

The School of the Cross

What a wonderful day it is, and I'm here to tell you that it is a good life living for the Lord. In just a few moments we're going to be looking in the book of Galatians. Let's read that verse now that we're going to look at in Galatians 2:20.

Paul is speaking. He says, *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.*

Paul the apostle, possibly a man who was maligned and ridiculed and suffered possibly more than any other person with the exception of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul suffered but yet he said, "I am crucified with Christ, but nevertheless, I live." We're going to look in just a moment at "I have been crucified with Christ," or the school of the cross.

Let me invite you to write me today, Lewis Woodard, 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, FL 34731. Sometimes I get ahead of myself and I forget to give the address. But did you know that I'm human and sometimes I do make a mistake? You're human as well, and we all make mistakes, but thank God that He is faithful and just to forgive us for anything that we do that would not bring honor and glory to Him, but if we've asked Him into our hearts, we're His children, and just as your earthly father overlooks the mistakes that you do, our Heavenly Father will overlook those mistakes. And we need to go to Him on occasion and say, "Father, forgive me for I've made a mistake and I've done something wrong. I ask you to lead me and guide me. Thank you for saving me, Lord." And we need to do that. We need to draw close to the Lord every day.

Well, according to John Bunyan, the author of *Pilgrim's Progress*... he was the wise interpreter of the inner life... the school of the cross is the school of light. The Christian life begins at the cross of Christ, and Christians experience and develop life by association with the cross of Christ. A person must come to the cross. They are drawn by the Lord, the Holy Spirit. They are brought there and they kneel before the cross and they see Jesus hanging there, and they know that He died for them.

Now, we know that Jesus is not still on the cross, but as a person comes to Jesus, they realize that, yes, He did die on that cross; yes, He was brought down from that cross; His blood was shed; He went to the grave, but thank God, He rose on that third day, and thank God that His blood covers the sin of those people who will trust Him as Lord and Savior. A person comes to the cross; they see Jesus; they understand that He died for them; they understand that He rose from the grave, that He is the Son of God, and that He is able to save them. And they say, "Lord Jesus, come into my heart. I receive You as my Savior."

Well, notice something with me if you would in Galatians 2 – Christ crucified for us. Jesus came to pay a debt that He didn't owe, because we owed a debt we couldn't pay. In Romans 6:23, it says, *The wages of sin is death*. Jesus died. He gave His life. He paid the sin debt for us. We couldn't pay that debt. We could never pay that debt, but Jesus paid that debt. He Who knew no sin died to pay that debt. He Who did no wrong died for us. He died for you that you could have eternal life.

Galatians 3:13 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*. The curse of the law is

that everyone is guilty before an all righteous God. All have sinned and come short, according to Romans 3:23.

I Peter 1:18-19 say, ¹⁸*Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; ¹⁹But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*

Christ became a substitutionary sacrifice. The truth of substitution is revealed in Christ. Christ took the place of the sinner in the experience of the cross. And there is no better illustration of a substitutionary sacrifice than in Christ Jesus.

Notice something else that I've noticed in these verses in Galatians chapter 2 – Christ crucified among us. In Galatians 3:1, it says, *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?*

A doctrine of proclamation is revealed in this verse, and nothing should rob us of the glory of the cross of Christ. We often hold back and not tell others of Jesus because we're afraid to offend, but I say to you today that the proclamation of Jesus Christ, proclaiming Him is the greatest honor that a person could have in this life, of sharing Jesus with those around you. The cross cannot be defeated, for it is defeat. The cross of Christ cannot be defeated by science. The cross of Christ cannot be defeated by human reasoning. The cross of Christ cannot be defeated by false prophets. The cross of Christ cannot be defeated by this world, and the gates of Hell cannot prevail against the cross of Christ as we charge forward, looking unto the Author and Finisher of our faith.

And I would have you know that the cross cannot be defeated for it is defeat. The cross of Christ defeats death. The cross of Christ defeats the grave. In I Corinthians 15:55, the Bible says, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?* I Corinthians 15:17 says, *But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The cross not only defeats death and the grave, but the cross of Christ defeats the devil. The cross of Christ defeats the flesh. In I Corinthians 15:50-52, the Bible says, ⁵⁰*Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵²In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

Meeting Christ at the cross is the beginning of the Christian experience. At the cross is the beginning of discipleship, and one day, we'll see Him. We'll be with Him. These bodies that we're in right now will be changed in a moment... in the twinkling of an eye... and we'll be forever with the Lord.

Something else I see about the cross of Christ, of being crucified with Him. Galatians 2:20, once again, says, *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.*

The message of identification is stressed in this verse, Galatians 2:20. Romans 6:11 says, *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

When He died, I died with Him. And I would have you know that union brings communion. We can have communion with God today because of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, because we count ourselves as being dead with him. I Corinthians 1:10 says, *Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*

I John 1:3 says, *That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* As Christians, we need to identify ourselves with Christ. Colossians 3:1 says, *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*

We need today men of the cross, women of the cross, with the message of the cross bearing the marks of the cross. We need to carry on the message that Jesus died for sinners. Galatians 2:20, once again, says, *I am crucified with Christ*, but in Galatians 5:24, we read about the flesh: *And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*

It doesn't say that you're going to be perfect. It simply says that you recognize that you're no longer yours, but you belong to the Lord and to the best of your ability and through the power of God, you're going to live for Him and you're going to do what is necessary to bring honor and glory to Him.

In Galatians 5:24, it talks about the flesh, and the flesh here is meant the self-life. Here, the Christly life must hold sway over the self-life.

In Romans 6:6, it says, *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. We should not go around looking for something to get into, some trouble to get into, but we should look to the Lord and trust Him to deliver us. Dead to the old, the Christian is to live to be alive to the new.

Well, there are many things that could be said about the verses found in Galatians. In Galatians 6:14, it says, *But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.* The Christian is crucified to the world and the world to the Christian.

The old cross slew men; the new cross entertains them. The old cross condemned; the new cross amuses; the old cross destroyed confidence in the flesh; the new cross encourages it. We need to look for the old cross today and trust God. We need to trust the Lord to save us, to keep us from this lost and dying world that Jesus wants to save.

May we say, "Jesus, I my cross have taken, all to leave and follow Thee, perish every fond ambition, all I've hoped and known, yet how rich is my condition. God and Heaven are still my own."

Can you say today that you know Jesus as your Savior? If not, bow your head where you are and ask Jesus to come into your heart. I remind you once again. You don't have to be in a church to be saved. You can ask Jesus right where you are. Bow your head and ask Him to save you right now. "Lord Jesus, come into my heart. I receive you as my personal Savior."

Well, it's been good being with you today. Let me remind you to look at our Website, www.LRWM.org. You can receive a free transcript on that Website of this program and other programs of "It's a Good Life."

Thank you for joining me. And at this same time next week, I pray that you'll be here when you'll hear me say, "It is a good life." May the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.