

The Heart of the Gospel (Session 2)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 22 July 2023

Preacher: Edward Sim

- [0 : 0 0] Our Bible reading this morning is taken from Galatians chapter 2, verses 15 through 21.
- We who are Jews by birth and not sinful Gentiles, know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ.
- So we too have put our faith in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law.
- Because by the works of the law, no one will be justified. Verse 17, But if in seeking to be justified in Christ, we Jews find ourselves also among the sinners, doesn't that mean that Christ promotes sin?
- Absolutely not. If I reveal what I have destroyed, then I really would be a lawbreaker. For through the law, I died to the law, so that I might live for God.
- [1 : 1 5] I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
- I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could begin through the law, Christ died for nothing.
- This is the word of the Lord. Good morning.
- Good morning. It's good to see all of you. Yeah, I hope that you have a good night's sleep. Can I just invite you to join me in prayer, and we ask God to help us as we come before his word.
- Father, we once again come before you, and we just want to say that your word is so rich, there's so much treasures and gems within. And we just ask that right now, even as it comes before your word, in Galatians chapter 2, that you help us to be open unto you, to open unto your spirit, that may your spirit speak, speak to us, and give us ears to hear, and help us to have faith that arise out of hearing, that they may hold on to you and your grace, that your grace may hold on us.
- [2 : 5 6] We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. So let me start by asking you a question, which is, what kind of, it may sound a bit strange, but let me just say, put it this way first.
- What kind of calculations do you make when it comes to life and relationships? You know, how do you make plans?
- That's really the question that I'm asking you. Now you may say, you may think, no, I don't do calculations, I just make plans. That's not true, right? Because when we make plans, we both consciously or unconsciously actually make some calculations.
- Even at workplace, there's something that's called a cost-benefit analysis. Right? And you can see this even from the most mundane of things. I don't know, I feel a bit vulnerable here because someone here knows my family.
- But then, it's a tradition of my family, right? It's very often the habit of my family, especially after a meal, is to say, hey, you know, how much did we pay for that meal? And then, we have a discussion whether it's actually worth the money.

[4 : 09] Right? And, and I carry on that tradition with my own family too. And my kids are now like, after a meal, they ask me, hey, papa, how much did you pay for that? And they'll say, oh, you know what, that's expensive, that's cheap, and things like that.

Right? So, we often think about this, how cost-effective is this? Right? And this kind of thinking, I want to suggest to you, actually goes right deep within our hearts.

Because, it's not just about how we bargain, you know, and haggle, you know, at the, you know, at a passart, or for vegetables. Really, right? Because, we're often asking this question in every single thing we do or we decide.

Even coming to this church camp, maybe that's why people choose not to come, because they ask, is this worth it? Right? When we're at work, we also ask this question, right?

Is it worth it for me to work so hard? And if I'm in school, no matter whether you are the hard-working kind of student or the lazier kind of student, we all ask the same question, which is, this amount of work I do, is it enough or not?

[5 : 15] Right? And so, our calculations extend not only just to work and our studies, but also to our relationships. Right? Because in our relationships, we often think like this, haven't I done enough for you?

And I would like to know how much love I'm actually getting in return. Sorry to belabor the point, but maybe just one more thing that she shows this example, right?

Which is, I don't know if you know, because I'm actually from a Chinese-speaking culture, maybe you understand, some of you, which is, there's a saying, right? Which is, I'm going to say in Chinese verse, which is, which really means that, I'd rather what?

I'd rather owe people money, rather than owe them favors. Why? Concept. Money, right, is easier to settle.

It is easy to calculate. But favors are relational, it's abstract, and it's difficult to compute. Because of this kind of thinking, I'm going to say, and it's a, I can't, I can't, I can't just, I can't just talk.

[6 : 44] Hello? Okay. And it's precisely this kind of thinking, right? That it can really be very hard for the gospel to really penetrate deep into our hearts. Because we are so calculative. Even if you have been a Christian for many years.

