

I Am Crucified With Christ

by A.W. Tozer

The sermon explores the meaning of being 'crucified with Christ' and how it relates to our relationship with God and our understanding of salvation.

Duration: 37:41

Topics: "Crucified With Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of living a selfless life and turning away from sin. He highlights the ugliness of selfishness and the moral ugliness of those who harm others for their own gain. The preacher also discusses the need for Christians to not only appreciate the deeper spiritual life but to actively live it out. He emphasizes that Christianity should not be just a theoretical belief but a practical and transformative experience. The sermon draws attention to the contrast between the beauty of God and the ugliness of self-centeredness.

Transcript

Now, in the Book of Galatians, the second chapter and verse twenty, I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live. Yet not I, but Christ lives in me.

And the life which I now live in this place, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loves me and gave himself for me. I think I have never but once in my life before attempted to talk on this verse. But I'm asking for your profit this morning.

This is Paul's testimony. It is a bit of beautiful, tight, personal theology thrown into an epistle which is not so beautiful. He's dealing with the Galatians for their backsliding.

But in verse 22, he reports the little diamonds that they take. And here is more the rest of the epistle, in trying to find out what the man of God meant. We're not taking it out of its context.

We're simply acknowledging the fact that the context is too big to be dealt with in any one sense. I am crucified with Christ, says the Apostle, and every version except the King James, probably, puts that I have been crucified with Christ. And that is the meaning of it.

I have been crucified with Christ. Now, I want you to note, before you attend it, that you go into it further, that it is a contradictory little verse with a number of contradictions in it. I am crucified.

I have been crucified. Now, that's a contradiction, meaning that anybody who had been crucified wouldn't be there to tell about it. Either he had not been crucified and could talk, or he had been crucified in which case he couldn't talk.

But here is a man saying, I have been crucified, and is still writing it down here and still can't talk. No one ever said, I have been hanged. Except, of course, if he were not in his right mind, we're talking about sane people.

But no one ever said to a doctor, or a doctor saying to the undertaker, I have died. Because, if he had not died, he wouldn't say he had died if he were in his right mind, and if he had died, he wouldn't be telling the doctor. And yet, here is a man who says, I have been crucified, and that in itself is a contradiction.

But, granted now that by some wonder, a man could say, I have been crucified, as though he were speaking from the next world back to this one. Then he contradicts himself again by saying, nevertheless, I live. If he had been crucified, how then could he live? And says, I live, and then contradicts that, and says, yet not I. And then down on the fourth line, if you have the same kind of a bible as I have, and says, the life which I now live in the flesh, I who have been crucified, and yet am alive, and yet am not alive, I who am yet not I, 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.

So, I have deliberately accented the apparent contradiction here in this, not because I believe that there are any basic contradictions, but I want you to see that you can't pass this verse over, just pass it over the way you do the Lord's Prayer in the 23rd Psalm. You can't do that. This means something, or else it doesn't mean anything.

If it means something, we ought to know what it means. If it doesn't mean anything, we ought to find that out and ignore it from here on. I believe it means something, and I believe not only that it means something, but I believe that it can be made practical and workable and livable in this present world, in the lives of all of us.

Now, he says, I have been crucified, and 14 times in those immediate verses around there, the words I, myself, and me are used, and five times the word I is used here. If that means anything, I don't know that it does, but the word I says here. He's not bashful about that I. He had a dear old brother in the society who, for years, was a missionary to China, and he's a very lovable man, a very cultured man, but he has a weakness for the word I. When he wants to talk about anything that happened in his missionary journey, he says, when one was in China, one saw, and that seems to me to be fairly a little bit contrived.

I've said about him good-naturedly, and he would have said it good-naturedly, but we're friends, that if he'd been writing a 23rd Psalm, he would have said, The Lord is one shepherd, one shepherd. Well, that's not so good. Paul is talking about I, and I believe there is a magical place in time for the use of the word I. Not somebody else, not generally.

The man who bows his head and says, Lord, bless the missionaries, and all who know that you pray are men. He has been so general that God himself could answer his prayer, I'm sure. But when we say I, we have thinned it down and thinned the point of it.

Now, I is the sum of my total individual deeds, and Christianity recognizes and tells the problem of I. Most of the shallow psychology religions of the day try to deal with the problem of I by jockeying it around, but

Christianity deals with the problem of I by disposing of it finally. And there are two I's. There is the I which is found in, well, two I's found in every believer.

There's the natural I, and that's what Paul means when he said, I, my natural self, I have been crucified. Then there is another I, and that is the new man, and that I now lives. So that there are two different I's here.

