

“And Those Who Are Christ’s Have Crucified The Flesh...”

by Wayne Goff

“And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” — Galatians 5:24.

Who Belongs To Christ?

Paul discussed that subject with the Corinthians who were divided in their allegiances (1 Cor. 1:12). His defense suggested that none should follow any man other than Christ — Who alone was crucified for you, and in whose Name alone you were baptized (1 Cor. 1:13). So we may conclude that those who were baptized into Christ belong to Christ. In fact, Paul has made the same argument to the Galatian saints (Gal. 3:26-27), explaining that if you are Christ’s then you are heirs to the promise. At the second coming of Christ, those who are His will be gloriously resurrected (1 Cor. 15:23).

It troubles me much today to hear brethren speak of those in denominations as “Christians” who have never yet obeyed the Gospel correctly by being baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)! I wish for them to be Christians, too, but God alone tells us how we become Christians. Wishful thinking will not solve the problem.

How Do You Crucify The Flesh?

Now the important point Paul wishes to make is that if you are Christ’s, then you **have crucified the flesh!** The term “crucifixion” is obviously used *figuratively* and *purposefully* as reminding all saints that when we obeyed the Gospel we **died** to sin. That is, we dedicated ourselves to God and our bodies to His service while denying and controlling the desire to fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

Paul explained himself more fully when writing to the Romans: “For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin” (Rom. 6:5-7). So when Paul tells us in the Galatian letter that we have “crucified the flesh,” we understand him to mean that we do not allow sin a habitual place in our lives — adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries and the like — all are absent because we willingly refuse them. If we fail to so restrain ourselves, then we do not truly belong to Christ!

What Are The “Passions & Desires” of the Flesh?

“**Passions**” comes from a Greek word which means “a suffering, affliction.” It is a *passive* emotion. Paul spoke of the “*sinful passions*” (Rom. 7:5) which worked in our members unto spiritual death. So we must conclude that “*passions*” speaks of the desire to *unlawfully* fulfill the desires of the flesh.

“**Desires**” is translated also as “*lusts*” and refers to a **strong desire** of any kind which is generally specified by an accompanying adjective. As the “*lusts of the flesh*” we understand Paul to mean the strong desire within to commit base, immoral acts. So to understand the full statement of Paul in Galatians, he informs us that we must put to death every sinful action “**with**” (together with; emphasizing the completeness of the extermination) any and all accompanying desires and emotions. This will require **discipline**, but will be done by the child of God seeking to please the Father.

Remember, only by *crucifying the flesh and its lusts* can we find room in our hearts to put on the fruit of the Spirit! It is a constant effort throughout our lifetime, for as long as we *live* in these fleshly bodies, we can be tempted by the lusts of them! May God help us to overcome.