Because what the gospel is, what the gospel really is, the gospel is really saying this, it's a proclamation, it's a proclamation, it's a message, right? And what's the message? The message is something that's happened 2,000 years ago.

That Jesus Christ has come, and He has come, and He has died, and He has rose again. And how do we enter into the benefits of this good news? Only one response, which is to repent and believe in Jesus, to trust in Him.

But, to some, this is incredible news. This is unbelievable. because this free grace is at the heart of the gospel. So, when you think about Christianity in this way, right, I'd like to offer you a different kind of definition of a Christian.

Because, a Christian actually, to me, right, who's someone who really trusts in Jesus, is actually this, is someone who has actually kind of stopped, stopped all the calculations, stopped all the computations.

[7 : 59] is someone who actually really starts to have a real relationship with God. He doesn't do transaction with God, right? He has a mutual conversation or communion, which is an even better word, with God.

And not just making business deals with God. And, that's why in the passage we just read, the last verse says the grace of God. Because our relationship with God is not based on transaction, but based on grace.

So, you see, from this, I just want to show you from this text today, that there are two kind of ways to live. There are two ways to live. I know it's a, it's a gospel tract amongst you, but that's not what I'm talking about.

There are two, there are two ways to live. The first way is the transactional way that's based on flesh. And the second way is the relational way that's based on grace and faith.

Grace and faith. And, we're going to say that if you live in the latter, which is the relational way of grace and faith, right, your gains and your losses in life are relativized.

[9 : 07] They are relativized because you know that Jesus loved you and He gave Himself for you. And so, you trust in Him and you live by that way. But, let's us look at the, the first one, which is the transactional way of the flesh.

And that way is really characterized by trusting in your own flesh. Now, how do we identify that kind of lifestyle from the passage?

So, let me just, let's just glance down to Galatians chapter 2 and just look, take a look at 15 and 16, right? 15 and 16. And, before we actually get there, maybe I'd like to do a bit of context.

Just, just can be on the page there as well because the context is there. which is, verse 15 and 16 really is a part of a much longer conversation. Do we really need the mic?

There's a recording. Okay. Okay, I'm sorry. Now, it's part of recording by saying, do we really need mic? So, the verse 15 and 16, right, is a part of a much longer conversation, actually, if you're reading in context.

[10 : 20] There's between Paul and Peter at Antioch. Now, where is Antioch? Antioch is actually this place where it's famous. How is it famous? It's famous not just for being a church.

It's famous actually for being a place where both Jews and Gentiles, there's non-Jews people, are gathered together in one place and they're fellowship with one another.

And what is remarkable about Antioch is this, if you read the book of Acts, is that the non-Jewish people, the Gentiles, they're not required to give up their Gentile style of living.

They don't have to be circumcised. They don't have to adopt the Jewish food laws. Is it? No, no, no.

I think it's, is it picking up the, maybe it's picking up the feedback from there. Okay. Or maybe I should just, I apologize for all these interruptions.

[11 : 29] And I'm sure you forgot where I was because I forgot where I was. So I was talking about Antioch, I was talking about them, the Jews and Gentiles, I was talking about how they come together and the Gentiles don't really need to give up their lifestyle.

They don't have to. They don't have to. They don't have to be circumcised. In fact, just a little tip. We read the book of Acts and it says it's a Jewish proselyte.

It's actually a Gentile who wants to become, who wants to worship the God of the Jews. He circumcised himself to be part of them. That's actually what is required. But now, the gospel is very new.

It's saying that you don't have to be circumcised. You can just come as you are and you're accepted by God. And that's actually really presented in a very real way in Antioch. And so, Peter comes to visit Antioch.

And when Peter comes to visit Antioch, right, he shared the same table as the Gentiles. Well, he ate pakudeh with them. Right? Okay? Right? And he has no qualms.

[12 : 28] He has no restrictions. He loved it. He enjoyed it. He himself, of course we know, received a vision from God, right, to say that all food is clean now. But the story is that when some man came from James, right, maybe bring some report, and Peter, out of fear of what is called the circumcision party, right, he grew from the table.

