

**Galatians 4**  
**(Chapter 6)**

**The world has been crucified to me  
and I have been crucified to the world.**

The ultimate position of the Christian is to be crucified with Christ. Being crucified with Christ means that I identify with Christ in His suffering, I forsake the glory of the world, I live by faith in the heavenly goal and I love His redemption of the creation. This is the fourth use of the word 'crucified' in Galatians (6:14):

- 1) I have been crucified (2:20)
- 2) Christ is portrayed as crucified (3:1)
- 3) the flesh has been crucified and (5:24)
- 4) the world has been crucified (6:14).

This brings out the central place of the Cross in Christian faith and experience. The Cross is the place where we stand. The Cross defends us and makes our way, gives us our mind and fashions our heart for others. In life and death we need nothing more than the Cross. Everything else in life is just our personal freight.

**6:1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any fault, you who are the spiritual ones should restore him in a spirit of gentleness (meekness) watching out for yourself lest you also be tempted.**

We have a responsibility for one another. Not one of us knows our breaking point or the point when temptation will turn into sin in our life. We should be aware of each other's situation, pray for one another, listen to God for one another and be able to restore one another when we are overtaken in some transgression. Paul usually ends his letters with practical instruction on caring for one another. He gives the deep (and high) theology first and then says care for one another as in the day of Christ's imminent return. This he expresses further:

**6:2 Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ.**

Christians do not reject law. There is the law of Moses (Act 15:5), the law of faith (Rom 3:27), the law of my mind, the law of sin (Rom 7:23), the law of God (Rom 7:25), the law of the spirit of life in Christ (Rom 8:2), the law of righteousness (Rom 9:31), the law of Christ (Gal 6:2) and the perfect law of liberty (James 1:25). The law of Christ is what Christ requires of us. It is not an option. The law of Christ is the commandment to love (John 13:34). Love is not a feeling but a caring. Bearing one another's burdens (pressures, heaviness) fulfils that law.

**6:3 For anyone who thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, deceives himself.** How easily we deceive ourselves. We so easily compensate for our deficiencies and fantasise our possibilities to avoid the consequences of our failures. The test here is for genuine and honest knowledge about one's self. There can be such a distance between where we are and where we want to be. We can also have the habit of not accepting ourselves as we actually are. Can we ever know exactly what we are like? Paul gives an answer:

**6:4 But let each man test (prove) his own work. Then his cause for boasting (feeling good about himself) will be in himself alone and not in another.** Deception comes when we compare ourselves with others. When we measure ourselves by what we perceive others to have done, we can readily covet their achievement. We desire and fantasise their excellence, opportunity or ability and actually disregard our own. Their effort is proven, ours is not. We can get into the habit of wanting to have what (we imagine) the other person is having. This can even become a source of idolatry which becomes a deep bondage of our spirit and hence our behaviour. I

need to see myself standing before God. He alone is my ultimate judge. Paul says that he does not even judge himself. The Lord Jesus will reveal what is hidden and expose the purposes of the heart (1Cor 4:3-5). We ourselves do not have this information about ourselves. We can have very deep habits of self-judgement and self-criticism. I should avoid the habit of using my perception of other people to make me feel better (or worse) about myself. There is a purity in the singleness of Christ.

**6:5 For each man shall bear his own load (freight).** Each person bears their own load in life. Some of us can be carrying far too much stuff. This is our choice. To decide to carry our cross can reorganise what we are carrying. This verse is different from verse 2 which says that we should carry one another's burdens. Verse 2 refers to the pressure carried in association with a load. We can share the impact, pressure, weight or anxiety that comes with what we are carrying in life. Verse 5 says that each person still carries the particular thing that they are carrying. I cannot carry your load for you, but I can share in bearing the pressure associated with that load. We all have a different walk but we can all share the journey. We can listen, share experiences and adopt various coping mechanisms.

**6:6 Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.** This is part of the divine economy. Teaching the Word of God is a calling, a work, a ministry and an occupation. The teacher is not just communicating ideas or knowledge but communicating the mind of God which is not trivial information. A life is formed to teach the Word of God. A mind is shaped to listen to what God is saying. The Word of God is living, sharp and capable of great energy (Heb 4:12). To teach the living Word of God is to handle fire. The teacher of the Word of God should live a life that is submitted to that Word. The teacher needs to be a living example of what is being taught. Otherwise the Word is not living and the teacher is humbug. The teacher is locked away in the purposes of the Word. Ultimately Jesus Christ is the Living Word of God. Scripture is the presenting context of the mind of God. Jesus Christ is its reality. The teacher becomes the living expression of what is taught, even embarrassingly so. The teacher who brings the Word of God brings the ultimate message for the human soul, faces the greater test (Mtt 10:24; 1Tim 5:17) and is a prophetic watchman over the Word and its effect (Ezek 3:16-27). The student is to share all good things with the teacher.

