



Walking the Way of the Cross with Paul

SESSION 1

The old is gone. The new is here!

Goals for the Session

- Introduce this six-week Lenten study
- Discuss what it means to live in a new creation because of the crucified Messiah
- Consider the crucified Jesus as the hidden wisdom of God

Preparing for the Session

- At the beginning of your preparations, take some time to pray for the members of the group, individually and as a group, and for yourself.
- Distribute the handout for the session (by e-mail attachment or as a printed copy) well enough in advance to have read it *before* coming to the session. Encourage group participants strongly to read the handout before the session, since this is the information on which the group sessions will be based. Also encourage them to read the biblical passages mentioned in the handout. It will be difficult for people to benefit from each session without reading this material.
- Lent is, among other things, a journey on the way of the cross, learning how to appropriate Christ's teaching about "taking up the cross" for ourselves. These six sessions look at how Paul sought to do that in his life. Some people may find Lent, the cross, and/or Paul himself a difficult or sensitive topic, for a variety of reasons. You may have your own ambiguities about some or all of these topics. Therefore, take some time before the study

Session at a Glance

OPENING

- Prayer
- Approaching Paul

EXPLORING

- The old and the new
- True confession

RESPONDING

- Practices for Lent

CLOSING

- Preparing for the next session
- Closing prayer

begins to sort through your own feelings (your emotional responses) and opinions (your ideas) on these issues. The feelings are at least as important as the ideas. This does not mean you need to resolve every problem and feel completely unambiguous about the whole topic. If you are wrestling with an issue along with the group, it helps the group realize that it is all right to have some struggles.

- As participants learn about Paul's understanding of the cross, encourage them to keep a journal and write in it during time between sessions. Each session (after this first one which does not

assume participants have read the material) will have a time for brief reflection and reaction to the handout, and during the Responding time there will be a chance for volunteers to share thoughts they have about the cross. Consider preparing journals for each participant or making them as a group in preparation of this study.

- Some terms and concepts in the participant handout, such as “eschatology,” may be unfamiliar and require some study on your part before the session so that you can answer participants’ questions. A good, up-to-date Bible dictionary or introduction to the Bible is a good source of information about this and other topics. You may even want to consult a commentary on some of the passages covered in the session, particularly 2 Corinthians 5:14–17.
- Bring at least one Bible to the session, preferably the New Revised Standard Version or Today’s *New International Version* (since their translations of 2 Cor. 5:14–17 are in line with the presentation in the handout). Encourage participants to bring their Bibles as well.
- Select a hymn or prayer to be used at the beginning of each of the six sessions (see activity 1 under Opening below). Some suggestions you might use are listed under Suggested Prayers and Hymns at the end of this guide, but feel free to choose your own.
- Always arrive at the meeting room a good fifteen minutes before the session to make sure that there are enough chairs and everything is set up the way you want it. For most of the sessions, you will need a board or newsprint available.

Materials Needed

- Bibles
- Board or newsprint
- Markers
- Pens or pencils
- Extra copies of today’s Participant Handout for visitors
- Copies of next week’s Participant Handout (if you do not e-mail it to participants as an attachment)

Teaching Tips

This first session covers quite a bit of ground, so be prepared, if necessary, to keep the group mov-

ing along. On the other hand, of course, if the group seems to tap into something that is particularly important to the participants, try to allow an opportunity for it to be adequately explored. It can be difficult to walk the line between letting people have their say and keeping the group on topic. If you know the group and its habits well, you’ll be able to judge how things are going and whether people need a nudge either to open up or to return to the subject. You may want to call on some people who are less eager to speak up, or find other ways of getting them involved. If you are not well acquainted with the group or if its members do not know each other well, be patient and give yourself and others time to get comfortable. But if necessary, exercise your responsibility as group leader to keep things on track and prevent more assertive participants from dominating the group. Your main tasks are to be prepared to lead the discussions and to create an environment that is hospitable and welcoming for people to participate.