He stopped eating pakudeh with all these Gentile brothers and sisters. And this act of Peter, right, he resulted in Paul's public rebuke of him.

And this rebuke, actually in the Bible, is actually very interesting because Paul didn't say, hey Peter, you forgot about a vision they had from God.

No, he didn't say that. And neither did he say that, hey Peter, you broke the racial harmony law. He didn't say that. What did Peter say?

What did Paul say? Paul said this in chapter 2, verse 14. Their conduct was not in step with the gospel. In the original, what it means is you're not walking in a straight line with the gospel, which means mathematically speaking, you're not walking in a way that can be implicated or extrapolated from the gospel itself.

[13 : 53] So, Paul, so Peter, Peter, why is he guilty of here? Peter is guilty of here of something that we actually spoke about last night, which is that he notionally, he understands conceptually that we are justified by faith alone.

But now, in practice, he's doing something else. In practice, he's doing something else. That is dichotomy in his life. And that's the reason why, coming back to chapter 2, like, Paul went straight to justification in verse 16, right?

And in verse 16 alone, it's a pretty long verse, but in this verse, Paul repeats twice the same thing. We are not justified by the works of the law. We are not justified by the works of the law.

Not by the works of the law, but we are justified. That's the last part. And contrasted with this is that we are only justified by faith in Christ Jesus. So, the works of the law, what is this referring to?

This is referring to the Mosaic Law. The Mosaic Law is not just morality. It's not just the Ten Commandments. It actually contains things like the circumcision, the food laws, for example, which is the discussion here.

[15 : 00] And to the Jewish person, the Jewish person, these are not just merely Mosaic Law. These are actually important demarcations, important boundary markers, so to speak, that protects my Jewish identity.

Right? So, what is actually wrong with what Peter is doing by withdrawing from the table? Because by doing so, he may not say it, but he's communicating it this way.

He's saying that, look, to be a good Christian, to be ready to be accepted as one of us, not only do you need to believe in Jesus, but you have to actually, what, observe all these food laws and circumcision as well.

That's why he's saying it by his actions. And that's why it's a denial of the gospel, of justification by faith alone. So, and so, what they're saying is that, look, you need to prove that you're not a sinner like the Gentiles, that's what verse 15 says, right?

Actually, I know that your version says sinful Gentiles, but really, in the original, it says Gentile sinners. So, we are not like the Gentile sinners.

[16 : 11] Why? Because they eat, they eat pakote, but we don't, we eat kosher food. I know it's something probably familiar to you. I mean, we're in Malaysia. But, let me tell you, we Chinese, we do the same thing too.

I know of someone, right, that people think he's a bad person, and this Howard Dandy is a bad person. Because at a wedding dinner, when the, when the, you know, when the roast chicken came, right, you know, it come in one whole chicken, right, it's served over here, right, and the person took the drumstick without asking anyone else, right?

Oh, shit, then you know what I'm talking about. And the rest didn't say anything. But after that, they were like, he's a bad guy. He's a bad guy. He's a sinner.

I mean, he didn't know a sinner, but he's a bad guy. Right? You see, what is it? We use our cultural things to determine whether this person is a good or bad person.

And that's what's happening over here. We are not like those Gentile sinners. Right? Yeah. But you see, when you think like that, you're allowed to affect your life, you're essentially saying there's something else other than believing in Jesus, trusting in Him that makes you good or bad.

[17 : 21] Because why is justification? Justification is what I've been thinking about since last night. And now, let me put it another way to you. We are living in time. We are living in time, right?

So, I love the diagram that Brian put just now. We are going to be at the end of time where we're going to be presented, hopefully, mature, right, before Christ Himself. So, at the end of time, we're all going to come before God and there's going to be this judgment that we all face as one human race.

And the human race is going to divide into two. There are those who are condemned and there are those who are vindicated. But what justification really means is that that end time vindication declaration has now been brought into the present when you're trusting Jesus.

That is, I'm already telling you that we're going to score 100 even before we take the exam. And that is the meaning of justification. And that's the gospel.

