

INTRODUCTION 引言

Today is baptism Sunday. Two sisters and a brother will receive baptism. I will love to encourage them and all of us with the Word of God. We will only look at one verse. Galatians 2:20 says: **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.** The title for our message is: Present The Present As A Present. It means we should offer today as a gift to God. Jesus saved us, and so we must live for Him. Paul wrote the book of Galatians to debunk a false teaching from some Jewish Christians. They told Gentile believers that they must observe the Old Testament Law before they could be saved. Paul rebukes them for preaching a different gospel that did not come from Jesus. Today, we do not obey the Law of the Jews. But a lot of people believe that they can go to heaven by doing good works. Here are the problems. First, who sets the standard for “good?” Second, how good is good enough? The Bible says that there is no good person in the world. The conclusion is that we cannot save ourselves. God provides Jesus Christ as the only way for salvation. However, being a Christian is not only about going to heaven. Our eternal destiny should affect the decisions we make in this life. Paul tells us in this verse that who we are in Christ will determine how we live for Christ. We will focus on a three words or phrases that have something to do with time.

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. I Have Been 我已經

The first phrase is I have been. Paul says Christians **have been crucified with Jesus**. Something in us died with the Lord when we received Him. When you became a Christian, you confessed your sins and committed your life to Jesus. As you did so, it were as if you went back to Jerusalem 2,000 years ago and were nailed with Jesus on the cross. What part in us died? Paul explains in Romans 6:6 – **We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.** Your old self, which is the sinful “you” before you knew Jesus, died with Him. The result is that the power of sin will become ineffective on us. Paul uses the phrase “the body of sin” to describe the authority of sin. In the past, sin held us captive. We were helpless but stumbled whenever temptations came. Jesus set us free from such bondage as we were crucified with Him. It is like a series of successful chemo treatment that kills cancer cells. The controlling power of the tumor is conquered. The patient is declared cancer-free. Similarly, the dominating effect of sin on those who are in Jesus is weakened. We have to constantly remind ourselves that we do not live in our old sinful self anymore. Any time when the devil entices us, we can cry out to Jesus: “Lord, help me! I now belong to You. I can only overcome this temptation by the power You have in me.” Then you say to Satan: “In the name of Jesus, go away from me!” Instead of falling to the same sin again, you can simply walk away freely. We can have victory only when we rely on the Lord.

2. I No Longer 我不再

Our crucifixion with Christ is the first step of our Christian life. Paul goes on to say: **I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.** Our death with Christ triggers the beginning of a new life. Some of you may get ready for your veggie garden. Seeds must literally die before they sprout. When seeds soak up water, nutrients will be mobilized to supply energy for new growth. The moment we received Jesus, the Holy Spirit will enter us and He lives in us forever. He will take over our lives as we submit to Him. We said earlier that we can now resist sin. On the positive side, God gives us the freedom to obey Him. Paul says in Galatians 5:16 – **But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.** Here “fresh” refers to our old self. Paul says we can either go with our flesh and sin, or follow the Holy Spirit and win. Then he lists fifteen sins as examples of the way of the flesh. We can sin in our mind, our speech and our actions. Next, he contrast those sins with the fruit of the Holy Spirit. We will display godly virtues when we walk by the Holy Spirit. For instance: you can love those who offend you, remain patient when you are on the edge and foster peace when people are in conflict. The outcome depends on who you follow. Some of us should remember playing a cassette-tape from a recorder. It will sound funny when the batteries are about to run out. To ensure a constant source of electricity, you have to plug it into a socket. Likewise, we lack the strength to obey God when we go independent of Him. We can live in a way that brings glory to God only when we plug into the heavenly power source. Jesus is our constant power source. As Jesus lives in us, He will live through us.

