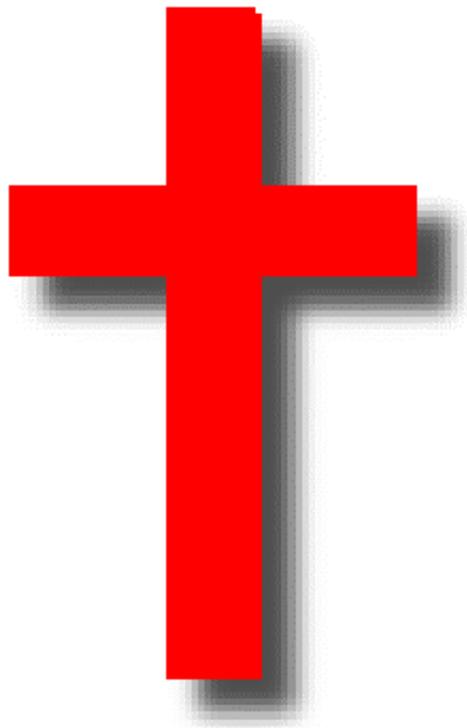


THE CRUCIFIED LIFE



by
Evangelist Norman R. Stevens

THE CRUCIFIED LIFE

Please open your Bibles to Galatians chapter 2 and verse twenty. I would like to preach a message entitled "The Crucified Life." If we were to take the time today to look at the life of the Apostle Paul after he was saved, after he was born again, we would all stand in awe at the life which he lived for the Lord Jesus Christ. He was used mightily of God. He magnified God with His life.

However, before he was saved, he was a blasphemer; he was a persecutor; he was a devout enemy of Jesus Christ. Yet this blasphemer, this persecutor, this devout enemy of Christ met the Lord Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus; and he was instantly changed. That's biblical. In II Corinthians 5:17, the Bible says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

The Apostle Paul lived his life for the Lord Jesus Christ. But how did he do that? How did he live his life for the Lord Jesus Christ? What was the secret to Paul's life? The secret to Paul's life is found in Galatians 2:20, where the Apostle Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Paul lived the crucified life. Brethren! You ought to be living the crucified life if you want to be used mightily of God, if you want to magnify God with your lives.

We are going to notice three things: Number one: the crucified life; number two: Christ liveth in me, and Number three: I live by faith.

Notice, number one: crucified with Christ. Paul had been talking about the crucified life, but what did he mean by that? The answer is found in Galatians 5:24, where the Apostle Paul said, "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." What was Paul saying? Paul was saying this: A crucified man is one who has put to death his own lusts of the flesh. A crucified man is one who has put to death his own desires of the flesh. A crucified man is one who has put to death his own affections of the flesh. So let me ask you something, "What are those lusts of the flesh? What are those desires of the flesh? What are those affections of the flesh?" Anything you love more than you love Jesus Christ is a lust of the flesh. Anything you love more than you love Jesus Christ is a desire of the flesh. Anything you love more than you love Jesus Christ is an affection of the flesh. It is that simple. And to the degree that you yield your life to those fleshly lusts, to those fleshly desires, to those fleshly affections, to that very same degree, you are living the self-life as opposed to the crucified life, because the crucified life is the life within the child of God who determines by God's grace, "I am going to die. I am going to die to my flesh. I am going to die to my lusts of the flesh. I am going to die to my desires of the flesh. I am going to die to my affections of the flesh. That is, I am going to crucify my flesh! I am going to crucify my flesh to those lusts. I am going to crucify my flesh to those desires. I am going to crucify my flesh to those affections."

Let me ask you another question. What do you love more than you love Jesus Christ? Is there anything, in all the world, that you would not give up for Jesus Christ? Think with me! Is there any job, any hobby, any career, any sport, or any possession that you would not give up for Jesus Christ?

Is there anyone, in all the world, for whom you hold greater affection than for Jesus Christ? Any mom, any dad, any brother, any sister, any aunt, any uncle, any grandpa, any grandma, any granddaughter, any grandson, any daughter, any son, any husband, any wife, any girl friend or boy friend for whom you hold greater affection than for Jesus Christ?

Is there anything in all the world that means more to you than Christ does? Any dream, any plan, any ambition, any goal, any feeling, any attitude that you love more than you love Christ?

Brethren! We all have an old sin nature, an old flesh nature that has carnal lusts, that has carnal desires, that has carnal affections. We cannot get away from that because it is part of our nature. What was Paul saying? Paul was saying this: Though you have an old sin nature that has carnal lusts, that has carnal desires, that has carnal affections, the crucified man does not allow those to control him. The crucified man does not permit those to control him. They do not control where he goes. They do not control what he does. They do not control what he says. They do not control what he feels. Those lusts of the flesh, those desires of the flesh, those affections of the flesh do not control the crucified man because the crucified man has instead crucified himself. That is, he has crucified those lusts of the flesh. He has crucified those desires of the flesh. He has crucified those affections of the flesh.