That's good news. And do you know what that means? The meaning is that our shame, our transgressions, our weaknesses, they don't define who we are anymore. But of course, it's more than that.

[18 : 33] It's not just these bad things. But it's also the good things, the careers, the families, our relationships, our moral behavior, all these things, the good and the bad, whether it's good or bad, all these do not bring into our justification on that day.

If we do, we are truly justified by faith alone in Christ. If we try to vindicate ourselves through these things, right, we are actually in the same position as Galatians and as Peter.

we are trying to justify ourselves through work. But, let's come back to Galatians 2 and Paul tells us something about what is wrong with us trying to justify ourselves by works.

Because, I want you to be clear about this. Peter is not actually denying Jesus. He's not. It's actually more subtle. He still believes in Jesus. He still believes in the gospel, which is why Paul says you are not in step with the truth of the gospel, which means that you believe in the gospel, now live from that.

Live out of that. Live in step with that. And that's what you need to do. Peter, right? So, what Peter is doing is that, look, he's like, in a sense, I mean, it's not easy to reconstruct the whole thing, but in a sense what he's doing is double insurance.

[19 : 54] I trust in Jesus, right? But, I also want to retain my Jewish identity as part of, as something that I can really trust in for myself, right? That's double insurance.

What's wrong with that? And in chapter 2, Paul gives us the answer because if you make such calculations, you are calculating, really, right? Because you're trying to trust in your works on one side and you're trying to trust in Jesus on the other side, you are wrong.

Why are you wrong? Verse 16 tells us why you're wrong because first of all, it gives two reasons why you're wrong from verse 16. It says that you know a person is not justified by works of the law.

Okay? Yeah, I think the NIV says person too. But really, that person is human. You are wrong about man. You are wrong about man. You are wrong about human nature. You are wrong about how men are weak.

And at the end of verse 16, it explains why that's the case. It says, because by the works of the law, no one will be justified. But the word no one, my friends, it's not just no one.

[20 : 59] The original is actually flesh. No flesh will be justified. No flesh will be justified. That's actually the KJV version, but it's more literal. It's more closer to the original.

Why? I think there's something there because I think the word flesh, in the whole book of Galatians, by the way, if, we don't have time to do this, but if you want to make a study of Galatians, I find it fascinating. Beginning from here, there's actually a constantly, a distinction between flesh and spirit that runs through all the way to the end.

Right? But we will not talk about that now. Right? We will not talk about that. But flesh is a very big theme. And what is wrong with flesh? What is flesh? In some sense, flesh is very pretty to understand.

What you see in front of us, we are all fleshly people. We are enfleshed. We have bodies. But I think it's more than that. What the flesh represents is that everything you can see, feel, bodily speaking, right?

Now, there's nothing wrong with that. But when you depend on the flesh, that what you see and what you feel and what you can identify, you know, basically by the natural man, so to speak, considering man apart from God, that is the problem.

[22 : 16] If it depends on that. That is why. Right? It's so easy for us to do that. Our own abilities, our physical strength, our culture, our family background, et cetera, et cetera, so on and so forth.

All these things in and of themselves, they are not wrong. But what's wrong? What's wrong become is that we become dependent on them for our vindication. That is the flesh.

And that is the opposite of trusting in Jesus alone. And I want to put it to you this way. If you want to trust in the flesh, this way, if you are still thinking of depending on the flesh to vindicate yourself, that really results, I think, in what is called the transactional way of living by the flesh.

And what does it look like? It looks like, well, what I began talking about, we are always making calculations. The way of life that actually relies on the flesh makes all of us actually businessmen, no matter what's your occupation.

Because we are always calculating. We are calculating what? How much we can do. We are calculating how much we can give. We are calculating how much we can get. And so we have a very hard time.

[23 : 36] We have a hard time. We struggle to really believe in the gospel. We find a hard time to really depend on the grace that's given by another, which is Jesus, which is a free grace.

Now, I know that we are not like Jews who depend on the Old Testament laws, but there's some of us here, right? Those who are like Christians for a very long time, what do we do in our lives?

