

January 16, 2011

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Monday

Gal. 2:21 "I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."

The temptation to believe that you can do something to earn salvation is a constant temptation of the flesh and of its pride. But the consequence of trusting in your goodness or religious acts is to deny the very death of Christ. If you could have done anything to bring salvation, then Christ died needlessly. Luther wrote, "If I, a condemned sinner, could have been purchased and redeemed by any other price, why should the Son of God have given Himself for me? Just because there was no other price in heaven and on earth big and good enough, was it necessary for the Son of God to be delivered for me."

Tuesday

Gal. 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ;..."

"Crucified with Christ"? It means that your sins, your failures, your alienation from God were nailed to the cross and died with Jesus. When you identify yourself with Jesus, when you trust Him for your salvation, then His death becomes your death. He is able to take upon Himself your sins and therefore His death becomes your punishment. "I am crucified with Christ" is the cry of faith. I need not die for my own sins; I cannot bear the cost. Instead, Jesus died for me and I was, by faith, crucified with Christ. This is your only hope, your only plea, and your full security.

Wednesday

Gal. 2:19 "For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God."

In what way did Paul 'die to the law'? In the sense that any hope that he might have in keeping the law, or its ceremonies, or its traditions as a means of salvation has been banished from his heart. He holds not one ounce of hope that he could do anything in order to make himself acceptable to God. He has thrown his entire hope upon the death of Jesus. Such is his trust. How about you? You must fight the urge to think that you are doing anything to win your salvation. You must resist the temptation to consider your religious activities as any help in achieving a right standing before God. IT IS CHRIST ALONE.

Thursday

Gal. 2:20 "...I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

Do you worry that you may lose your salvation? Then you have allowed yourself to trust in some means other than the death of Christ. You may be subtly swayed to trust in your religious nature, or your good works, or your church membership, but inwardly you know that these are all imperfect and therefore you fear you are lost and without genuine hope. When you trust in Christ alone, when you trust not one iota in your own merit, then you are confident your salvation is secure, for you know that His death was fully sufficient to cover your sins. You did not first choose Christ, He choose you. Your salvation does not even rest in your love for Jesus, but in His love for you.

Friday

Gal. 2:20 "...it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God."

When I put my trust in Christ and His atonement alone, my gratitude rises to a new level. When I realize what He has done for me. When I realize that I could not do anything of myself, then my love for Christ grows and with it my desire to please Him and to serve Him. Now Christ lives in me. Now I live for Christ. My works, my worship, my service rise to new heights, not to gain the approval of God, but because God has approved of me in Jesus. Now service and work are not a burden but a release of my love. Faith without works is not true faith, but genuine faith in Christ issues forth in new works arising from my love for Him.