

**Devotion: July 1, 2020**

**Galatians 2:15-21**

15 We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; <sup>16</sup>yet we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law. <sup>17</sup>But if, in our effort to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have been found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! <sup>18</sup>But if I build up again the very things that I once tore down, then I demonstrate that I am a transgressor. <sup>19</sup>For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; <sup>20</sup>and it is no longer I who live, but it is 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. <sup>21</sup>I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.

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Every morning, while having my coffee, I ask God:

"God, we cool?"

And God answers

"Yeah, we're cool."

God only talks to me like that. I'm sure Martin Luther or John Wesley would not converse with God that way, but at 5:30 in the morning, it's cool to know that I'm cool with God that day.

But, I'm cool not because I did anything in particular to get on God's good side. It's not about me and what I did or didn't do. It's about what Jesus did.

Over the past few months there has been a lot of talk and press about rights: civil rights, women's rights, gay rights, children's rights, victim's rights, criminal rights. But the apostle Paul is much more interested *in righteousness than in rights*, and he wants to teach us how to be cool with God. Surprisingly, he does not link righteousness to the works of the law. Instead, he connects it to our faith in Jesus Christ.

This was a radical concept to the people of the first century, especially to Jews who had grown up assuming that they remained right with God as long as they did good works in accordance with God's law. But Paul insisted that our faith in Jesus was enough to put us cool with God.

Paul is convinced that all of this comes to us as a gift. "*I have been crucified with Christ,*" he says to the Galatians, "*and it is no longer I who live, but it is 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*" (vv. 19-20). Paul's old life is dead, and his new life is defined by his faith in the Son of God. But even Paul's faith comes to him as a gift from the living Christ who now lives inside him.

The *faith of Christ* and our *faith in Christ* are both gifts of God. They start and end in God, and God is not any richer because of it. But these gifts of faith are incredibly enriching to us -- they make us right with God.

So, you cool?

Let us pray:

*Gracious God, sometimes it is really hard to be a Christian. We say we model our lives on Christ's life, but we really don't. We try to be good - to love our neighbors, to offer hospitality to the stranger, to fight for justice - but at the same time we justify our behavior, saying that there's no time or money to help others. We believe that Christ died for us so that we might have new life, but we squander that opportunity in competitiveness and desire. Paul says that it is no longer he who lives, but Christ who lives in him. Help us to let Christ live in us and through us - help us to give ourselves over to Christ. Amen.*