3. I Now 我如今

Christians have been crucified with Jesus. Their old self no longer lived. Paul goes on and says: they **now live by faith in the Son of God.** The word “now” underscores the fact that Christian life is not a point, but a process. Our past decision to accept Jesus has a continual effect. We can think of analogies like financing a house, becoming a U.S. citizen or getting married. The agreement you signed will bring about future changes. From now on you have to pay a monthly mortgage, fulfill the obligations of a citizen or consider your spouse when making decisions. Likewise, we do not only say “I do” when we received Jesus. We must keep saying “I do” to Him in every decision. Jesus makes it clearly in Matthew 16:24 – ... **“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”** Believers of Jesus must also be His followers. We must deny our desires, sacrifice for the Lord and follow Him. Sadly, many Christians sacrifice others, follow their own agendas and deny the Lord in doing so. We must let go of our grip and let Jesus takes over. That is why we need faith. We do not have all the information and resources. We cannot foresee nor control our future either. Jesus is asking you: “I love you by dying for you. Will you trust me?” Of course, putting our faith in the Lord does not take away our responsibilities. You still have to study for your exams, finish your work projects, do laundry and prepare dinner. We keep the same daily duties. But we now live for a new purpose because we live for a new Master. We love Jesus back by obeying Him.

CONCLUSION 結論

Who we are in Christ will determine how we live for Christ. We have been crucified with Jesus. Since then, He lives in us. Jesus expects us to live for Him. Our belief is not a religion, but a relationship with Jesus. We should continue to grow in our love for Him and our submission to Him. Every day is gift we present to the Lord. God will help us fulfill our commitment to Him. Hope that this is an encouragement to our three baptism candidates and to us all.

INTRODUCTION 引言

今天是浸禮主日。兩位姐妹和一位弟兄將接受浸禮。我願意用神的話語來鼓勵他們和我們所有人。我們只會看一節經文。加拉太書 2:20 說：**我已經與基督同釘十字架，現在活著的不再是我，乃是基督在我裡面活著；並且我如今在肉身活著，是因信神的兒子而活；他是愛我，為我捨己。**我們信息的標題是：呈獻今天作為禮物。這意味著我們應該將今天作為禮物獻給神。耶穌拯救了我們，所以我們必須為祂而活。保羅寫了加拉太書來澄清一些猶太基督徒的錯誤教導。他們告訴外邦信徒，他們必須遵守舊約律法才能得救。保羅斥責他們傳的福音不是出於耶穌。今天，我們不會遵守猶太人的律法。但是很多人相信他們可以通過做好事上天堂。這就出現了一些問題。首先，誰來定「好」的標準？第二，好到什麼程度才算好？聖經說世上沒有好人。結論是我們無法救自己。神賜下耶穌基督作為得救的唯一途徑。然而，成為基督徒不僅僅是為了上天堂。我們永恆的歸宿應該影響我們今生所做的決定。保羅在這節經文中告訴我們，我們在基督裡的身份將決定我們如何為基督而活。我們將重點放在三個與時間有關的用語。

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. I Have Been 我已經

第一個用語是「我已經」。保羅說基督徒**已經與耶穌同釘十字架**。當我們接受主時，我們裡面有一些東西與主一同死去。當你成為基督徒時，你承認你的罪並將你的生命交託給耶穌。當你這樣做之時，你彷彿回到了 2000 年前的耶路撒冷，與耶穌一起被釘在十字架上。我們的哪一部分死去呢？保羅在羅馬書 6:6 中解釋說：**因為知道我們的舊人和他同釘十字架，使罪身滅絕，叫我們不再作罪的奴僕。**你的老我，也就是在你認識耶穌之前那個有罪的「你」，已經和祂一起死去。結果是罪的權勢對我們失去功效。保羅用「罪身」這個字來描述罪的權勢。過去，罪俘虜了我們。我們很無助，每當試探來臨時，我們就會跌倒。當我們與耶穌同釘十字架的時候，祂就把我們從這個捆綁中釋放出來。這就像一系列成功的化療殺死癌細胞。腫瘤的控制力被制服了。病人被宣布為沒有癌症了。同樣，罪的影響力對那些在耶穌裡的人也減弱了。我們必須時刻提醒自己，我們不再活在過去犯罪的我之中。每當魔鬼引誘我們時，我們可以向耶穌呼求：「主啊，幫助我！我現在屬於祢。我唯有倚靠祢在我裡面的能力來克服這個試探。」然後你向撒旦說：「奉耶穌的名，離開我！」你不用再犯同樣的罪，乃是可以自由地走開。我們只有依靠主才能得勝。

