

Weekly Bible Study for Highcliffe and Bransgore Methodist Churches

GALATIANS 2:17-21 – THE TRANSFORMED LIFE by Jean Davies w/c 14th June **PAUL EXPRESSES HIS TRANSFORMED LIFE OF FAITH IN CHRIST ALONE**

“It’s no longer I that liveth, but Christ that liveth in me.” This is now a well-known song, and this concise statement by Paul in Galatians 2:20 is right at the heart of this brief but somewhat difficult passage of Scripture.

To set the scene for our study passage, Paul, in his letter to the young church (or churches) in the Roman province of Galatia (in present day Turkey), is summarising his previous public rebuke of the Apostle Peter at Antioch (Gal 2:11). Peter’s temporary but inconsistent behaviour and hypocrisy in eating with and associating freely with Gentile Christians until Judaizers arrived from Jerusalem had to be addressed. The Judaizers were a group of Jewish Christians who still insisted on maintaining the old Jewish laws and ceremonies, including circumcision. They were in error of adding to the Gospel of Christ, changing it from one of “Christ Alone” to “Christ Plus”. In view of Peter’s leadership in the church, his example had a powerful effect on others with the danger of a divided church, and God’s principle of believers being justified by faith in Christ alone being misinterpreted, ignored then abandoned.

Paul’s passionate argument in Vs 17-21, however, also reveal something about how much he himself had been “transformed” - changed. So deeply in relationship and “at one” is he with Christ that he describes himself as being “dead to the law”, as having been “crucified with Christ”. All his previous opinions, philosophies of life and values have “died”. By grace, his righteousness before God has instead been credited to him through Christ. It is as though the cross of Christ has put a barrier between the old “Saul” and the new “Paul”, between the old life and the new. He knows the intensity of Christ’s love for him (“the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me”).

Paul does not now depend on laws or things of merit; he now draws from the life of Christ within and chooses to live by the power of that life that always pleases God. He lives an abundant, vibrant life of true contentment even in great dangers and difficulties that we can read about in his other New Testament letters.

- 1 “It’s no longer I that liveth, but Christ that liveth in me.” Is this a song that you can truthfully sing about your own relationship with Jesus Christ?
- 2 In what ways have you been changed (transformed) from the “old you” since trusting in Christ as your Saviour, and what further changes would you like to see in yourself? Have others noticed the “new you”?
- 3 In our study passage, Paul verbally expresses his transformed life of faith in Christ. How do you express your new and growing life of faith in Christ?

We have all broken God’s law. However, Christ bore our sins, removing them from us on His cross. To believe this, to live by faith in His death, is sufficient to be justified (made right) in God’s sight and receiving His forgiveness and peace. This is living life in all its fulness.