The handout recognizes that Paul can be a controversial figure for some people, and one of the activities will give people a chance to air their admiration for Paul or their skepticism about him. You may hear opinions that are sharply opposed to one another, and to your own ideas and feelings. It’s important to allow room for all shades of opinion to be expressed, without letting this topic take over the entire session. The main key is *respect*. Even if you know the group well, do not assume, and do not let the group assume, that everyone in the group has the same feelings and opinions about Paul (and the same is true for the meaning of suffering and the cross). Be respectful of everyone’s responses, and encourage everyone to say what they think but to do so in a way that respects others’ ideas and feelings.

Opening (10 minutes)

1. Prayer

To help create continuity and focus throughout this study, choose a prayer or hymn *focused on the cross* that is consistent with the worship traditions of your group. Use this prayer or hymn to open each of the six sessions, and encourage the participants to use it in their personal devotions between sessions.

2. Approaching Paul

Invite participants to offer words or short phrases that express their images and opinions of Paul. Emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers and that it's to be expected that people will respond in different ways to a strong figure like Paul.

Teaching Tip: Some may find it hard to keep their expressions brief; some may not wish to say anything. Don't force anyone to talk, but do encourage people to summarize a long thought in a single phrase. Depending on the group and the setting, you may want to keep this completely oral or write responses on the board.

Once everyone has had a chance to speak, try to arrange the various opinions and images in two or three categories as a group.

Finish by encouraging people to bring an open mind to this study of Paul and to allow their existing conceptions of him to interact with both the readings from his letters and the ideas of others in the group.

Exploring (20 minutes)

3. The Old and the New

Have two volunteers read aloud Galatians 6:14–15 and 2 Corinthians 5:14–17. (Use the New Revised Standard Version or *Today's New International Version*, especially for the 2 Cor. passage.) As they read, prepare two pieces of newsprint or two columns on a chalkboard or whiteboard, one headed "World/Flesh" and the other headed "New Creation." After the readings are finished, refer to the discussion in the handout (or go over the topic in your own words) about *sarx*, the Greek word for "flesh" that many Bible versions translate in terms of a "human" or "worldly" point of view. Remind the group that when Paul says "flesh," he is not just talking about the body but about the self-centeredness and resistance to love that often characterizes human life.

Next invite the participants to name specific behaviors or attitudes to place under the heading of "World/Flesh." Don't let them stop with just sexual or other bodily sins! If they need a push, have someone read the "works of the flesh" in Galatians 5:19–21a. Write responses under "World/Flesh."

Teaching Tip: Encourage the group to think in terms of today's world and their lives, not just in biblical lists.

Once that list has been filled out, move to the "New Creation" column and do the same. Again, encourage participants to think in terms of contemporary life and to go beyond the physical to social, economic, and other practices and attitudes. Don't censor their suggestions; just write them down for the group to process.

After a few minutes ask the group: What is it, in Paul's view, that gets us from one side to the other, from the world/flesh to the new creation?

Refer them back to the texts in Galatians and 2 Corinthians if necessary. Obvious answers include the cross, being "in Christ," and God's grace. The group may come up with others as well, but these should be the goal.

4. True Confession

Form small groups of three to five participants (if the group is already small, you won't need to do this). Say: Lent traditionally has to do with reflection on one's spiritual life and aims at transformation and spiritual growth. In that spirit, I invite everyone to share in your small group either (1) something about the "new creation" that you tend to resist or (2) something to do with the "world/flesh" that you have a hard time giving up. These can be items that are already posted on the written lists, but they do not have to be.

Teaching Tip: No one needs to embarrass his or herself in this. The "confessions" will not be shared beyond the small group, but nevertheless this brief exercise is *not* the place for revealing things that ought to be kept confidential. Try to keep the atmosphere thoughtful and sincere, not superficial, but without raising expectations that deep, dark secrets will be exposed.

Responding (10 minutes)

5. Practices for Lent

Invite the participants to choose *one* of the following two practices to use throughout the six weeks of Lent (and this study). Let them know that they will have opportunities, on a voluntary basis, to share with the group what they discover through their practice.

Journal: Keep a journal (with at least two entries each week, if not an entry every day) in which you reflect on how your understanding of the way of the cross develops over the course of the study series and on how this developing understanding affects your life. Begin by

reflecting on your current understanding of the cross and on its relation to your own life and to the lives of Christians whom you admire (they might be personal acquaintances or people you know through books or other media).

