

Romans 8:2 - For the law [nomos] of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law [nomos] of sin and death.

The law now becomes the Spirit's instrument of changing us (Jn 17:17, Gal 5:7 Rom 6:6). Our death with Christ stripped the law's ability to condemn us for we are no longer UNDER it, but what many miss is the fact that being *under grace* means that we are now able to obey the law in order to please God (Romans 8:1-8).

To be under grace is to be under the law of the Spirit of life. The aforementioned rendering of Galatians 2:20 makes the law of the Spirit of life and the law of sin and death the same thing, and rejects the freedom from the law of sin and death made possible by the new birth (regeneration, or quickening).

This is why Galatians 2:20 is rendered that way accordingly: the "Christian" is still under law (being yet dead), and Jesus must therefore keep the law of sin and death for the believer. This is what drives the idea that Galatians 2:20 applies to the Christian life, BUT the law of sin and death has been ENDED by our death with Christ. We are no longer under its jurisdiction (Rom 7:1-4)—Christ does not need to fulfill the law of sin and death for us, that law was ended by Christ (Rom 10:4). Said rendering turns the gospel completely upside

down and rejects the new birth. If the law of the Spirit of life and the law of sin and death are the same, "Christians" are still under the law of sin and death.

Moreover, take note as well that Paul doesn't say the Galatian error was trying to be sanctified by the law; the error is an attempt to be "justified" by the law (5:4). If Paul's primary issue with the Galatians was an attempt to apply the law to sanctification in order to justify themselves, why wouldn't he simply state it plainly?

The real issue in Galatians is a justification by ritual, and a ritualistic dumbing down of the law in order to maintain salvation. This is necessary when the law of sin and death is not properly understood as ended, and combined with the law of the Spirit of life.

In fact, the law of the Spirit of life is redefined as something done by Christ instead of the Spirit using the "perfect law of liberty" to change us (James 1:25, Matthew 7:24-27).

## Galatians 2:20

**Does Christ Live Our Life For Us?**



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A passive approach to Christian living has not served the Western church well. Few will disagree that Protestantism is predicated on the idea that the Christian life should be lived out in the same way we were saved, by faith alone. By far, the most popular proof text for this is Galatians 2:20;

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me (ESV).

On its face, the verse does seem to say that we are dead and unable, and Christ is living out our lives for us and through us. The English Standard Version, a Neo-Reformed translation, adds to the idea by excluding the following words that are underlined:

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 (KJV).

The apostle Paul is saying that there is a sense in which we are dead, but also alive. How can we be both alive and dead? The crux of the problem in interpreting Galatians 2:20 is a Protestant propensity for confounding justification

and the Christian life. Galatians 2:20 is not addressing the Christian life, it is addressing justification. This should be evident because Paul addresses the subject of justification specifically in the immediate context several times (three times alone in Galatians 2:16, Galatians 2:17, 2:21, 3:8, 3:11, 3:24, 5:4). Note what Paul states in the verse immediately following verse 20:

I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

The word for “justified” (dikaioō) and the word for “righteousness” (dikaïosynē) mean the same thing. Paul’s point is that Christ “died” in vain if justification is by the law. By “law,” Paul is not referring to an astute observation of the finer points of the law, but the traditions of men that propagate salvation by some ritual, and a dumbing down of the finer points of the law for maintaining salvation through additional rituals (Gal - 2:3, 2:12, 2:17, 2:19, 4:10,11, 4:21, 5:2, 5:3, 5:6, 5:11, note 5:2-5:5 as a summary of these ideas).

Paul is not saying that Christians are dead in the Christian life, and it is Christ alone living through us, he is saying that Christians are dead to the law for justification. Christians died with Christ, but are also resurrected with Christ. Hence, Galatians 2:20 begins with... “I have been crucified with Christ.” Christ died

to end the law’s ability to condemn us (Rom 4:15, 5:13, 6:8, 8:1,10:4). We are no longer under its jurisdiction (Rom 7:1-6).

In regard to our justification only, we are, and remain dead while Christ lives, but this does not include the Christian life in which we are alive and new creatures. The usual rendering of Galatians 2:20 makes justification and the Christian life the same thing. Justification is a finished work, while we are continually separated from our old self by learning God’s law and obeying it. That’s commonly referred to as “sanctification.” Gal 2:20 is ONLY talking about justification. Making Gal 2:20 about the Christian life is tantamount to rejecting half of the gospel pictured in baptism:

Romans 6:3 - Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

And frankly, it also keeps the believer under law instead of under grace (Rom 6:14). If we are not now able to keep the law as a way of loving Christ and others, the law of the Spirit of life has not set us free from the law of sin and death: