, perhaps, which is the greatest hope of the Christian's life in Christ.

Paul uses the expression, **"I am crucified with Christ"**. What is the 'I' to which Paul refers? It is quite evident that he is not referring to his mortal body because that was still intact. No, Paul makes much of the duality of natures; he refers in a number of places to the 'old man' and the 'new creature'. The 'I' which is crucified with Christ is the 'old man', **"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. For he that is dead is freed from sin"**. Rom. 6:6,7.

Paul saw the law as that which escalated sin. In Rom. 5:13 he affirms, **"but sin is not imputed when there is no law"**; later at v20 he says, **"Moreover the law entered that the offence might abound"**. He emphasises the argument in ch.7 when he says, **"But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the**

commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death". 7:8-10. There is not the slightest doubt that Paul knew what Christ had delivered by His crucifixion; in Gal. 3:13 he says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree". That is why the 'I' was crucified with Christ. The 'old man' - striving under the law for a righteousness which could never be achieved - was dead, crucified with Christ who was the true righteousness of God 'without the law'.

#### NEVERTHELESS I LIVE

We have just said that the 'I', which is the 'old man', has been crucified; so, then, this must be a different 'I' to which Paul refers. Writing to the saints at Corinth he says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new". 2 Cor. 5:17. The same idea is expressed by the Hebrew writer, "In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old, Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away".

Paul says, "And all things are of God", and it was God, through Jeremiah, who had said that the new law 'should be in the mind, and written on the heart'. Paul refers to this new law and calls it 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus', and he goes on to say 'that this new law had made him free from the law of sin and death'. See Rom. 8. Obviously, if this new law is 'in Christ Jesus', then we must in some way have access to Him in order to be a partaker of it. We are all sinners. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God". Rom. 3:23. Therefore, all have an 'old man' which needs to be renewed, and that renewal can only take place 'in Christ Jesus'. To be 'in Christ Jesus' is one of those mystical statements that Paul is fond of using. In Rom. ch. 6 he explains in terms that we can understand how this can be achieved. It is as well to read and study the whole chapter in order to get the full meaning. We must never forget that when we submit to Jesus we are accessing the new life which, because of His sacrifice at Calvary, is available to all who in faith and obedience submit their lives to Him. It is by the *grace* of God, and *must* be received as a *gift*.

#### YET NOT I

We must not be confused by Paul's use of the pronoun 'I' in the first person singular, after all, even though he is writing under the influence of the Holy Spirit, he is still seeing himself as a complete entity, but one who is responding to the different emphases which have had such a profound effect on his life. He indicates the most profound change which has come upon him if we complete his words, "Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me".

We can now see that the 'I', even though singular to himself, is the product of his *own life*, and also the life of Christ. This is a fundamental and wonderful thought. It is no longer 'I' in a detached sense. So complete has Paul's identification with Christ become, that his separate personality is merged into that of the Christ who has saved him; we can almost echo the words of John the Baptist, but in a different sense, "He must increase, but I must decrease". This surely must be the experience of every Christian; it is only when we die to self, and take on *His* yoke, that we shall feel the blessedness of our lives becoming *His* life. I'd like to quote some lines from a poem I wrote:

I bore the cruel nails,  
On bitter Cross impaled;  
If you're My disciple,  
Come, die with me.

#### THE LIFE WHICH I NOW LIVE

"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". It is our *belief* in Christ, and our *obedience* to him in repentance, confession, and immersion, which brings us *into* Him; it is *our faith* in Him

which keeps us there. It is not *His* faith shown to us, but *our* faith in Him expressed in the lives that we lead. I have said this before, and reason will not allow a different conclusion. If the new life in Christ Jesus is the product of *our* lives and *His*, then how can some interpret Rom. 7 to mean that Paul could do the will God in his *mind*, but in his *flesh* he would inevitably have to sin. What we are really saying is that the mind is in control, but the flesh is out of control. I have heard some brethren say from platforms that they sin hundreds of times every day; the mature Christian should not be capable of that, especially if he believes that Christ makes His abode with him. Oh, I know what they mean; they contrast their own fallibility with the Divine strength of Christ. But Christ *is* our strength, and the Holy Spirit *is* our guide, and our resource *is* the Godhead. I feel sure that the great Apostle saw his life in Christ like that. Read 1 Cor. 4:11-16. Also 1 Cor. 9:27, "**But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway**".

