

Ex-Convicts, but Not Model Citizens

Scripture Reading — Galatians 2:15-21

*I have been crucified with Christ ... The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God.
Galatians 2:20 —*

Jesus has freed us from the condemnation that holds humanity captive, so everyone who is in Christ is now an ex-convict, out of jail and free from condemnation.

But of course there is more to salvation than that. An ex-con doesn't automatically become a model citizen. There's still the power and presence of sin in our lives day by day. There's still some of the old self in us that landed us in prison in the first place. It's a lot of old-prisoner thinking and talking and doing.

So how can we overcome the power of sin and rid our lives of its presence? Only by the power of the cross and the resurrection. There's much that can be said about this, but for now let's listen to the powerful testimony of the violent, murderous Pharisee who became the vibrant missionary Paul. (See the dramatic story of his conversion in Acts 9; see also Acts 13:9.)

In his testimony in Galatians 2 Paul reveals the basis of his change from persecutor to preacher: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me... I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

That's how an ex-con becomes a saint. And that's how God changes every one of us.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, we tremble in anticipation as we hear Paul's testimony. Help us to live in the faith that you can change us too. Amen.

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