I have been crucified, I live, and yet I who crucified do not live, but I live in Christ, and Christ is in me. There's no contradiction. There's only an apparent one, you see, because there are two of these I's, and this I, which is the natural me, stands in the just angle of God.

God can't sin, because it is the essence of everything that is anti-God. There are those who don't believe in the Antichrist, or the possibility of there ever being an Antichrist, but putting aside the eschatology that is involved there, at least they can see that whatever does not go through the process of crucifixion, and transmutation, and the passing over into the new creation in Christ is Antichrist. We don't know it, and certainly we try to smooth it over, but all that which is not with Christ is against Christ.

If you're not on my side, you're against me, and if you do not gather with me, you scatter abroad. This is the day of tolerance, when the whole wide world, sparked by the Communists, who are the most intolerant people in the world, are preaching tolerance in order to break down all the borders of religion, and embarrass American people with their social and racial problems. But, in spite of the fact that this is the day of tolerance, the most intolerant book in all the wide world is the Bible, and the most intolerant preacher that ever stood on this street to address an audience was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

There is a vast difference between being tolerant and being charitable. Jesus Christ was so charitable that, in his great heart, he put in all the wide world and died for those that hated him. But he was so intolerant that he said, if you're not on my side, you're against me.

If you do not believe that I am free, you shall die in your sins. It was an either-or drawn in time, that it would either get over onto his side and live, or stay over on the other side and perish, and there was no middle ground. There's no twilight zone that keeps him at ease, no place in between.

You say, then you've got the true religion and nobody else has. I said to a Lutheran pastor yesterday, I don't know how this sounds to you, brother, but it's for me. The older I get, the less I care about denominations, the less I care about names and tags, and the more I see that there is a broad fellowship of spiritual people who know their God, regardless of what they call themselves.

He quickly agreed with me, warmly agreed with me, and said he believed that was in the will of God, and that we knew each other by the discernment of the Spirit when we met. Now, that came from a Lutheran brother. Well, character-bondedness is one centrality that is depicting everybody, and that loves everybody, would die for everybody, that would give your life for anybody and everybody, that believes in the humanity of everybody, and the dignity of everyone, and the right of everyone to his own opinion.

That's charity. But tolerance is quite another matter. For me, they say, well, come and be saved if you want to, but if you don't want to, then there's another way.

You'll burn Jesus Christ if you will, but if you do not want to, God will find a way for you, or you will find a way to God. That's tolerance. That's power.

Now, in this matter of I, Christianity deals with it, and it deals with it by an intolerance and final destruction. It says this I can't live. God deals with it to assemble all our proud life, and pronounces stern condemnation upon it, and flatly disproves it, and fully rejects it in total.

It says that this I, this rich, this rebellious I, this fancy God I, is still the sin, the essence of rebellion and disobedience and unbelief. This I of God will have nothing to do with it. There's two kinds of religions.

I'm not talking about denomination. I'm talking about within the facts and framework of Christianity. There's two positions.

One is that the Lord came in order to help me, help my I, and to take out the complexes and the twists that I got into because my mother told me when I was a baby. You know the old psychiatry stuff. Or, the other position is that God, Jesus Christ, came to bring an end to self.

Not to educate it and polish it, but to put an end to it. Not to cultivate it and put it along with Bach and Beethoven and Da Vinci, but to bring an end to it. You say, all right, now you've come so far.

You've stopped here. That's why I know, because of the old I, and in repentance and self-repudiation, the putting of myself out, I turn my back on my old self and refuse to go along with it anymore, and desert the strength to come over onto the side of Emmanuel, Jesus Christ, walk onto the banner of the cross from that hour on. That reposes of the old self finally.

And that's what baptism is supposed to mean, but doesn't. Baptism is nothing but a bath to the average person. We have a banshee back there, but it's nothing but a quick dip to the average person, because they do not know what it means.

They do not know that it's an outward visible symbol of something that is supposed to have taken place. The old self is repudiated and put away. Sigh, I have been crucified with Christ, down and up, and now I live.

That can happen apart from water baptism of any mode. The water baptism is supposed to set that forth as a wedding ring, set forth the fact that you are married. Now, I hope that there will not be any attempt to synchronize and compromise these by mutual confession, and say, well, now why not be charitable, and tolerant, and take it all in? If some people believe that the Lord came to help the old life, and patch it up, and get a little elixir into it, and give it a new jab of adrenaline, why, let them believe it.

Don't go and argue with them. Let them believe it. They're doing good, but I can't see it that way.

And I do not believe that we ever ought to try to dovetail us into this. Either Jesus Christ came to bring an end to itself, and start a new life, or he came to patch itself up. Now, he can come to do both.