What was Paul saying? Paul was saying this: I have taken the old sin nature, the old flesh nature that I have, that I was born with, and I have nailed it to the cross. I have given up my rights. I have given up my dreams. I have given up my plans. I have given up my ambitions. I have given up my goals. I have given it all up because I am crucified with Christ.

Can that be said of you today? Have you nailed the old sin nature, the old flesh nature that you have, that you were born with, to the cross? Have you given up your rights? Have you given up your dreams? Have you given up your plans? Have you given up your ambitions? Have you given up your goals? Have you given it all up because you too are crucified with Christ?

The crucified life is the life that demands that Jesus Christ come first. In Mark 8:34, Jesus said, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." What was Jesus saying? Jesus was saying this: If you are going to come after me, if you are going to follow me, I've got to be first. I've got to be first in your life. I've got to be first in your dreams. I've got to be first in your plans. I've got to be first in your ambitions. I've got to be first in your goals. I've got to be first in your marriage. I've got to be first in your dating. I've got to be first in your home. I've got to be first in your business. I've got to be first in your

church. I've got to be first in your standards. I've got to be first in your studies. I've got to be first. I've got to be first in your life.

Listen! Anything that contradicts the will of God in your life has got to go, and that is why a vast majority of God's children today will never live the kind of life the Apostle Paul lived. They are not willing to do that. They are not willing to give up whatever contradicts the will of God in their life. Therefore they will never live the kind of life the Apostle Paul lived. In I Corinthians 15:31, the Apostle Paul said, "I die daily." What was Paul saying? Paul was saying this: I die to myself and I nail myself to the cross.

You say, "Preacher! What must I do?" You need to nail your lusts of the flesh to the cross. You need to nail your desires of the flesh to the cross. You need to nail your affections of the flesh to the cross. You need to nail your dreams, your plans, your ambitions, and your goals to the cross. It is that simple.

Are you crucified with Christ? As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you ought to be. You ought to be crucified with Christ.

We have noticed, number one: crucified with Christ; but notice, number two: Christ liveth in me.

So let me ask you something. What takes the place of self-rule? It is the rule of the Lord Jesus Christ in your life. What takes the place of those fleshly lusts? What takes the place of those fleshly desires? What takes the place of those fleshly affections? It is the will of God. In Galatians 2:20, the Apostle Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." What was Paul saying? Paul was saying this: I crucify my flesh; and, in its place, I put Jesus Christ living out His life in and through me. Paul said it this way in Philippians 1:21, "For to me to live is Christ." Is that the way you are living your life today?

The crucified life is a life lived in such a way that the Lord Jesus Christ lives out His life in and through you as a child of God. It is so yielding to the Holy Spirit of God that the Holy Spirit of God does in and through you what He did in and through Jesus Christ.

So let me ask you another question. How did Jesus Christ, God's Son, live His life on this earth some 2,000 years ago? How did He fight the Devil? How did He fight temptation? The answer is found in Luke 4:1, which says, "And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness." How did Jesus, God's Son, live His life on this earth some 2,000 years ago? How did He fight the Devil? How did He fight temptation? The Bible says that He did it in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus went out to fight the Devil in the power of the Spirit. Jesus went out to fight temptation in the power of the Spirit, and He returned in the power of the Spirit. You say, "Preacher! How do you know that?" I read the Bible. In Luke 4:14, the Bible says, "And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about."

When you are filled with the Holy Spirit of God, when you are controlled by the Holy Spirit of God, the very same Holy Spirit that gave Jesus power will give you power today.

How then can you crucify your flesh? Brethren! You can crucify your flesh by walking in the Spirit.

As a child of God you ought to be crucified with Christ. That is, you ought to nail your fleshly lusts to the cross. You ought to nail your fleshly desires to the cross. You ought to nail your fleshly affections to the cross. You ought to nail your dreams, your plans, your ambitions, and your goals to the cross.

You ought to be living in the fullness of the Holy Spirit just like Jesus lived in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Why? So that the life of the Lord Jesus Christ can be reproduced in and through you as a child of God. You say, "Preacher! How can I do all of that?"

That's number three: I live by faith. The Apostle Paul is not finished with us yet. He goes on to say, "And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

What was Paul saying? Paul was saying this: I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the way I do all of that is that I live by faith.

Now the faith the Apostle Paul is talking about here is the way you live your life. You ought to be living by faith. In Hebrews 11:6, the Bible says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." In Romans 1:17, the Apostle Paul said, "The just shall live by faith." In II Corinthians 5:7, the Bible says, "For we walk by faith, not by sight." And in Mark 11:22, Jesus said, "Have faith in God." That's good advice. You ought to have faith in God. He knows what He is doing.

