



This Sunday we continued with our new topical series at Magdalen Road, looking at the counter-cultural 'shape' of the Christian life – especially that 'the way down is the way up'. Why is it that God says we must be weak to be strong, foolish to be wise, go through suffering to enjoy glory, be slaves to enjoy true freedom? We will, each week, be seeking to challenge our 'natural' thinking processes, asking God to help us to think more and more as he does – and trust him that what he says is best.

This week we focused on Gal 2v20, thinking about how it is through our death, with Christ that we gain life in him – as he lives in us. We noted especially that the death and resurrection of Jesus is not simply a fact 'out there somewhere', but rather that a daily truth for the Christian. The battle we have is that we simply forget the truth of our new identity in Christ, and revert back to seeking to live by law. The Galatians (like us?) had got grace as the way to be right with God – but had slipped into thinking the way to grow (sanctification) – was all about effort and works.

You: no longer live

We started the sermon by considering what it means for Paul to say that he has now died, and the fact that this truth pulls against who we are and our perception of self. Paul is saying something bigger than the cross is a truth, he is saying that the cross is a truth for him – that as Jesus died physically, so he, and every other believer dies spiritually. And yet of course he is still in his body – still living, still with a personality, still in the messy-ness of life. Because he is now dead, so the law does not have a hold over him.

Christ: lives in you

Paul may be dead, but he lives because Christ lives in him. This is not simply a Paul upgrade – this is Jesus, through his Spirit, living in Paul now and giving him life. Because Jesus lives in his heart, so we have life and so we are transformed. We are able to live differently in the old scenarios and situations. The problem is we're skeptics. We think we've tried it and it doesn't work – usually though that's because we've gone back to the default tendency in our hearts to that of works and law (just like the Galatians).

The Daily Implications of the this truth

Because Jesus lives in us, and loves us, we have a huge potential for change and transformation. He's not just able to change us, but because he loves us and died for us, we can trust him to be at work. It's ok to be open and honest about our sin. We also noted that we **all** live a life in the body that is by faith in Jesus. We are all struggling and hence this, although personal, is a community project. We can help each other, encourage each other, love each other, forgive each other, treat each other as we want to be treated.

Here are just a few questions that might get things going, please feel very free to ignore / adapt for your group:

Why do you think our culture loves a resurrection narrative in the films / books etc that we consume?

In what different ways ought the cross and resurrection affect the Christian? What is the 'paradox' here?

What does Paul mean that he is now crucified / no longer living?

How ought we to apply that truth?

Why do we struggle to remember / apply it?

How is it, that Paul now lives?

What does this mean?

How does he describe Jesus?

How does this verse change how we think about growth as a Christian?

What is our tendency in life as we seek to change?

How might our lives show that we believe Gal 2v20.