



## NEW SHERIFF IN TOWN: “CHRIST LIVES IN ME.”

### “Aha” ... Now what will they do for a moral code?

What about all those sinners? All those people who believed to be justified but they still sin. Where do they get their moral code if they are dead to the law? What are they living by now if we remove the important moral guidelines of the law?

### Two things ...

**THING ONE:** Paul doesn't say that we no longer pay attention to the law or that the moral code is not helpful in our pursuit of righteousness. He says what he has said all along. The law cannot justify us. The law cannot make us right before God. Anyone who believes that the law can play such a significant role in a person's life does not understand the depravity of humans and the

infinite gap between spiritually dead people and a holy God.

**THING TWO:** Christ lives in me ... and you ... Yes. Christ in you and me, the hope of glory. Get that? The hope of glory. Our hope is God's promise. God's glory. Christ and Christ alone is our provision, and he will bring us to glory. The “new deal”—Christ living in me—is far superior to the “old deal”—me living under the law.

### New Covenant ... New Era ...

- (Galatians 2:20 ESV) 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.
- (Colossians 1:27 ESV) To them God

chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Eugene Peterson clearly and powerfully gives us the thought and flow of the tension in this text; a tension that each of us might honestly confront. That is—What happens if we are no longer “under the law”? Where is our moral grounding? This can be an honest (or at least okay) question initially; a genuine concern unless we cling to our fear and unbelief and refuse to accept God's instruction of his new way in Jesus Christ.

The problem with some of the Galatians was that they were not trusting the new covenant—justified by faith alone—to do what God said he would do.

They wanted to go back to the old, failed way—the covenant that was never intended to save—to (by human effort) try to keep God's holy law.

Guess what? Mission impossible. No wonder Paul erupts at the beginning of chapter three: “*O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?*”

### Eugene Peterson ...

We know very well that we are not set right with God by rule-keeping but only through personal faith in Jesus Christ. How do we know? We tried it—and we had the best system of rules the world has ever seen! Convinced that no human being can please God by self-improvement, we believed in Jesus as the Messiah so that we might be set right before God by trusting in the Messiah, not by trying to be good.

Have some of you noticed that we are not yet perfect? (No great surprise, right?) And are you ready to make the accusation that since people like me, who go through Christ in order to get things right with God, aren't perfectly virtuous, Christ must therefore be an accessory to sin? The accusation is frivolous.

If I was “trying to be good,” I would be rebuilding the same old barn that I tore down. I would be acting as a charlatan.

What actually took place is this: I tried keeping rules and working my head off to please God, and it didn't work. So I quit being a “law man” so that I could be God's man.

Christ's life showed me how, and enabled me to do it. I identified myself completely with him. 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. Is it not clear to you that to go back to that old rule-keeping, peer-pleasing religion would be an abandonment of everything personal and free in my relationship with God? I refuse to do that, to repudiate God's grace. If a living relationship with God could come by rule-keeping, then Christ died unnecessarily.

*(Galatians 2:16–21 The Message)*