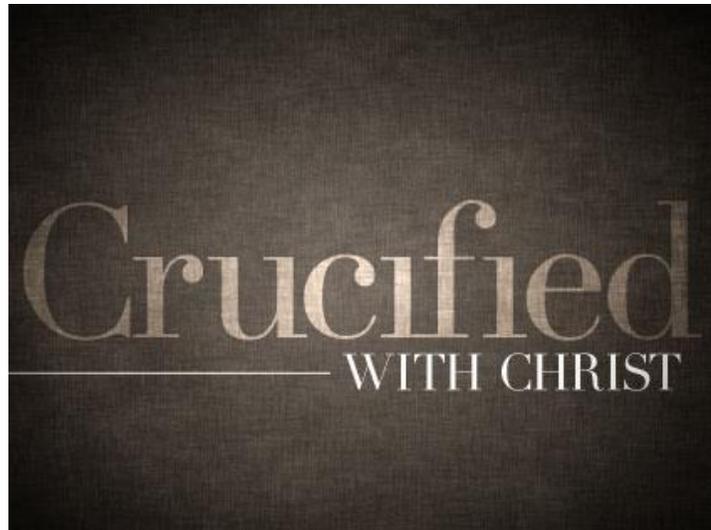


18 June 2021

Galatians 2.19-21

19 For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; 20 and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. 21 I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.



When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. — 1 Corinthians 2.1-2

Saul was a keeper of the law, and fiercely so. When the Holy Spirit of God revealed to him that it was Jesus he was persecuting, that Jesus was indeed Israel's promised Messiah, Paul left the law behind. He died to the law as gatekeeper, law has boundary drawer, law as people definer. All that the law provided was now over. It was dead to him, as dead as Christ was now alive in him.

The law, the Torah, was a gift from God; the law both helped define a people and guided them in their life together. The law was not a list of "thou shalt nots," but the teachings of and instructions from God to a chosen people, set apart, whose identity was expressed in the God they worshipped, the stories they told, and living in obedience through the practices, customs, traditions, and rituals in their life together as signs of being a covenant people.

Once again it is easy to forget the issue at hand. Paul isn't talking about individual salvation, but the way Christians relate to one another. What Paul has died to is the idea that Jewish Christians still need to be law-obedient, Torah-observers. The unity of the church is at hand — what is the bond of fellowship between believers? There cannot be two standards: one for Jews, another for gentiles. Christ alone is the answer, for each and for all.

Paul's argument is this: if we are *justified* (made righteous) by faith in Christ and not by observing the Torah, then we must *live* by faith in Christ and not by any former observances, practices, or commandments. Of course, you and I are Jewish Christians, we are gentiles. But Paul's words reach to us as well: we must be careful never to add requirements to what is a free gift from Christ.

As Christ lives in me, and in you, may the Christ in me see the Christ in you, and the Christ in all.

—Pastor Peter

Prayer: *Creator Spirit, breathe in us the life that is Christ. Help us to die this day to the old distinctions and divisions, and may our unity be found in Christ alone. Amen.*

Choral Link:

The Deer's Cry — Arvo Pärt (b. 1935, Estonian), performed by VOCES8. Text from *St. Patrick's Breastplate*. Click [here](#) to read more about the composer.

*Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,
Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down,
Christ in me, Christ when I arise,
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me,
Christ with me.*