

Center of Life

Prov 4:23



23 Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.

Think about this passage for a minute, watch over your heart with diligence, how do you watch over your heart, and what does it mean that, from it...



“Flow the springs of life”

This is what is known as a paradox. The statement seems to be contradictory in its context and doesn't seem to make common sense.

A paradox is defined as...

Paradox



- 1 a tenet contrary to received opinion
- 2
 - a. a statement that is seemingly contradictory or opposed to common sense and yet is perhaps true
 - b. a self-contradictory statement that at first seems true
 - c. an argument that apparently derives self-contradictory conclusions by valid deduction from acceptable premises
- 3 One (as a person, situation, or action) having seemingly contradictory qualities or phases

We see then that while the passage talks about our heart, it is in reality talking about the center or the core of our beliefs, those things that we base our decisions on, the ethos that we choose to guide us. What might be understood as our... 

Gal 2:20



20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

There seem to be a number of these self-contradictions in this passage...



1) 'I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live.'



2) 'Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'



3) 'The life which I live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God.'

How can a man be crucified and still live, how is it that I no longer live but Christ lives in me, or how can I live a life in the flesh...

1 Peter 3:18 7

18 For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;

The concepts in **Gal 2** are the foundation of the attitude that the Christian should have. The Christian needs to understand that the cross is indeed a cross of death. Not just the physical and spiritual death of Jesus, but also the death of the Old Law, the death of the penalty of sin, the beginning death of the hold that Satan had on this world and man. The death at the cross represents the path that God put in place for man to come back to Him.

The death of Jesus paid the price that is required by the sins of man.

Rom 5:12 8

12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.

Through sin physical death came into the world and all men must die physically.

Heb 9:27 9

27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,

Jesus also paid the price of spiritual death, being separated from God, so that man would have the opportunity to be saved from his sin. Christ's death on the cross fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Law and separated man, death, from its requirements. His sacrifice put to death the penalty of sin, and His resurrection broke the hold that Satan had on this world. The cross was indeed a cross of death for many things and, now the paradox, the cross was even more so a cross of life, becoming, in fact, the symbol of the very... 10

Which brings us to the first of our paradoxes...

11 **1)** 'I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live.'

I have been crucified, put to death, yet in Christ I live. Paul gives us some insight into this idea in...

Eph 2:16-18 12

16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. **17** And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; **18** for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.

The sacrifice of Christ put to death the enmity that was between man and God because of sin. Sin separates man from God and the sacrifice of Christ reconciled man with God, brought them back together, doing away with the enmity caused by sin.

As always, man must make a choice, the choice to live or die.

2 Tim 2:11-13 13

11 It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him; **12** If we endure, we shall also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; **13** If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.

Life can be found when we die to sin and live to eternal life with Christ. But notice that when we deny Christ, He will deny us.

1 Thess 5:9-10 14

9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, **10** who died for us, that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him.

The first paradox is; how is it possible to live by dying? Yet the truth of the matter is that we can only truly live only by dying. Paul tells us that in...

Gal 6:14 15

14 But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

We see that same idea in...

Gal 5:24 16

24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

When we crucify, put to death the flesh, its passions, and its lusts, then we can begin to live and that is what we see in the second paradox...

17 **2)** 'Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'

Rom 7:4-6 18

4 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God. **5** For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. **6** But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

Christ can live in us, He can live in all who choose to let Him. If we allow our lusts and the things of this world to be our guide, to be the pattern we live our lives by, then we are dead and the fruit we bear is death. But, when we die to that which we are bound, sin, then, we live in the Spirit.

Paul makes that very statement in...

Rom 8:6 19

6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,

Christ lives in us when we live in the Spirit and we live in the Spirit when we live in the truth. John says that in...

1 John 5:7

20

7 And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is the truth.

Christ sent the Spirit to lead the Apostles into all truth, the truth that sets man free from his sin and guides him into life.

The life that the Christian is to live...

21

3) 'The life which I live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God.'

The paradox, the element of contradiction from our text in Galatians is a set of building blocks.

I die, yet I live, but it isn't I that lives, but Christ somehow lives in me, and Christ lives in me by my faith in the Son of God, and the truth that reveals Him.

This is not a new idea, it has been around since the creation. Abel's sacrifice was more acceptable because he offered it by faith.

The Psalmist writes...

Ps 85:13

22

13 Righteousness will go before Him, And will make His footsteps into a way.

When one chooses to act by faith, to follow the ways of righteousness then his path will be set.

Rom 1:16-17

23

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous man shall live by faith."

Paul makes clear the point that the Gospel is the power that God uses to accomplish salvation and in it the righteousness of God is revealed resulting in faith and if a man chooses to live righteously he will live by faith in that Gospel.

The Gospel is the good news of Christ and man's responsibility to that good news is...

Acts 8:37

24

37 And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

That is the final building block in our list of seeming contradictions, almost...

2 Cor 13:5

25

5 Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you, unless indeed you fail the test?

26

4) Test yourselves, unless you fail the test.

Funny thing about faith and our obedience to the truth, all too often we either fail to see or can't see where we are as individuals in it. No matter how we approach the righteousness of God

and His word, it keeps coming back to the choices we make. God will not force man to obey or to have the right attitude, neither will He overlook disobedience. It is our responsibility to...

Phil 2:12

27

12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;

The test is in our hands, God's Word, it is up to us to measure, test, ourselves against it, it is our responsibility to come to God, not the other way around. We have every opportunity to live in Christ and He in us if we will but make the right choice.

Brethren when we come to God, He will...

Eph 2:4-6

28

4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, **5** even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), **6** and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus,

The real paradox is why, when faced with the truth that is God, man doesn't make God the Center of his Life by coming to God through Christ and being...

29

1) 'I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live.'

By understanding the concept that...

2) 'Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'

By recognizing that...

3) 'The life which I live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God.'

And disciplining ourselves by...

4) Test yourselves, unless you fail the test.