Question! How then can you be filled with the Holy Spirit of God? You can be filled with the Holy Spirit of God as you daily walk in simple faith before God. The Christian life is not "seeking an experience." The Christian life is not "seeking some feeling." The Christian life is "walking by faith every day"--faith in God's ability, faith in God's character, faith in God's leadership, faith in God's love, faith in God's providence, faith in God's sovereignty, faith in God's strength, faith in God's wisdom, faith in God's Word.

Do you want to live the kind of life the Apostle Paul lived after he was saved, after he was born again? You say, "Preacher! I would like that. I would like to live the kind of life the Apostle Paul lived after he was saved, after he was born again. He was used mightily of God. He magnified God with his life. But how can I do that? How can I live the kind of life the Apostle Paul lived?"

You can live the same sort of life the Apostle Paul lived when you come to the Lord Jesus Christ and lay down your life beside Him and say, "Lord Jesus I am going to trust you with my life. I am going to trust you with my dreams. I am going to trust you with my plans. I am going to trust you with my ambitions. I am going to trust you with my goals. I am going to trust you with my marriage. I am going to trust you with my dating. I am going to trust you with my home. I am going to trust you with my business. I am going to trust you with my church. I am going to trust you with my standards. I am going to trust you with my studies. I am going to trust you with my life, because I know you have a far better plan for my life; and you can do a far better job running my life than I could ever do. So I am simply going to trust you with my life."

Can that be said of you today, or do you fret and worry because you don't trust God, because you don't trust that God knows what He is doing in your life? You ought not to be doing that. You ought to have faith in God. You ought to have faith in the Word of God. In Philippians 4:6, the Bible says, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made know unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." In I Peter 5:7, the Bible says, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." In Psalms 50:15, the Bible says, "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." In Joshua 1:9, the Bible says, "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." In Hebrews 13:5, the Bible says, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." In Romans 8:28, the Bible says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." In I Thessalonians 5:18, the Bible says, "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." In I Corinthians 10:13, the Bible says, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

Brethren, you ought to have faith in God. You ought to have faith in the Word of God. You ought to have faith in God Almighty that He knows what He is doing in your life. Simply trust God to know what He is doing in your life. Do you know why some of you are so afraid to consider full time Christian service for the Lord? You don't think God knows. You don't think God knows how to run your life.

Do you know why some of you are so afraid to consider full time Christian service for the Lord on some foreign mission field? You say, "Preacher! God will send me to Africa, and I will have to eat worms the rest of my life." No, that's not it. You don't think God knows. You don't think God knows how to run your life.

Do you know why some of you are so scared about your finances? You're scared because you don't think God knows how to run your finances.

Do you know why some of you are so scared about your life? You're scared because you don't think God knows how to run your life. As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you think He is going to mess it up. You think God Almighty is going to mess up your life as a child of God.

How foolish you are and how you must anger the God of heaven when you do not allow Him to have complete control, rule, and reign over your life as a child of God!

Listen! God knows how to run your life. He was running lives a long time before you got here and He will be running lives a long time after you are gone. He has always done a good job. God has never made one mistake. God never fails. Why then don't you trust Him? Why then don't you trust Him with your life?

Look at the life of Job for just a few minutes. Job said, "I don't know what's going on in my life right now. I don't know what's happening to me right now. Everything seems to be going wrong. My life is an absolute mess and I don't understand it. I have lost all of my children. I have lost all of my earthly wealth. I pray and nothing seems to happen. I pray and I don't get any answers from God! My body is an absolute mess. I have boils from the sole of my foot unto my crown. My wife is telling me to curse God and die." Yet in all of that, in Job 13:15, he said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him."

What was Job saying? Job was saying this: I am going to trust you Lord. I am going to trust you with my life. I am going to trust you with my dreams. I am going to trust you with my plans. I am going to trust you with my ambitions. I am going to trust you with my goals. I am going to trust you with my marriage. I am going to trust you with my life, and I am going to keep on doing what is right regardless of the circumstances of life. I am going to do what is right.

Though everything seems to be going wrong, though everything is an absolute mess, though I have lost all of my children, though I have lost all of my earthly wealth, though I pray and nothing seems to happen, though I pray and don't get any answer from God, though my body is an absolute mess, though my wife tells me to curse God and die, I am going to trust you with my life because I know you have a far better plan for my life, and I know you can do a far better job of running my life than I could ever do, so I am simply going to trust you with it. I am simply going to trust you with my life.

Because I know you have a far better plan for my life and you can do a far better job of running my life than I could ever do, I am simply going to trust you with my life. Can that be said of you today, or do you fret and worry because you do not trust God, because you do not have confidence in God? You ought not be acting that way. You ought to have faith in God. You ought to have confidence in God. Job did. Job had confidence in God. Job had faith in God--faith in God's ability, faith in God's character, faith in God's leadership, faith in God's love, faith in God's

providence, faith in God's sovereignty, faith in God's strength, faith in God's wisdom. Job came out on the other side.