Discipline: Choose a specific *physical* discipline that draws on values related to the cross. “Physical,” in this context, essentially means something that you do, not something that is just verbal or mental. Examples might include the following: fasting; working with and for the needy; working for justice or peace; visiting the sick or imprisoned; intercessory prayer (praying *with and alongside* people, not just praying *for* them); reconciliation.

Teaching Tip: Participants may choose other options, of course; and you may have ideas of your own to present that are consistent with the nature, traditions, and experience of the group. Some caution needs to be exercised. People with health issues should not fast without a doctor’s approval, for instance. “Reconciliation” can mean helping people to be reconciled to one another or seeking reconciliation with people in one’s own life, but this should be attempted *only with considerable thought and prayer*, making sure that the people involved will welcome the overture. The discipline does not have to be chosen on the spot during this session, but do encourage those who want to take up such a discipline to select and begin it during the coming week, rather than waiting until late in Lent to begin.

Closing (5 minutes)

6. Preparing for the Next Session

Distribute the handout for the next session, and encourage people both to read it carefully and to study the passages from Paul to which it refers. Remind them to keep a journal or do some spiritual activity that they will discuss next session.

7. Closing Prayer

God of mercy and compassion, as we enter the season of Lent, we become mindful of the suffering of Jesus and of what his love for us led him to endure. Help us, as we seek to deepen our understanding of the meaning of his cross, to grow both in insight and in courage to walk with him, for it is in his name we pray. **Amen.**

Teaching Alternatives

- If people have not read the handout and you prefer that they do, allow fifteen minutes of silence after the opening activities to let them read it. Either choose activities in this Leader’s Guide that your group will enjoy or hold a general discussion for the Exploring time.
- The notion of Christianity as “new creation” may strike some group participants as a breath of fresh air, and others as surprising or puzzling. Organize a discussion or even a debate about the extent to which Christianity is dramatically new and the extent to which it is conservative and traditional. Use your best judgment about whether this would be appropriate for your group. If there are sharp disagreements, or people who tend to disagree sharply, it might lead to more personal conflict than is desirable. But if participants are able to “disagree without being disagreeable” or if there is a range of opinions without a sense of antagonism among the people who hold them, this can be a thought-provoking exercise.
- Put on a simple skit about the “mystery” of Christian belief. Let half the group take the role of first-century Christians and the other half the role of non-Christians. The Christian group will explain to the non-Christians what it is that they believe, under the heading of having a “mystery” to unfold. This doesn’t need elaborate staging, just enough space for the two groups to interact. Allow a few minutes for each group to organize and prepare. In particular, the Christian group will need to use 1 Corinthians 2 to decide what is “mysterious” about Christianity, what makes it strange and hard to grasp. That is what they will try to communicate to the other group.

Suggested Prayers and Hymns

There are many possibilities for the prayer or hymn to be used at the beginning of every session. One well-known prayer comes from St. Francis of Assisi:

May the power of your love, Lord Christ, fiery and sweet as honey, so absorb our hearts as to withdraw them from all that is under heaven. Grant that we may be ready to die for love of your love, as you died for love of our love. **Amen.**

Another originates with a thirteenth-century English saint, Richard, Bishop of Chichester:

Lord Jesus Christ, I thank thee for all the blessings thou hast given me, and for all the sufferings and shame thou didst endure for me, on which account that pitiable cry of sorrow was thine: "Behold and see, if there was any sorrow like unto My sorrow!" Thou knowest, Lord, how willing I should be to bear insult, and pain, and death for thee; therefore have mercy on me, for to thee do I commend my spirit. **Amen.**

In modern times it has been adapted in this form:

Thanks be to you, our Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits which you have given us, for all the pains and insults which you have borne for us. Most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may we know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day. **Amen.**

The Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer* offers this:

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. **Amen.**

Of course, there are countless other possibilities. You or your church library may have prayer books and other resources that can help you find a suitable prayer for your group. (Some of the above examples

are taken or adapted from George Appleton, ed., *The Oxford Book of Prayer* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1985], which also has other possibilities.) You may wish to write a short prayer yourself, or invite someone who will be in the group and has a gift for writing to do so.