Brethren, we are saved individually and personally. I pray that our personalities will always be in subjection to the One whom we love and adore. For His name's sake.

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## CHRIST'S LOVE FOR THE CHURCH

Christ loved the Church because of God's plan and purpose through it; because of its position; because of the price that was paid for it; because of the kind of people who make it up; and because of the praise these people in the Church can give to God.

In Ephesians 3:8-11, we see that the Church was according to God's eternal purpose; that through it he planned to make known to the world the manifold wisdom of God. The Church therefore occupies an exalted position in the eyes of the Lord. It is spoken of in connection with "**the heavenly places**" (Ephesians 1:20-23. Jesus purchased the Church with His own blood (Acts 20:28). It is called His body (Ephesians 1:22,23). The Bible says, "**For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it even as the Lord the Church**" (Ephesians 5:29).

Jesus loved the Church because of God's purpose and plan through it. He loved it because of its exalted position before God. He also loved it because He bought it with His own blood. He loved it because the saved are added to it (Acts 2:47). He also loved it because of the praise the people in the Church could give to God. "**Unto him be glory in the church by Jesus Christ throughout all ages, world without end**" (Ephesians 3:21).

### TO WHAT EXTENT DID JESUS LOVE THE CHURCH?

Christ loved the Church so much that He gave Himself up for it (Ephesians 5:25). He loved it so much that He purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28). He loved it so much that He sanctified it and cleansed it by the washing of water with the Word (Ephesians 5:26).

The love Christ had for the Church was not a shallow one, but a sacrificial one. To be Christ-minded, we, too, must have a sacrificial love for the Lord's Church.

### BUT WHY DO MANY NOT LOVE THE CHURCH?

Some today think the Church is not very important. Why? Some have lightly esteemed it. Why?

In the first place, some don't really know a whole lot about the Church our Lord established. They think of it only as a denomination. But the Church of our Lord is not a denomination. The Greek word "church" means "called out". The Church consists of those who are called out of the world into Christ. The Church is in Christ (Romans 12:4,5). A man cannot be in Christ without being in His Church. A man cannot be saved without being in

the Lord's Church (Acts 2:47). If people could realise this, surely they would come to love the Church more.

Some do not like the Church because they are not in sympathy with its mission. In the Church there is a grand fellowship, but the Church is more than a mere social order. Its mission is to make known to the world the manifold wisdom of God. What a responsibility God has placed upon those who make up His Church.

Some do not love the Church because they are not deeply committed to Christ, who is the head of it. They are not ready for the sacrifices Christ calls for. One cannot live any way he wants and be a member of the Lord's Church. For this reason, many do not love it.

### **HOW CAN WE SHOW OUR LOVE FOR THE CHURCH?**

We show our love for the Church by showing our love for Christ and His Word. We cannot love Christ without loving His Church. How could a man honour Christ and dishonour His body?

We show our love for the Lord's Church by being members of it. It is by one Spirit that we are baptised into this one body (1 Corinthians 12:13). We show no real love for the Church of our Master unless we have been scripturally baptised. There is only one baptism (Ephesians 4:4, 5), and unless we have been baptised exactly as the New Testament teaches, we could never be members of the Lord's body.

We show our love for the Church by godly behaviour and faithfulness in our work and worship. We also show our love for it by showing love and concern one for another. The Church is made up of the Lord's people, and we cannot love the Church without loving and serving the Lord's people.

### **HOW MUCH DO YOU LOVE THE CHURCH?**

It might be well to ask, "How much do you love Christ?" Christ is the head of the Church (Colossians 1:18). The Church is the Lord's body (Ephesians 1:22,23). Do you love the Church enough to submit to everything Christ, the head of the Church, has requested of you? Do you love it enough to support it with your means, to proclaim its glory to the world? Do you love it enough not to substitute anything in its place, but to do everything you can to help bring the whole world into it? Since Christ loved the Church so much, you cannot be Christ-minded without your showing much love for the Church!