Our relationship with God is still very transactional. That's why some will confess that we only pray when we are in trouble. We look at how much we pray, we look at how much we read the Bible, we look at how much we serve in church to measure how much God loves us.

And at the same time, while doing all these things, we are still trying to, what, use our career and, you know, our cultural background and all these things to vindicate ourselves.

If not before God, at least before man, right? And why are we so prone to this? Because these things are so easily measurable, right?

[24 : 49] Which is why, I'm not outing myself again, I know some families which is like, which my wife noticed is actually very interesting. It's a very bad habit. We like to say, hey kids, well your behavior today is 80 marks, your behavior today is 90 marks, 70 marks, or 100 marks.

What are we teaching our kids? Right? They're being measured all the time. And we like measuring things. We're measuring things, I compare. Compare, then I can be proud. I can be proud, I can vindicate myself. Now, I'm not saying, okay, don't get me wrong, we should do our jobs, we should love our families, we should do our duties of reading the Bible and praying.

We should relate to God. But, we should not end up relying on these things. Because that's what sin does. Because what sin does is, it doesn't, it's actually through using these fleshly resources that's within us, right?

And, it makes us depend on it. It attracts us to it, so to speak. But relying on flesh, it's not going to work. My friends, it's not going to work.

It's not going to work because flesh in itself is weak. We talked about that last night. It will die. So, if you want to vindicate yourself by the works of the law, by the works of a good career, or by the works of good parenting, or good marriage, Paul says here, no one, no flesh, will be justified.

[26 : 18] But, before we move on, I just like to talk about one more way that the flesh manifests itself. In the transactional way of the flesh.

And that is in how we make calculations. You notice something about the issue of Peter withdrawing from eating the Gentiles? He actually is making some kind of a calculation there.

I want to show you that from the text. Because, verse 17 to 18, verse 17 to 18, can be difficult to read. But, if you understand the context, it actually makes it quite clear.

Right? Because, it says here that, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, what if, but what if, what happens? If we too are found to be sinners. So, is Christ then a minister of sin?

Now, what is Paul saying? I know that some people think that this means that, you know, when we really believe in Jesus, we become more sensitive to sin. It's like a new believer. I think that's true.

[27 : 16] That's true in real life. When you start to believe in Jesus, you are more sensitive to sin. But, I don't think that's what's going on here because it doesn't fit the context. After all, in verse 15, Paul already says that the Gentiles are the sinners.

So, what I think is more like this, is this, is that, when we Jews no longer use circumcision, we no longer use these food taboos to differentiate us from the Gentiles, right?

Okay? So, when the other Jews look at us, what would they think we are? They would think that we are sinners. And so, what should we do about that?

Right? And Paul says, certainly not. Christ is not a minister of sin. But, actually look, if you rebuild what you tore down, you already tore down those boundary markers.

You already say that these things, circumcision, food loss, no longer define you. Right? And you actually rebuild these things, you are actually really proving only something else. You are proving that you are really a transgressor.

[28 : 18] And so, it's really very interesting over here. Because even for the Jews, the older people of God, in order to trust in Jesus, they also need to put their identity first in Christ before they are Jewish.

Because if they reverse that, they are undermining the gospel. But, how are you struggling with that?

Because I speak for myself, I have the same problem. Because as a Chinese person who believes in Jesus, the challenge is, I also need to stop being Chinese first.

Right? And, this means that other Chinese, sometimes they look at my life, they think that I am not Chinese. And that is actually the reason why we are aware of this.

It is so difficult for Chinese people, some of them, to believe in Jesus. Because to do that means they have to stop their ancestral worship. they stop many things. And to them, this is the identity.

[29 : 24] It is not because they believe in these things. They really don't. But, it is the identity of being Chinese. You see? That I cannot give up. And so, I actually really identify with that because my struggle, even as I become a Christian, for a very long time and season, is how to balance my Chinese identity and my Christian identity.

And, I think this probably impedes my Christian growth quite a bit. Because it is kind of, this is kind of calculations we make all the time. How do we balance these two? The word balance, my friend, is not a good word.