He won't do it one way in your confidence, and another way in my confidence. He does it alike in all confidence, around the world, regardless of what he calls it. Men and women belong to his name.

And incidentally, I read two letters this week. I wish you could read them. I'll let you read them if you wish.

You know who they're from? They're from, uh, uh, what do they call this one? Trappist-Monk. Trappist-Monk. He's taking us out of the title.

That man isn't a Christian? God isn't a Christian, and I'm not. You'd think John Wesley had written those letters. You'd think Luther had written those letters, or John Monk.

Trappist-Monk. Don't ask me. Don't ask me.

Mr. Joseph, how can you, and I don't explain. I don't know. I didn't get out of that holy ground.

Well, how can you get a Bible and begin to preach what he believes? I don't know. I only know he's out there taking a vow of silence, letting people one-third as big as he is boss him around. Oh, for the slow blood he has for the person that he is, for redemption, for the cross, for the glory of the Lamb.

For whatever conscience you're in, it's all the same thing, brother, even if it's in a monastery. I wouldn't want to be in one. Now, don't go out and say, close it in favor of monasticism.

I'm not. The Lord said, go into all the world and preach to God for whoever. Take everything and say, go and hide in the bowels of the earth, and pull a hole in after it.

I never believed in monasticism. Old Trillium Trilites, remember, went up on a pole 30 feet high, and sat down on it and said, there's 30 years. One year for every foot he was off the ground.

30 years he stayed up there. The only discount loan he should have come down out of that, and gone and taken a bowl of soup to a little world, or a bottle of milk to a baby, or given a New Testament to somebody that didn't know the truth. Up there, squat-legged like a useless sailor, sitting 30 years, thinking that because he was 30 feet off the ground he was nearer to heaven than if he'd been down too soon.

I say that's tragic misunderstanding of everything. I don't know how I got into that, but I did. Now, the whole burden of New Testament theology is that the old self is raw and incomplete.

Its values are false, and its wisdom is flesh and bone, and its goodness none at all. And that the new self in Christ Jesus, the new man in Christ, is all that must live. From now on, we must reckon ourselves to have died indeed unto sin, but be alive unto God in Christ Jesus.

Now, the naturalized take sins and glory, and what is required in peace and hopes to find something that will cause it and help it to escape the past, sin and the wrath of God, something that will make itself pleasing to God, something that will make it sufficient to live pleasing to God, something that will enable it to do God's work satisfactorily, and something that may be as important as any that will enable it to develop to the fullest outreaches of the potential of its nature. They're all created with a blueprint, and I suppose not very many ever build all over the blueprint. They just build a little pot in the middle, and maybe after a few years of hard work, add a little addition on it, and they're attracted to the blueprint in all four directions.

God made the blueprint, and we as we build never come out to the edge of the blueprint, never roll it up and put it on the shelf and say, thank God I've got the last wallops and the last arch shavings and the last roof. I believe that the outworking of all the potentials of a man's mighty nature, all that he can do, all that he can think, all that he can dream and imagine and move as a human, as a redeemed human, that if he has not found a way to let all those powers loose and receive those powers from God, he's not yet what he ought to be. So, I think that ought to be it.

That's what a man looks for in himself. Something that will enable him to live a full human life and a full Christian life, pleasing to God, safe from the past and safe to the future. What does he actually find when he looks in his own heart? He finds he's nothing.

He finds he knows nothing. He finds he has nothing. He finds that he can dream nothing.

I preached commencement sermon at a college last Tuesday, weeks ago, and I told them, among other things, that all the difference between an educated and uneducated man was this, that the educated man knows that there are more things he doesn't know than the uneducated man. That the main purpose of education is to show you more things you don't know and probably never will find out. The oracle declared that Socrates was the wisest man in Greece, and Socrates explained the reason the oracle said it was that Socrates was the only man in Greece that knew he didn't know anything.

He said, that's why he said, I replied, because I'm the only man in Greece that knows I don't know anything. All the rest don't know anything and think they do and are unwise for that reason. I know nothing and know it, and I'm wise for that reason.

That was Socrates' explanation. Now, maybe I'm convinced here, but it sounds all right. So, that's the stuff, your natural self.

Well, you say, but I'm a Swedish descent. Well, you're human. I'm a Welsh descent.

I come from the Netherlands. Well, how nice, but you're human. You say, my German grandfather was a farm so-and-so.

Nice indeed, but you're human too. I'm a cross between English and German, and I'm human, because I was once human, and this five-year-old from North Dakota is human, or North Carolina. And they were all alike, but don't boast to me about their ancestors.

