

Homegroup Notes for Week Beginning 20/1/2025.

Introduction:

At the beginning of 2025, we are examining a verse that will chime throughout the year and to which we will return. Galatians 2.20, variously stated as:

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (NIV)

²⁰ My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (NLT)

Indeed, I have been crucified with Christ. My ego is no longer central. It is no longer important that I appear righteous before you or have your good opinion, and I am no longer driven to impress God. Christ lives in me. The life you see me living is not "mine," but it is lived by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I am not going to go back on that. (MSG)

²⁰ 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. (ESV)

Christian faith is faith *in Christ* and is shaped by the crucifixion and resurrection. Once and for all and uniquely, Christ died and was raised as the means of the salvation of the world. We are included in this renewal as we live our lives through our identifying with Christ. Consequently, the cross and resurrection also form the pattern of our discipleship, dying to self in order to live for Christ, counting ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ.

This series looks both at the work of Christ and what it means to live 'in Christ' or to step into the life that is ours as Christ lives in us.

There is a genuine challenge here as to how we approach life, faith and church. We under-realise who we are if we fail to grasp the ending of one way of life and the gift of another accessed exclusively in Christ. The church is called to live differently because it is the community of those who are dead and alive in Him living towards a new creation.

We are not that which we were; we are saved from death and called into life; we are being transformed into the glorious image of God in Christ as we continue to die and find new life in Him (2 Corinthians 3.18)

AS TS Eliot wrote, *"What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from..."*

Week One:

Read Ecclesiastes 1 together.



- What picture of life does this give?
- Focus on the relationship between verse 10 and verse 2.

Is there anything of which one can say, "Look! This is something new"? It was here already, long ago; it was here before our time.

"Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless."

The picture here is of meaningless experienced in the cycles of 'same old, same old' and by the futility of it all coming to an end too soon. Woody Allen expresses it saying, *Life is full of misery, loneliness, and suffering - and it's all over much too soon.*

The hope we have is that we are no longer caught in a meaningless cycle, but that this cycle has been interrupted by something new, Christ. The quality of our life now has an eternal dimension, which finds its meaning in being with God.

Read 2 Corinthians 5.17 and compare that to Ecclesiastes 1.



- How might this change of perspective challenge our mindset about our lives in the here and now as well as our hope for the future. Try to be specific.
- Pause to PRAY giving thanks and in silence turning over our need to find 'new creation' perspective on our lives.



Turn to Galatians 2.20. Read the verse aloud several times, ideally from different versions.

- Share together the challenges and hope that this verse offers. You might like to record these first impressions to return to in a fortnight.
- The hope of Galatians 2.20 does not avoid death, it confronts death. To arrive with Christ, we have to leave our old way of life.
 - Look at Genesis 12.1 and Exodus 9.1. What do these verses say about leaving in order to go, ending in order to begin? What danger does Exodus 14.12 signal?
- Read Romans 6.23 alongside this verse.
 - What causes death in us?
 - How do we die? What place does confession and repentance have?
 - How does Jesus' dying relate to our dying when we live 'in Christ'?
- What is the 'I' that dies in Galatians 2.20? Do we lose our sense of who we are when we give ourselves to Christ or do we become more who we are?



Conclude by applying this to the details of our lives...have a reflective prayer time asking God what we need to die to and asking for courage and perseverance.