

844

844

73/AA

LAD 389

preached by Mr. J. Delves at Ebenezer, Clapham, on Sunday evening, 2.12.73.

Hymns: 746, 44, 228.

Reading: Romans ch.6.

Sermon: Gal.2:20 -

LIBRARY OF THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS

"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 is describing an experience only known to the Lord's redeemed people who have been brought in some degree to a knowledge of Christ, and interest in Him, and are partakers of the blessings that flow through Him. He could say, what many perhaps feel they could not in quite the same language, in a personal sense, that he was crucified with Christ; but unless we are, whatever our profession may be there will be something lacking and something finally lacking. This verse appears to describe the standing of all the living family of God as we view them

"In union with the Lamb,  
From condemnation free".

Here we view them in the eternal purpose of God as vessels of mercy appointed unto everlasting life and glory; there they were in union with the Lamb, part of Himself as His body. But the apostle is speaking more particularly of the old man being crucified, as we read, and of that remarkable change the grace of God makes in the heart and life of a vessel of mercy. I have mentioned what the apostle would look upon as being crucified with Christ, where he states that he counts all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, and that it was his one desire to be found in Him, clothed in His righteousness, washed in His blood, crucified with Him. It was explained very clearly in the chapter that I read this evening, where the apostle speaks of being dead with Him; and if we are dead, or die, with Him, we shall also live with Him. It is an absorbing thought that surpasses the compass of our minds, but by His grace we may come to this point, humbly to pray that we may be found among those for whom He died, and that we might feel our interest in the wonders of Calvary and so be taken up with these all important matters that concern our eternal redemption, as though little else really mattered as viewed in this light.

The apostle says, "I live" - he was still a living man in a natural sense as far as his natural body was concerned, but he was a living man in a spiritual sense. The life he refers to here is not so much the life of his body as the life of his soul. "Nevertheless, I live". So it is with the Lord's dear people while they are here below, and some of you may understand it, that your spiritual life is a life of living upon Christ, or receiving from His fulness and grace for grace. Living upon Him in the humble exercise of faith, as we read in John,

is eating His flesh and drinking His blood, which is in a spiritual sense the life of faith upon Him in all that He is and all that He has done. "Nevertheless I live".

"Yet not I" - This may appear to be some contradiction of terms at first sight, "Nevertheless I live; yet not I". What does the apostle really mean by this? He means that he is not living as before when he lived to himself and this world, but the vital difference is that now Christ liveth in him; and this "yet not I" will have to be the experience, more or less clearly, of all the living family of God who are brought to a knowledge of the truth. "Yet not I" - that is to say "'I live not as I lived before'. How did he live before? We read of him that he breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of Christ and obtained authority to go to Damascus to apprehend them and put them to death; but now, says he, "Yet not I" - I live not now in that awful bitterness of persecuting His followers. "Yet not I", not my old self, I live not as I did before, a pharisee of the pharisees, concerning the law blameless. "Yet not I". As far as his body was concerned he was the same person but a vital, striking, marvellous, effective change had been wrought in him by the grace of God, as you know, when he was on his way to Damascus. So that instead of entering Damascus an inveterate persecutor he entered Damascus blind and trembling under a sense of the awful majesty of God and some humbling sense of the Majesty of Christ Whom he had persecuted. As you know, the apostle said, "Who art thou Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest", not, I am Jesus whose people, my followers you are persecuting, but "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest". This is a sobering thought, and we may realise by this that those who persecute the Lord's people for their faith are persecuting Christ and will one day reap the awful consequences of their bitterness, if grace prevent not.

"Nevertheless I live; yet not I", and though this was so strikingly true of the apostle Paul it will be true of everyone called by divine grace, from a state of death in trespasses and sins, "I live; yet not I". I live, not as I did before, I live not to this world, I live not to myself, "yet not I". The striking point of difference is now "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me". This is the beautiful point, and it is really true of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is actually the fruit of Christ dwelling in him, "Christ liveth in me". We read in the Scriptures of our body as being the temple of the Holy Ghost and of the Lord Jesus Christ dwelling in the hearts of His people, "Christ liveth in me". Here is a changed character then, one who has been convinced of his or her condition, brought to feel where they are, where they stand, as some

of you have done, and who humbly seeks for mercy through the Lord Jesus Christ and His most precious blood. "Christ liveth in me". How far can we really feel this? I take this to refer to the life of faith in the heart where Christ is formed the hope of glory. The teaching of the Holy Spirit brings us away from all confidence in the flesh to humble dependence upon Him, and in receiving this life within "Christ liveth in me". This is the power and exercise of grace. There are several ways in which this may be said to be true of the Lord Jesus Christ living in our hearts.

First of all "Christ liveth in me" as my foundation, for we read of the Lord Jesus Christ that the Father had laid in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, and the apostle Peter refers to this particular point in writing to the scattered believers and refers to the same Scripture in Isaiah, "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation". "Unto you therefore which believe, He is precious"; and this can be a point, beloved friends, though it may occasion some searching of heart, whether Christ is living in us as our foundation. I do not suppose this can be affirmed with everybody calling themselves Christians who may at the same time be trusting to something in themselves more than in Christ; but to the Lord's living family He makes Himself their foundation. Every other foundation has to be swept away as a refuge of lies and false hiding place, to put their faith and hope alone upon the slaughtered Lamb. He lives as a foundation to build our hopes upon, and it is sweet to feel this. I realise that some of our younger friends may find it difficult to follow me, but even so if you are graciously exercised before the Lord you will have to realise you cannot build for eternity upon your own foundation. We must be stripped and wounded and brought down from any false trust to build our hope of eternal life upon the finished work of Christ.

"Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me", and He lives in me in another aspect, He lives in me as my blessed Redeemer Who redeemed me from the curse of a broken law and Who was made a curse for me, that is, if we come inside this verse; the apostle Paul could come inside it, and it is true of all the Lord's dear people; but even so we may feel personally to come very short in these things. If the Holy Spirit is graciously working in our hearts He will form Christ there, not only as a foundation but as our Redeemer Who completed the work of redemption and in Whom and through Whom all spiritual blessings flow. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins". Does He live in your heart in any measure as a foundation? Does He live in your heart as a Redeemer?

That is to say, can you rightly feel that you have no other foundation but His finished work; and you have no other Saviour but the same Person Who atoned for His people's sins, and for your sins on Calvary's cross? "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us".

Christ lives in the hearts of His people as their all-prevailing Intercessor, and to this the apostle refers, writing to the Hebrews, speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ as "the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec". This is a feature of His priesthood to intercede on behalf of His people for whose sin He shed His precious blood, "Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me".

He lives in the hearts of His people to be their support, comfort, strength, and stay in the path of trial and difficulty, in their tribulations, their sorrows, to comfort them in their difficulties, to make a way for them in their weakness, to be their strength and in their felt death to be their life.

"Nevertheless I live". O what a blessed life is this with a true believer in whose heart the Lord Jesus Christ lives, "Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me". This is not my old natural self that I was contented with before, but Christ living in me now and formed there the hope of glory. He lives as a Mediator, for "there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus".

"And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God". It may be easier if I explain it like this, - the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, for this is the life of a true believer! the life which I now live in the flesh, while I am here in the body, I live by the faith of the Son of God. By "the faith of the Son of God" we may understand the faith and confidence the Son of God felt and possessed in His Father as a Man to bear Him through what was laid upon Him. This is explained in Isaiah 50 where in the language of prophecy the Lord says, "The Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded". The faith of the Son of God was the faith He possessed and felt in His Father to bear Him through what lay before Him. There is another feature in the faith of the Son of God and that is a confidence that the Saviour felt in relation to His own substitution, that it would be effective to the everlasting redemption and salvation of all for whom He suffered. And may not I say that the faith of the Son of God finds its centre in three words uttered by the Saviour Himself when He said, "It is finished"? It was like a confidence that the work He now accomplished was accepted at the hand of justice and that no further claim could be made. This is the faith of the

Son of God, and the faith of the Son of God here may refer to some in this chapel whose faith is built upon Him so that they, and everyone who is brought away from all refuges of lies to a knowledge of Him and to build their faith and hope upon Him, would one day be in glory with Him world without end. This is the faith of the Son of God. This may also incorporate, experimentally speaking, the faith that the apostle himself had in the Son of God and the faith that His dear people have which is a confidence in their souls in the all-sufficiency of His sin-atoning and redeeming work. "Who loved me and gave Himself for me" - the apostle could say this, O favoured man! O favoured one who may feel able to say this: "He loved me and gave Himself for me"! The apostle felt no doubt about his own state and standing. He felt a sweet sacred certainty of his interest, though he longed to know more and more of Him.

This love of the Lord Jesus Christ was a love that moved Him to come and take our nature upon Him and appear in human flesh, and it would be a wonderful mercy if the season that lies ahead were connected with this text "Who loved me", Who took my nature upon Him without sin to suffer in my place; He paid the ransom price and oh, love, everlasting love, love moved Him to come to suffer, bleed and die, and love moves Him now, enthroned above on His dear people's behalf, to plead their cause. Though now He reigns exalted high His love is still the same. "Who loved me". O what a sweet moment it would be with some of us if that wonderful love were shed abroad in our heart so that we could say: "Who loved me, and gave Himself for me", and that which is true of all the number of the redeemed, a number whom no man can number, is true of unworthy me, poor sinful me. O if we could but really feel this in some application of it, "Who loved me and gave Himself for me"!

Here I would close with a word of encouragement to any who may have a concern about this important matter; and it may be that some of our younger friends have, I believe you have, O what a day it would be with some of you if that sweet revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ were granted and you looked upon Him Whom you have pierced, and were favoured to see He suffered all this because of His love to you. "Who loved me and gave Himself for me"! not gave a large sum of money for me, for He had not that to give, neither would it have been of any avail if He had, for we read of the dear Redeemer that He had not where to lay His head; but He gave Himself for me. He laid down His life, which was the greatest act of divine love; as the Lord said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"; and notice this too, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you", even the commands of His blessed Gospel that are recorded in His Holy Word; not legal commands, but the sweet effect of love to Him "Who loved me and gave Himself for me". Amen.

-----  
For additional copies write to: 9 Sibella Road, London, SW4 6JA

CONFIDENTIAL

The following information was obtained from a confidential source who has provided reliable information in the past. It is being provided to you for your information only and should not be disseminated to any other personnel. The source has advised that the information is accurate and reliable.

The source has advised that the information is accurate and reliable. It is being provided to you for your information only and should not be disseminated to any other personnel. The source has advised that the information is accurate and reliable.

The source has advised that the information is accurate and reliable. It is being provided to you for your information only and should not be disseminated to any other personnel. The source has advised that the information is accurate and reliable.

CONFIDENTIAL