What was the secret to Paul's life? The secret to Paul's life is found in Galatians 2:20, where the Apostle Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

The Apostle Paul lived his life for the Lord Jesus Christ. He lived a life that was crucified to his lusts of the flesh. He lived a life that was crucified to his desires of the flesh. He lived a life that was crucified to his affections of the flesh. He lived a life that was totally yielded to the Holy Spirit of God, which allowed Christ to live out His life in and through him. He lived a life that was characterized by faith. He had faith in God. He had faith in the Word of God. Is that the way you are living your life today? Are you living a life that is crucified to your lusts of the flesh? Are you living a life that is crucified to your desires of the flesh? Are you living a life that is crucified to your affections of the flesh? Are you living a life that is totally yielded to the Holy Spirit of God, a life which allows Christ to live out His life in and through you?

Are you living a life that is characterized by faith? Do you have faith in God? Do you have faith in the Word of God? Do you have faith in God Almighty that He knows what He is doing in your life today?

As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ you ought to be living the crucified life. You ought to have faith in God. You ought to have faith in the Word of God. You ought to have faith in God that He knows what He is doing in your life.

I have primarily preached to those who profess knowledge in Jesus Christ. You are saved. You are born again. You are on your way to heaven, and you ought to be living the crucified life. But, if you are here today and you do not know Christ as your own personal Saviour and Friend, it would be absolutely impossible for you to live the crucified life apart from the new birth. In John 3:7, Jesus said, "Ye must be born again." You must be saved in order to begin to live the crucified life. You say, "Preacher! What must I do to be saved?" The very first thing you must do is realize the fact that you are a sinner and in need of a Saviour. In Romans 3:10, the Bible says, "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. There is none that doeth good, no, not one." In Romans 3:23, the Bible says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

Because you a sinner, you are condemned to die. The Bible is very clear on this. In Hebrews 9:27, the Bible says, "And it is appointed unto men once to die." In Romans 6:23, the Bible says, "For the wages of sin is death." That includes eternal separation from God and from the people of God in an awful place called Hell.

You will never be able to work your way into heaven. God does not have a scale in heaven to weigh your good and bad works. That idea is a lie from the Devil. In Ephesians 2:8,9 the Bible says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."

God loved you so much that He gave His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to bear your sin and die in your place on the cross. In other words He became your substitute. In II Corinthians 5:21, the Bible says, "For he hath made him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Believing is the key. In Acts 16:31, the Bible says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." In Romans 10:9-10, the Bible says, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," the Bible says in Romans 10:13.

If you have never been saved, if you have never been born again, you need to be saved. You need to be born again so that you can begin to live the crucified life. And with that salvation, you will receive forgiveness of all your sins, eternal life, and a home in heaven when you die. That's a good deal.

Brethren! As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, you ought to be living the crucified life. You ought to have faith in God. You ought to have faith in the Word of God. You ought to have faith that God knows what He is doing in your life. Simply trust God.

How is a Person Saved?

Salvation is all of God. God does the saving. Just take God at His Word and claim His salvation by faith. You will never be able to work your way into heaven. God does not have a scale in heaven whereby He weighs your good and bad works. That is a lie of the Devil – Romans 3:24; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; I Peter 1:18; Romans 5:8.

Salvation is as simple as believing on Christ as the one who bore your sin, who died in your place, who was buried, and whom God resurrected from the dead – John 1:12, 3:16, 6:47; Acts 16:31; II Corinthians 5:21; Romans 10:9-10; Romans 10:13.

Simply admit that you are a sinner and believe on Christ as your crucified, buried, and risen Saviour. You will receive forgiveness for all of your sins. You will receive His free gift of eternal life by faith – Romans 3:10, 23; I Corinthians 15:3-4.

Jesus did a wonderful thing for you some 2,000 years ago on Calvary's cross. He died for you. He was buried for you. He rose again the third day for you, and nothing would thrill Him more than to save you today.

Won't you go to Him right now in prayer and tell Him in your own words that you will trust Him as your Saviour? Or pray this simple prayer: Dear Lord, I know I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died for me and that He arose from the grave. Here and now I ask You to forgive me of my sin and save me. In Jesus's name. Amen.

If you prayed that simple prayer, I would like to hear from you. Please contact me by e-mail or phone (813) 760-4028.

Evangelist Norman R. Stevens
602 Canterbury Road
Kings Mountain, NC 28086-9601
Phone: (813) 760-4028

E-mail: nrsevangelist@earthlink.net
<http://www.evangelistnormanstevens.com>