

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

Scripture: Galatians 2
(05-17-26 Pastor Tony Hao)

In Paul's day, false teachers called Judaizers preached "the gospel plus Moses." In our day counterfeits of the gospel of grace preach "the gospel plus" their extra-biblical beliefs, their religious organization, their rules, regulations, and special revelations. In response to such false teachings that go beyond the gospel of grace, Paul said in Galatians if anyone should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!

Paul describes returning to Jerusalem after 14 years to confirm his message with the other apostles (2:1-10). He highlights that Titus, a Greek, was not forced to be circumcised, proving salvation is by grace through faith alone, apart from the works of the Law. Religion often says "Jesus + [Something Else] = Salvation". Paul argues that any "plus sign" actually subtracts from the finished work of Christ. Paul also confronted Peter publicly because the truth of the Gospel was at stake (2:11-20).

For Paul, the Gospel means to be crucified with Christ. It means that when we are united to Christ in faith, we participate in His death, not physically but spiritually. We let our old selves and desires die with all our sins. All the patterns of sin we once took pleasure in, and the things we took pride in identifying with are dead and gone. George Müller was asked the secret of his victorious Christian life. He replied: "There came a day when George Müller died, utterly died! No longer did his own desires, preferences, and tastes come first. He knew that from then on, Christ must be all in all."

Martin Luther said, "I am now one with Christ, that is to say, Christ's righteousness, victory, and life are mine." We don't just share in Christ's death; we share in his resurrection victory. Union with the resurrected Savior empowers to live for Him.

GROWING DEEPER (Reflection & Application)

1. What would you have done in Paul's place when faced with 'false brothers'? Would it matter to you if Paul's arguments had failed?
2. What difference would it make to you if you had to earn your way to God by good works?
3. What 'additions' to faith might others suggest on what should be done to be approved by God?
4. How can you help break down and avoid the performance trap?