I know who they are. They were all alike, and it can be said of all of us regardless of our racial strength, whether they be from Africa, or India, or many of the occidental countries, all alike. I am nothing.

In myself, I know nothing. I have nothing. I can do nothing.

Now, the new I, say, in Missouri, what is the new I? Ah, my friends, the new I has Christ. The new I, the new person, has Christ, who says, it is no longer the old, ignorant, do-nothing, know-nothing, see-nothing, have-nothing person. He died when I believed in Christ, and now it's a new man in Christ Jesus the Lord.

And now, I'm not ashamed to say I, nor afraid to say I, because when I say I, I mean not I, but Christ living in me, and I mean the new man in Christ. You see, it says in Colossians 1.22, Christ renewed the hope of glory. In Ephesians 1.6, accepted in the Beloved.

In Colossians 2.10, we are complete in him. In Corinthians 1.13, he has made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. So, Jesus Christ is what we need.

He has what we need. He knows what we need to know, and he can do in us, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight. You say, that rather ruled me out then.

Where's my ambition? Where's my thing? Where's my publicity? Do I get a statue out of this, or a nameplate on the window? You get Christ, and glory, and fulfillment, and future, and the world to come

whereof we seek, and the spirit that kept men in purpose, and the Christ in the love of the everlasting covenant, and innumerable companies and churches are first born in the new Jerusalem. And before that, we get all the service on earth for mankind. That's what you get out of it.

But God loves you too well to let you strut and boast, and cultivate your egotism, and feed your eye. He won't have that. Christ works in us to complete himself, and make himself over in us.

What a great Christianity we evangelicals have these days. We get criticized by the liberals, and all we should have, and I don't blame them. Let them criticize.

They've got a right. They haven't anything any better. But what a low bunch of unworthy people we evangelicals are, daring to stand up on our feet, and point to intelligent audiences that the essence and final purpose and end of the cross of Christ is the saving from hell.

How stupid can we get and still claim to be followers of Christ? The purpose of God is not to save men from hell. The purpose of God is to save them unto Christlikeness, and to make them like God. And God will never be done with us until the day when we shall see his face and his name shall be on our forehead, and we shall delight in him, seeing as he is.

What a cheap, low-grade, across-the-counter, commercial kind of Christianity that says, I was in debt, and Jesus came and paid my debt. Sure he did, but why have I emphasized that? I was on my way to hell, and Jesus stopped me and saved me. Sure he did, but that's not the thing to emphasize.

What is to emphasize? That God has saved me to make me like his son, that his purpose be catching me in my wild race to hell, and turning me around, and renewing me, and bringing the old self to an end, and creating a new self within me. The purpose of God was that he might reproduce in me the beauty of his son. And no Christian is where he ought to be until that beauty of his son has been reproduced in the Christian life, his Christian life.

Now, that's necessary. That question of degree, certainly there never is a time when anybody can look in his own heart and say, Well, thank God, I see it's finished now. The Lord has signed the painting.

The profile, the beautiful picture has been painted. I see Jesus in myself. Nobody will say that.

Nobody. Even though he'd be Christ-like, and God-like, and charitable, and full of love, and peace, and grace, and mercy, and kindness, and goodness, and faithfulness, he won't know it. He won't know it.

He'll be ignorant of it, and he'll be pressing on, asking folks to pray for him, and reading his Bible in tears, and saying, Oh God, I want to be like thy son. And God knows he's like his son somewhat, and he ain't supposed to know it. And the people around him know it, but he doesn't know it.

Humility never looked in on itself. Humility always looked out. Emerson said, The only eye that sees itself is blind.

He said again, The eye is to see through, not see, but see through. If my eye could suddenly become conscious of itself, I'd be a blind man. But I'm unconscious of my eye, and conscious of your face.

The moment I'm no longer conscious of your faces, but conscious only of my eye, I'm blind. Now, in practical operation, I try to be true to myself. In practical operation, you must increase, but I must decrease.

Less and less of me, and more and more of Christ. That's the bitter cross, brother. That's the bitter cross.

More and more of Christ, less and less of me. I get less and less inexperienced. Potentially and judicially, I was crucified with Christ.

Now God wants to make it actual, and in actuality it's not as simple as that. In actuality, it comes by degrees. Peace and power and truthfulness will increase according as it's no longer I but Christ that lives in me.

Now, what's it going to be? My way or Christ's? Is it going to be my righteousness? No, Christ's righteousness. Is it going to be my honor and praise? No, Christ's honor and praise. Is it going to be my choice? No, Christ's choice.

My plan? No, Christ's plan. The only time we hear this anymore is in the analogies. We think about it, and don't we think about it? Shut the book and fight the man who looked in the mirror and forget what he looked like.