Because, this manifests really probably in my relationship with my parents. Because for a very long time, my thinking has been this. How do I balance the demands of my heavenly father and my earthly father?

How do I please both of them? And, you see this problem with this lifestyle? When I'm still thinking, how can I please both of them? Who's in the center? It's me.

It's up to me to upkeep the two. It depends on my ability. It depends on my flesh, so to speak, to balance the two. So, what should really be is that to rely on God first and allowing God to help me to love and honor my dad in a biblical way, maybe not in a Chinese way, that means, right?

[30 : 51] I was trying to do things my own way. And, I think this actually really prevents and restrains my growth as a Christian. And so, in this room, for you, what kind of a calculation, what kind of a balancing act are you trying to do in your life?

Maybe for some of you, you say, this is where I draw the line. It's okay for me to date a non-Christian. I will never marry them. Maybe for you, you're looking at certain websites and you rationalize it because you say, I draw a line at porn.

This is not porn. It's okay. So, I can look at all this stuff. And you know what you're doing? You're not only just rationalizing, you are calculating.

Because you're calculating how can, and the examples can be multiplied. How do I actually balance between having a great career, making a name for myself, and also being a good Christian? I like to balance these things.

But this sort of rationalization, this sort of getting near to the boundary, right? This really came to me because in 1 Thessalonians 4, Paul says, you avoid all sexual immorality.

[32 : 12] And then that verse struck me between the eyes because for me, it's like, wow, I often think I want to veer as close as possible without crossing the line. But actually, he says, avoid. And there's something for you to think about.

I'm just trying to illustrate that's what I'm thinking about. And do you know why that thinking is wrong? Because there's a transactional way of the flesh. There's just thinking how much I can get out of this without actually losing as much as, without losing too much.

And this is opposite, this is entirely opposite to the relational way of grace and faith. And to do that, to pick up that relational way of grace and faith, we need to metaphorically speaking put down the computer or the calculator in our hands.

But you cannot do this by your willpower alone. You cannot do this by trying harder. Right? Because otherwise, you're just falling into another vicious cycle. You're using flesh to fight flesh.

That doesn't work. Okay? That doesn't work. So what you need to see is this. We need to see how God actually makes his plans or in the lingo of this talk, how God actually makes those computations and calculations.

[33 : 28] Now that brings us to the last half of the verses that we're looking at. So, you see, there are quite a, just a few things to show you over here. That's really fascinating and important for us to look at.

The first is that, look, we see what Jesus himself unites with us in spite of us. He unites with us in spite of who we are.

Verse 20 is a very, very important verse. I'm sure that many of you, especially those who have been in church for a long time, you can memorize it. I am crucified with Christ or I have been crucified with Christ in some versions.

Right? What is this? How does it make sense of this? How are you crucified with Christ? Isn't Christ crucified 2,000 years ago? Now, how does this work?

We often will say, which is that God himself, Jesus, he came into this world, he became a man, he died on the cross, he rose from the dead, and did all that for the sake of sinners, for us, for those of us who believe in him.

[34 : 34] Right? Okay? Now, that's perfectly fine. That's pretty correct. Jesus died and rose again for us. But I want to suggest to you that Jesus not only did that for us, but he did that with us.

Now, what does the word with mean? The word with means that we are united to Christ. Now, what does that mean? United to Christ. He unites us in spite of who we are.

The best analogy for this, I'm not trying to suggest that those who are single cannot appreciate this, but the best analogy for this is marriage. Because when two persons get married, right? What happens to two persons who get married?

They share their destiny together. They share their destiny together. I know some folks who joke, right? I mean, I'm sure over here as well. They say, hey, when I marry you, your money is my money and my money is still my money.

Okay? I want to tell you that's not biblical at all. That's not biblical at all. Right? Okay? At all. Because what the Bible teaches is that when the two persons get married, right?

[35 : 39] Okay? They share everything. They become one flesh. They share the same destiny. And when it says here that we are crucified with Christ, it's actually not what we have done.