2. I No Longer 我不再

與基督同釘十字架只是我們基督徒新生命的第一步。保羅接著說：**現在活著的不再是我，乃是基督在我裡面活著。**我們與基督同死觸發了新生命的開始。有些人可能已經開始為菜園做準備功夫。種子必須先死去才會發芽。當種子吸收水分時，營養物將被調動起來，為新的生長提供能量。在我們接受耶穌的那一刻，聖靈就會進入我們的生命，並永遠住在我

們裡面。當我們順服聖靈時，祂便掌管我們的生命。我們剛才說過，我們現在可以抵抗罪。從積極的方面來看，神賜給我們自由順服祂。保羅在加拉太書 5:16 節說：我說，你們當順著聖靈而行，就不放縱肉體的情慾了。這裡的「肉體」是指我們的老我。保羅說我們要不然隨從肉體去罪惡，要不然跟隨聖靈而得勝。然後他列舉了十五種罪作為順從肉體的結果。我們可以在思想、言語和行為中犯罪。接下來，他以聖靈的果子與那些罪作對比。當我們順著聖靈而行時，我們就會表現出敬虔的美德。例如：你可以愛那些冒犯你的人，你可以在壓力之下保持忍耐，在衝突之中製造和平。結果取決於你跟從誰。我們中有些人應該記得用錄音機播放磁帶。當電池快沒電時，播放出來的聲音會變得很奇怪。為確保持續的電力供應，你可以把插頭插上。同樣，當我們遠離神之時，我們就缺乏順服神的力量。唯有當我們接上屬天的電源時，我們才能過榮耀神的生活方式。耶穌就是我們持久的動力源泉。當耶穌住在我們裡面時，我們才能活出祂的樣式。

3. I Now 我如今

基督徒已經與耶穌同釘十字架。他們的老我不再存在。保羅接著說：他們如今...是因信神的兒子而活。「如今」這個用詞強調了一個事實，基督徒的生命不是一個點，而是一個過程。我們過去接受耶穌的決定會引起持續的影響。我們可以想到一些例子，比如貸款、成為美國公民或結婚。你簽署的協議將帶來未來的變化。從現在開始，你必須每個月負款，履行公民義務或是在做決定時考慮你的配偶。同樣，我們不只是在接受耶穌時說「我願意」。我們必須在每一個決定中不斷對主說「我願意」。耶穌在馬太福音 16:24 中說得很清楚：...「若有人要跟從我，就當捨己，背起他的十字架來跟從我。」耶穌的信徒也必須是祂的跟隨者。我們必須否定我們的意願，為主犧牲並跟隨祂。可悲的是，許多基督徒犧牲別人，隨從自己的意願，並否定主。我們必須放手，並讓耶穌接手。這就是為什麼我們需要信心。我們沒有所有的信息和資源。我們也無法預計也無法控制我們的未來。耶穌在問你：「我愛你，為你而死。你會相信我嗎？」當然，相信主並不能免除我們的責任。你仍然需要為準備考試、完成工作的任務、洗衣服和準備晚餐。我們維持相同的日常職責。但我們現在為新的目標而活，因為我們為新的主人而活。我們通過順服主來愛祂。

CONCLUSION 結論

我們在基督裡的身份將決定我們如何為基督而活。我們已經與耶穌同釘十字架。從那時起，祂就住在我們裡面。耶穌期望我們為祂而活。我們的信仰不是宗教，而是與耶穌的關係。我們應該繼續加深對主的愛和對祂的順服。每一天都是我們獻給主的禮物。神會幫助我們履行我們對祂的委身。希望這篇信息對我們三位受浸的弟兄姐妹和我們眾人有所鼓勵。