Didn't say a woman did that, said a man did it. He looked in the mirror and forgot what he looked like, and that's why he was more than you. We think, oh, to be dead to myself, dear Lord, oh, to be lost in me.

Shut our book and go have a soda. But I tell you, it must become operative. It must become practical.

That which is objective truth must become subjective experience, or else Christianity's a fuck. Church always follows selfishness, always. When it's I instead of Christ, ugly.

I told you sometime recently that the most beautiful, certainly one of the most beautiful verses in the Bible is that one in the 90th Psalm, Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us. How wonderful the beauty of the Lord our God. But set in sharp contrast to the beauty of the Lord our God is the ugliness that I myself, an anonymous writer of the Germanic text, said, Nothing burns in hell but my me, I, and mine.

That's the fuel of hell. How ugly it is, how unutterably ugly. What an ugly man Hitler was.

Oh, he wasn't bad to look at, with that beard down, that's what he would say. I mean as a state he looked at anybody else, more or less. But how ugly he was, how unutterably ugly, how ugly was Caligula, a Negro.

How ugly, how ugly is that man? Murdered a gangster. How morally ugly, because selfishness, that's just an extreme case. You say, I'm not a Caligula, I'm not a Negro, I'm not a Hitler.

No, you're not yet. The Bible says, Let none that is unholy beget it. Unholy or still, they simply rush to their degeneration faster than you have.

Culture, education, twentieth century, modern ways of good things, plus the fall of Christianity, keeps the world from going to hell as fast as it would otherwise. But they've all got an image. And Jekyll said, I never heard of a sin that was ever committed, but I didn't know that I had the seed of it in me.

There never was a sin committed that you don't have the seed of it in you. As soon as God takes away the salt of preservation, we'll rot overnight. How ugly is Caligula, how dirty was the Lord our God.

Dr. Huxley, I certainly don't quote him as an orthodox man, but he said something I appreciated. He said, My kingdom go, is the necessary corollary to thy kingdom come. And yet we dare to pray every Sunday in this church, thy kingdom come, thy will be done.

What are we praying for? Never we'd better put into a verse, better put what he added in a little bit. He said, My kingdom go, thy kingdom come, for his kingdom can never come till my kingdom go. And when I am no longer king of my life, you become king of my life.

I am crucified, I have been crucified with Christ, says the dear old man of God. Nevertheless, I live in what I, Christ lives in me. And the life I now live for the Christ I live for the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Now, I want to tell you something, and then I'm finished. It's this. It's quite one thing to preach this, and it's quite something else to live it.

John Fowler, Johannes Fowler, the great German preacher before Luther, one of the greatest preachers, and evangelical before his time, he was a great preacher, and he could preach. Somebody came down from the country, Nicholas they called him, Carmen, said, Doctor, I'd like to hear a sermon on the deeper life, on the spiritual life, union with Jesus. Old man said, all right, young boy, old man.

Doctor said, all right, Nicholas, I'll preach that sermon. Stick around, I'll preach it next Sunday. He preached it.

He had 26 points. He had 26, and it was a good sermon I had read it, and I can underscore every line of it. It was a good sermon.

It was telling people how to put away their sins and their selfishness, and live under God and Christ Jesus, a great sermon. When it was over, and the crowd had dispersed, Nicholas came slowly down the aisle. He said, Doctor, that was a great sermon.

He said, thank you, thank you. He said, that was just what I wanted to hear. I hadn't heard a sermon on that for a long time, and I want to hear it.

He said, thank you, I'm glad that preached. He said, Doctor, would you mind if I made a mild statement about the whole thing? Oh no, he said, go ahead. He said, Doctor, that was brave preaching, but you don't have it.

You're not living it. I could tell by the way you preached that you felt. You don't have it.

He learned that Doctor went on to lead for a long month in preaching, but he stopped. He stopped to take that which was objective truth spiritually. And the day came when, after the dire sufferings in his soul, God had brought an end to his own power, and the flood of the Spirit came in on his life, and he went out to be one of the greatest preachers of his generation.

So he had to die for it in actual spiritual experience. Now, you pray for me, and I'll pray for you. We will not follow our Lord in this, and not be satisfied with what I'm quoted, not memorize it.

I've memorized it. I can quote it from memory. That isn't enough.

I know what Paul meant, but that isn't enough. This must become living reality to me. Do you agree? Do you want God to do something for you, that it's no more I, but Christ is living in me? Yes? Let's pray.

Oh Lord Jesus, our branch of healing, our star that on Israel shone, we bless thee this month. We worship.

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