It's actually what Christ has done. He has come not only to forgive our sins, not only to save us, He actually takes us as His own, as to speak, as to wed Himself to us, so to speak.

Right? That's why it's called a bridegroom. Right? So that, to share His destiny with us. That is, just as He was crucified and He rose again, even though we may suffer in this world, even though we may die, we share in His hope of resurrection.

That is the union we have with Christ. And, you know, think about this, what kind of a business do you, what kind of thing is Jesus getting out of this by uniting Himself to us?

Not much, really. Because all of the liabilities, right? Okay? And all the filth are on our side. All of the glory, righteousness, credit are all on His side.

[36 : 50] He bore our losses, so to speak, on the cross so that all the gain may be ours by union. we become, in the words of Peter, partakers of the divine nature.

We are given the righteousness of Jesus Christ. In some respect, this is actually a totally bad deal for Christ and we are totally just benefiting from it.

Jesus unites us to Himself in spite of who we are. And my friends, if that is the way that He has united Himself to us, right, then the second thing you see from the last few verses here is that our identity is changed.

Our identity is changed. Verse 19 here says, I have died to the law, right, so that I may, so through the law, I have died to the law. That's why it says in verse 19.

What does that mean? That means that our relationship with the law has really changed because of this union with Christ.

[38 : 02] Because this union with Christ, because Christ Himself died unto the law and together we have died with Him to the law, so our relationship with the law has changed. That means that the demands of the law, the Mosaic law, are no longer the means by which we vindicate ourselves.

And by extension, the demands of family, the demands of career, the demands of culture, etc., are no longer absolute on us. So, to bring back the example, how I honour my father and mother, it's not that I'm free from honouring them, but I'm free from honouring them according to Chinese cultural standards.

That is no longer the most important consideration. I have a different motivation in honouring them. Or to put it this way, through Christ, if I've died even to the demands of Chinese culture of me honouring my parents, that means actually now I have actually new and living ways of actually honouring my parents.

I can confront them lovingly, winsomely, and tell them that I think that you're really wrong. Whereas previously, I can't even bring that out. for example, you see, this is what Christ has done for you.

You have a new identity, and so you no longer live according to these things. They are no longer absolute in your life. You have a new master, so to speak. And so, we have a positive identity.

[39 : 31] Not only just that, which is why it says it's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. What does that mean? It's no longer I who live. Is Paul saying he died?

That wouldn't make sense. He's still literally writing the book of Galatians as he's writing down these words. So what he's saying is this. We are sharing in Christ's identity, right?

We are united to Christ. My identity is no longer what? Defined by the flesh. It's not me who's alive now. It's not the successful me in school.

It's a successful me who's in the career. It's a successful me who has four children. I don't know why people always congratulate me that I have four children. That's another story anyways.

Right, okay? It's not these who are me who are me truly. It is what? The Christ who lives in me. That's my new identity and I want to live out of that. And so, my friends, if you live this way, the way that you do your, the way you live a life is completely changed.

[40 : 34] The way you live a life is completely changed. Because you live what? In verse, the end of, near the verse, verse 20, which is the life you live now, you live by faith in the Son of God.

Live by faith in the Son of God. No longer living by the flesh, you are living by faith in the Son of God. And what does that look like? That means that we stop, as I mentioned, we stop making all these calculations, trying to balance the world and Christianity, so to speak.

We stop all these things, right? We live life not on the boundaries, but we start to live life from the center. What is center? The center of actually knowing and meeting this gracious God.

And, and here, Paul says, my life lived in the flesh. It's very interesting. It's the same word. I don't think it's an accident. Because, what sin is doing in our lives, as I mentioned, is to what?

Make us boast in the flesh. It's to actually use flesh by the way that we actually vindicate ourselves. Our physical strength, our abilities, our family, our culture, whatever, right?

[41 : 43] But, when you live in, by faith in the Son of God, in the flesh, it means the reverse now. We no longer use the flesh as the means to boast in ourselves. The flesh is by the means which we continue to rely on Jesus.