**6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; we reap what we sow.** Do not be deceived (lead astray) on this one. You cannot make a fool of God: we reap what we sow. There is nothing surer than this statement. It is about the consequences of our behaviour. Our behaviour always has consequences. Many of us would love that our behaviours have different consequences (outcomes). We are the ones creating our future. We reap the consequences of our behaviour. Our behaviour can have moral, emotional, physical and financial consequences. And we have to deal with this. In fact, we may say that God sees to it that we suffer the consequences of our own behaviour. We live in a moral universe as well as a physical universe: there are physical consequences and there are moral consequences. I can also be affected by the moral behaviour of others, to which I make my own response. I cannot be always aware of what the consequences of my behaviour will be. This is something that I learn in life. May I learn to plant the right seed to create the crop that I want. And then harvest it wisely.

**6:8 He who sows to the flesh will of the flesh reap corruption. But the one sowing to the spirit will of the spirit reap eternal**

**life.** If we persist in sowing corrupt seed we will reap a harvest of corruption and deception (Eph 4:22). Corruption and deception are signs of decay and dying. Our abilities, motivations and desires fade and die. We are deceived into inactivity and dereliction of duty (Lk 17:10). We are unproductive for the kingdom of God (Mtt 25:21, 29-30). We literally decompose. But if we sow to the spirit realm and cultivate Holy Spirit obedience then the harvest that we reap is eternal life. We walk in the spirit as Paul recommends (5:16). The natural thing to do (the thing without God in my life) is to sow to the flesh. We need to negotiate a spiritual walk and crucify the passions and desires (life-style) of the flesh (5:24).

**6:9 Let us not grow weary doing good, for in due season we will reap if we do not lose heart (faint).** We are to bear the heat and burden of the day. We are to persist in good works. We are to place ourselves in the hands of a faithful creator (1Pet 5:19). When we do good we are planting seed that will produce a harvest of goodness, because we reap what we sow: this is spirit and life law. Circumstances may seem otherwise but God is not tricked, mocked or proved wrong. This is treating others the way you want to be treated.

**6:10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us do (work) good to everyone and especially to those who are of the household of faith.** Goodness is a fruit of the spirit. Christians should be known for their goodness to all. Well done good and faithful servant (Mtt 25:21). But we should also look after those in the church as a special concern. This goodness supports one another in the faith.

**6:11 See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.** Paul has someone who writes his letters for him (an amanuensis). Presumably he is writing large letters because he has bad eyesight (4:15; 2Cor 12:7).

**6:12 It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised and only that they may not be persecuted for the Cross of Christ.** The desire to be circumcised is the desire to cling to the culture and to be defended by the religious status quo. All that the Cross represents is alienation from the culture. Carrying one's cross brings one out from the culture which also gives one a place from which to minister to the culture. The Cross is an offence to the natural man. There is no human pride in the Cross; only the hidden glory of the Christ. The daily humiliation of the Cross is not the chosen place for much of man-made religion.

**6:13 For even those who are circumcised do not keep all the law. But they desire to have you circumcised that they might boast in your flesh.** Paul claims that by circumcision people are being made some kind of religious trophy. The perpetrators are not really interested in keeping the law. What they want to do is make people an extension of their own ego. It is a power play and the goal is the manipulation of people's souls and bodies. This is indeed a demonic activity and a satanic misuse of human beings. And it is all done in the name of religion.

**6:14 But far be it from me to boast except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by which the world has been crucified to me and I have been crucified to the world.** Once again Paul resorts to the Cross. It is the place here he stands, by which he is covered, from which he ministers and in which he finds his identity and purpose. He desires no other place. The world still exists and he has a profound calling to minister to it. Paul does not deny the reality of the world. But now he is detached from it. The world no longer evokes a response from him. Whatever was in him that the

world influenced no longer exists. He is not dead to the world: he is crucified to the world. He is not able to respond to the world in the way he once did. The world is also crucified to him. He cannot get the world to excite him as it once did. The world has lost its allure. Paul is no longer searching the world for its treasures, riches and excitements. He finds all these things in Christ alone. His life is hidden with Christ in God (Col 3:3).

**6:15 For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but a new creation.**

The change is not in the outer man but in the inner man (Eph 4:22-24; Col 3:9-10). The outer man is wasting away (2Cor 4:16-5:5). If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away and behold the new has come (2Cor 5:17). The new life and covenant in Christ is not about the external performance and fleshy observance of ritualised religion but rather about a continuous life in (and by means of) the Holy Spirit. There is a Christian life already prepared for us to walk in (Eph 2:10). The new creation is the newly constructed personality; the person living out of a different space; the person capable of entirely different experiences and goals.

**6:16 As for all who will keep in line with this rule, peace and mercy be upon them and upon the Israel of God.** The rule is the new creation and the spirit walk. Paul prays a blessing of peace and mercy upon those who keep this rule of living. And he prays a blessing of 'the Israel of God'. This is a very important phrase. It includes the Jews and the Christians and points to the future.

**6:17 From now on let no one trouble me for I bear in my body the marks (stigmata) of the Lord Jesus.** Paul bears in his body the marks of following Jesus (2Cor 11:22-29). These are the undeniable signs of his apostleship. He knows where he stands and he knows whom he has believed (2Tim 1:12).

**6:18 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren, Amen.** A benediction.