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<http://www.fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>

Personal Study of the Bible-71

Galatians 2 – The Indwelling Son of God

Read Galatians 2. One of the most important capacities (virtues) any believer can develop is the capacity to really enjoy reading his Bible for truth as such. To enjoy reading the Bible *chiefly* for its objective truth is to break the modern curse of simply looking for some existential, gee-whiz, truth. It is very easy in these days with our culture of existentialism and pragmatism just to be interested in God's truth only if it makes one feel better (existentialism) or solves some problem (pragmatism). To advance in reading the Word (or attending church) for truth first and foremost is to make giant leaps in the spiritual life in truly understanding God in the context of whole truth, total truth. The Bible is not like Facebook. It requires deep thought about metaphysics of God, man, the spiritual life, and reality as such.

We live in a very pragmatic, quick-fix, superficial age that is not accustomed to sustained thought about metaphysics, the study of reality/beings as such, whether it is about God, man, or creation. This lack of metaphysical understanding not only adversely effects the way we view God and creation, but it also distorts how we distinguish between right and wrong. I will touch on this in our next Bible class in Matthew 6. With a superficial view of reality and God, the believer will focus on problem solving. However, with a deep realist view of reality, the believer's problems are solved by understanding reality whether it is the nature of God, testing, problems, or the true nature of the spiritual life (far above just getting the mechanics). Consider our studies in Job. Boy, did he have problems! I hope that neither you nor I will ever suffer as much as he did. Can you imagine losing your children, then property, and then health? How did he solve those problems? Did God come to him and say "do x, y, z?" Did God come to him and say "just trust Me"? Or teach him about the angelic conflict? Did He give him promises in the Word of God to apply, something like Romans 8:28? No! No! No! So how did Job overcome his agonizing tragedies? By understanding God's absolute loving control over all things by seeing the philosophical realism of concurrence. Imagine that! Imagine today if someone attended a church after losing their children, property, and health, and getting a message on concurrence. What kind of response would be expected? The message certainly would not appeal to those looking for a quick fix, a cliché, or a superficial feel-good message. However, apart from understanding concurrence, one *cannot* really believe that God is all loving and in control of all things and in all things is drawing men to Himself. Ontological and metaphysical messages simply do not resonate with our culture. However, for those who continue to advance in metaphysical understanding, they will be able to solve all of the problems of their lives by truly understanding God and the issues of life. They will see all of life in a whole new amazing way. They will be able to see the reality Job saw and the reality in Romans 8:28 in a very perspicuous way. I certainly acknowledge that concurrence is much more difficult for us to understand than Job, but that is because much of Christianity has been bathed in the paganism of the horizontal

perspective (read Matthew 6:31-32). Christ was explicit that living like pagans, that a horizontal focused life on the details of life, is absolutely *verboten*. We are made for eternity, the transcendent☺

Reread Galatians 2. This chapter can be divided into two sections: in verses 1-10 Paul recounts how his authority was recognized by the church in Jerusalem, especially by James, Peter, and John (vs. 9). Note what is mentioned in verse 10: remember the poor. Every believer should understand that both the Old and New Testament emphasize every believer's responsibility to help the poor; read Deut. 15:7-11; Prov. 10:17; 14:21; 22:9; 28:27; Isa. 58:10; Matt. 5:42; 25:34-46; Luke 14:12-14; Acts 20:35; 1 Tim. 5:8; James 1:17. Every believer should examine his own virtue in this area. What do you think of our Lord's words in Acts 20:35? Do you agree with Christ's sentiment in this passage?

In Galatians 2:11-21 we have Paul's rebuke of the Apostle Peter who had slipped into legalism of the Judaizers. Peter was no longer living in grace. He was negating the "truth of the gospel" by not treating Gentiles in grace (vs. 14). Paul then reminds Peter that one is saved by grace and not by the "works of the Law" (16). In fact, Paul declares that he died to the Law as a means of salvation because he understood that Christ paid fulfilled the Law and paid all penalties that the law imposed on the guilty (19). He makes it clear that if one could be saved by the Law (or any human effort), Christ's death was a waste of time and effort; in other words, "Christ died needlessly" if man could be saved by the Law or any human effort.

Galatians 2:20 is one of the most profound verses in all of Scripture. It would take years to unpack all the spiritual, metaphysical, and theological truths of this verse. Here are a few of main ideas in the verse:

1. "I am crucified with Christ." This shows that the Christian life is essentially a dying life. Paul is saying to be joined to Christ on the cross (salvation) means a life of death to self, sin, and kosmos diabolicus (sanctification).
2. "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." The Christian life is a life in which the indwelling Christ gives life and power for sanctification. Paul remained Paul, but his energy for sanctification came from Jesus Christ.
3. "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God." Externally and superficially, Paul understood he lived in the flesh as a human being. However, his focus was on the transcendent vertical perspective of Jesus Christ. As far as any righteousness accepted by God, he was always oriented to completely trusting in Christ's righteousness.
4. "The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself to up for me." These two words, the loving and giving, both point back to the historical fact of the Cross the death of Jesus Christ. Jesus' giving Himself up was the highest manifestation and proof of His love for Paul. Christ not only went to the Cross out of His love for the Father, He also had Paul, you, and me in mind. Christ's sacrifice for us was motivated by His love for each of us. While Christ was on the Cross, He knew you completely and totally and bore all of your sins so that you could be justified before God. It is not like Christ generally *loves* all men and therefore loves you. It is more like God loves you and each person personally, and this translates to Him loving all. You can personalize this truth

by filling in the blank with your own name: ‘The Son of God, who loved ____ , and gave Himself up for ____.

5. Note the two spheres we believers operate in, “in the *flesh* I live by *faith in the Son of God*. Each of us is one person living in two spheres. It is that vertical transcendent realm that anchors our lives in the eternal realm of the Son of God, while we live out our temporal lives here in the flesh. It is by faith in the Son of God that we derive our perspective, power, and joy. All lives that do not have that transcendent vertical perspective are doomed to live out flat, horizontal lives void of transcendent joy or meaning or value.
6. The life we live in the flesh is by nature limited, frail, and often beset by dreads and anxieties. However, when we exercise faith in the Son of God and realize that He actually indwells us, He brings us hope, forgiveness, strength, triumphant, and most of all Christlikeness, which is drawn from His very life within us. No wonder Paul said what he did in Philippians 1:21. Only Christ brings real life to the soul, and He does it deep from within our own souls! He is closer to us than we are to ourselves in every conceivable way.

In 'Ehyeh,

Pastor Don Hargrove