

Crucified with Christ

Galatians 2.15-21 ~ March 20th, 2011

“Who has seen the movie **Castaway?**” ~ recap for everyone

- “Do you remember **Wilson?**” ~ Wilson helped Chuck through a difficult time
- Chuck depended on Wilson ~ to an unhealthy degree
- Chuck abandoned the raft to go after Wilson in the open ocean
 - He was literally at the end of his rope and had to choose . . .
 - The rope led back to the raft and salvation ~ Wilson led to death

v15 ~ “**We who are Jews by nature and not sinners of the Gentiles**”

- “**We**” ~ Paul identifies with Judaizers ~ they are brethren
- “**Jews by nature**” ~ born that way ~ descendants of Abraham
- “**not sinners**”
 - Does this mean that Jews were not sinners?
 - No ~ Paul is using sinners to describe their alienation from God
 - The Jews were God’s people ~ The Gentiles were outcasts (*Satan’s*)
 - The Jews were special to God ~ The Gentiles were ignored by God
 - Jewish consciences were informed by the “*law*”
 - Gentiles by contrast were given over to sin
 - **Acts 17.30** ~ “*these times of ignorance God overlooked*”
 - We forget Jesus was Jewish ~ Jesus called Greek woman “*Gentile dog*”
 - In the early church Jew and Gentile distinctions were very real
 - Imagine us worshipping with Jews now ~ this was more odd

v16 ~ “**knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law**”

- Paul begins with common ground ~ what all believe and know
- Three times in verse 16 Paul uses the word “**justified**”
- Three times in verse 16 Paul uses the phrase “**works of the law**”
 - They accepted Jesus ~ They admitted the “*law*” was not enough
 - This “*law*” was both the moral and the ceremonial
- Paul **hammers this home** through **affirmations** and **denials**
 - “**We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.**”

Xition: The main point of verses 15 and 16 is...

v16 ~ “**even we have believed in Christ Jesus**”

- Even Jews, who love the law, recognize that the law doesn't save
 - *“Is it just the order?” “Do we need law and Jesus but in reverse order?”*
 - **No!** Paul is emphatic ~ **but** and **not** show only one is true
- So Paul's main point is this
 - The Law can't even save us Jews who were given the Law...
 - *“So why would we force law-keeping upon the Gentiles?”*

v17 ~ “**we ourselves also are found sinners**”

- The Judaizers are saying *“we're no better than the Gentiles now”*
- Let's “assume the best” about the Judaizers ~ reason with them
 - They're concerned that God is not being honored
 - I try to always do the same with Arminians ~ 2 types of them
 - Some obsessed with “free will” ~ others with God's character (*fair*)
 - Judaizers were perhaps of 2 types also
 - Those that loved self-righteousness ~ others loves holiness (*sanctity*)
- **Acts 15.1** ~ *“... men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, ‘Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.’”*

v17 ~ “**Is Christ therefore a minister of sin?**”

- *“Belief in Christ breaks down the wall between Jew and Gentile.*
- **Q:** *“Does this mean He no longer cares that people be set apart for Him?”*
 - Paul answers this implied question, *“Certainly not!”*
 - Even the Jews once knew in their hearts that they were unworthy...
 - **Read Exodus 20.18-21** ~ Jews ask Moses to speak to God . . .
 - Martin Luther on Gal 2.17 ~ *“Moses brought the people out of their tents to have God speak to them personally from a cloud. But the people trembled with fear, fled, and standing aloof they begged Moses: “You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.” The proper office of the Law is to lead us out of our tents, in other words, out of the security of our self-trust, into the presence of God, that we may perceive His anger at our sin.”*
 - Later wrote, *“If my salvation was so difficult to accomplish that it necessitated the death of Christ, then **all** my works, **all** the righteousness of the Law, are good for nothing. **How can I buy for a penny that which costs a million dollars?**”*
 - But the Jews were much richer than the Gentiles ~ they had 2 pennies
 - The distinction between Jew and Gentile is merely *‘dust on the scales’*
 - **Ps 7.11b** ~ *“God is angry with the wicked every day.”*

Xition: Let's look at verse 19...

v19 ~ "I died to the Law that I might live to God"

- Paul had to die to the Law so that he could live to God
- The Law served to remind him of his sin
 - But the Pharisees had become experts at self-justification
 - They were subverting the one true purpose of the Law
 - The Law was not intended to justify them ~ but to condemn them
 - But they refused to submit to this condemnation
- Death to the Law frees us to serve Christ
 - We are not condemned by sin, nor are we a slave to sin

v20 ~ "I have been crucified with Christ; 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, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

- When tempted to sin Luther would admonish himself, "*I am a baptized man!*"
 - He was set apart to God ~ He was sanctified for God's use
 - He was the property of Christ, bought and paid for by His blood...
- This verse beautifully portrays this as well

v20a ~ "I have been crucified with Christ;"

- This is not physical crucifixion ~ this is sin and evil crucified to me
- Christ's crucifixion triumphed over sin and evil, Satan and death, in me...
 - We were crucified with Christ
 - We were buried with Christ
 - We were raised with Christ
 - We now sit with Christ in the heavenlies

v20b ~ "it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;"

- Paul says this in **Col 3.1-3**
 - "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."
- All true believers are dead men walking . . .

v20c ~ "and the life which I now live in the flesh"

- We Christians may outwardly appear as any unbeliever
 - The recent messages c/Saul and David have shown this . . .
- We may live "in the flesh", but we do not live "after the flesh"

v20d ~ "I live by faith in the Son of God,"

- Luther made this comment about this phrase, "We may now understand how spiritual life originates. It enters the heart by faith. Christ reigns in the heart with His Holy Spirit, who sees, hears, speaks, works, suffers, and does all things in and through us over the protest and the resistance of the flesh."
- **Read 1 Cor 10.13** ~ "No temptation has taken you . . . way of escape"
 - But we don't always take God's escape route . . .

v20e ~ "who loved me and gave Himself for me."

- Christ died for all of His elect
- But Paul says Christ died for him personally
 - Christ is our personal savior
 - I have often been uncomfortable with the phrase "*personal savior*"
 - But Paul embraces it ~ not to show us how special he was
 - It reminds us how much we personally gained by Christ's death
 - Christ's death is not a mere fact of history
 - It is intensely personal for millions of people
 - Ill: *While You Were Sleeping* – giving up seat on EL ~ not heroic
 - Stalin: "*One death is a tragedy, 1 million is a statistic*"
 - Gary North refers to this as God's "cosmic personalism"
 - Ill: Amusement Park game ~ "*picking up people & reading thoughts*"

v21 ~ "I do not set aside the grace of God..."

- The phrase "set aside" can also read
 - deny ~ despise ~ reject ~ or, cast away
- So we return to the beginning of this message
 - The castaway is saved by God
 - But the castaway does not cast away God's grace
 - Instead he casts away self-righteousness
 - We hang onto our works as if they're something valuable
 - We reflect upon our service to God as if it's something worthy
 - But our works are nothing, and they are worse than nothing
 - * Because they draw our eyes away from our Jesus, our Savior
 - * the author and perfecter of our faith . . . (**Heb 12.2**)

Let's Pray

Benediction ~ Jude 24-25