Now, what I mean by this, to give you another one example to close this up, which is like, when my children are arguing at home, when I go home and it's World War III, okay, my instinct, everything in me cries out, shout it down, and so they all stop so they can peace and quiet.

Right? And, you know what? Why is that the flesh? Because the flesh is hateful that the flesh doesn't like the idea that my children are not behaving as well as I like because I cannot boast in my parenting.

I want to shut it down so that I can continue boasting my parenting. I cannot face it. But, truly, if I'm not relying on these things to vindicate myself, what can I do?

I can, sometimes, not all the time, really, come down and know what exactly is going wrong here. why are they shouting? Why are they so unhappy?

[43 : 01] How can I treat the hard problems of my kids? You see, instead of treating the symptoms, you go to the root of the problem. You face your weaknesses in a much even bigger way.

Because why? You're not really depending on the flesh to vindicate yourself. Actually, it's more helpful. You can actually see for what it is. It's just about flesh. But, you can deal with problems as it is without all the added emotions and stress.

So, finally, this way of the faith is to respond to the love of Jesus. You see, the faith will only grow if you continue to look at the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

How personal is that love for you? As we close, I'd like to ask you this question. How personal is that love for you? Now, many times in church we heard this, right?

Which is, Jesus has done so much for you, what have you done for him? I have a slight problem with that statement to be honest. Because sometimes, oops, I thought it was going to go over.

[44 : 12] Because sometimes, that statement can sound very transactional. Jesus has done so much for me, I've got to do something for him, right? In exchange. I don't know. I did some calculations. And I'm planning to do this with my daughter on the 21st birthday.

I'm going to say to her, hey, I've done the math as your dad. I've supported you for 21 years. And now, based on my calculations, I spent about 1.5 million ringgit on you.

It may be higher depending on the exchange rate actually, right? Okay? And 20,000 hours of my life on you. So now, I want you to start working and pay off the debt you owe me. Imagine me talking to my daughter in this way.

That would be crazy. That would be crazy. How can I be a calculative in this way? But you know what? Jesus is not like that at all. That's not how the love of Jesus is like.

Because his love is genuine love. He loves you for no other reason than he loves you. It's very similar. When you think about parents, I don't know, for myself, it's not primarily what they provided for me.

[45 : 16] Even though I'm very grateful for that. It's those moments of moments when they say something. You know, see their heart. They see that, wow, they really love me because of me. And that just creates in me the response that I want to honor them and love them with my life.

And it's a very similar thing with Jesus. If you can see that in Jesus' heart, right? It's not about calculation. It's a relationship. He loves me. And therefore, I cannot do anything else except to give my life.

give my life in response to Him. It's like the hymn, right, at the end of when I survey, right? It's a love so amazing soul divine that demands my soul, my life, my all.

So, what kind of calculations are you making in your life? What kind of things you are trying to balance? Or are you, can I invite all of us to just stare and behold this love so divine, so wonderful that actually demands my life, my soul, my all?

I just invite you at your seat to just give you a minute to think about what we just shared and have some time to respond to God before I actually lead all of us together in prayer.

[46 : 43] Thank you. Thank you. Lord Jesus, your love is so amazing that even though we have nothing to bring to the table at all, yet you choose to unite yourself with us that we may share in your destiny.

That we not only just share in your righteousness by which Lord, we clothe ourselves and come before our heavenly and holy Father, but we also share in your divine life, we share also in the hope of the resurrection.

And so Lord Jesus, our prayer and our ask is that you help us to see Lord, where we are still relying on our flesh, how we are still relying on the flesh to vindicate ourselves instead of using the flesh in some ways Lord, as a means, instruments that we actually rely on you to come to you.

I pray, open our eyes and we see the weakness of the flesh so that we may be driven on our knees to pray to you, to rely on you, and to find you again and again, that wonderful love they have for us, that we may say to you again and again, that Lord, that your love is so amazing, so divine, that we can't help but want to give you our all.

We pray, we ask this all in your own holy precious name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[48 : 48] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.