Familiar hymns focused on Jesus' suffering include:

- Beneath the Cross of Jesus
- O Sacred Head, Now Wounded
- Were You There When They Crucified My Lord
- Go to Dark Gethsemane
- In the Cross of Christ I Glory
- When I Survey the Wondrous Cross
- Ah, Holy Jesus
- Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross

Key Scriptures

1 Corinthians 2

2 Corinthians 5:14–17

Galatians 5:16–24

Galatians 6:14–15

For More Information

A fairly accessible technical study of the overall significance of Paul's theology of the cross is:

Michael J. Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).



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Introduction

The apostle Paul has often been considered a controversial figure in early Christianity, especially in modern times. For some, he is the dynamic visionary who transformed Christianity from a Jewish sect into a universal religion; for others, he is the arrogant usurper who turned the simple spirituality of Jesus into a complex creedal religion. Some see him as a radical proponent of the idea that faith alone can act as the means of putting everyone, without distinction, on an equal footing with God; some, in stark contrast, see him as an irascible misogynist or an authoritarian despot determined to impose his will on all who wish to be saved.

Paul's own complex and sometimes contradictory writings are partly responsible for his mixed image. Yet at the heart of his difficult texts (and difficult life) was a simple but potent realization: God had sent Israel a crucified Messiah. This key recognition transformed Paul's entire understanding of God's ways and of the human response to them. It made the cross of Christ central to his unfolding of what it means to believe in God and of what it means to live a life conditioned by that belief. It placed self-sacrificing love at the foundation and the core of Paul's view of God, his own apostolic ministry, and Christian life overall.

Lent is, among other things, a journey on the way of the cross—a journey of learning how to appropriate Christ's teaching about "taking up the cross" (Mark 8:34–35) for ourselves. This six-session study will look at how one early Christian missionary, teacher, and theologian sought to do just that in his work and in his life. We will

Paul uses "the flesh" as a metaphor for the self-centeredness and resistance to love for God and other people in which human beings and human societies are inclined to live.

examine a number of passages in Paul's letters in order to reflect on the place of the cross in Christian lives today. We will consider Paul's statements about the cross and its implications not only in themselves but in relation to his practice—including areas where he seems to us to have had difficulty living up to his own ideals. The aim is to invite you into Lenten reflection and practice centered on the cross of Christ, guided by Paul's own incorporation of the cross into his spirituality. You will have an opportunity to reflect on your own practices of Christian spirituality and ethics in the light of the experience, teaching, and faith of the apostle Paul.

Some passages we will consider explicitly present Paul's cross-centered spirituality and its consequences for the lives of individuals and the church as a whole. Other passages will develop these consequences more

indirectly. In this first session, we'll look at the key theme of new creation and how it relates to the crucified Messiah. In the following sessions, we'll see how central the cross was to Paul's mission and message—how it conditioned his understanding of Jesus, how he saw the crucifixion of the Messiah as transformative for himself and all believers, and how he saw this transformation affect human relationships and behavior. As you prepare for each of these sessions, be sure to read the passages from Paul carefully and refer back to them as often as necessary.

New Creation

In Galatians 6:14–15, Paul speaks mysteriously of the world being crucified to him and he to the world. This happens, he says, by means of the cross of Christ. Paul seems to be saying that because of Jesus' crucifixion, he no longer relates to the world—the whole organized system of beings, natural and supernatural, plant and animal, and especially human beings—in the way that he once did. It is in some sense dead to him, even though he, along with everything and everyone else, goes on living.

We'll give more consideration to this puzzling declaration in session 4. For now we may note that here Paul rejects the claim that Gentile men who become Christians must be circumcised and that all Gentile converts must keep at least some parts of the Torah.¹ These requirements belong to that world to which believers are now dead. The distinction between circumcision and its absence now means nothing; all that counts is living in the "new creation."

Paul associates spiritual participation in the cross of Christ with dying out of the existing world and beginning life again in a new creation. The cross brings the believer not only to a kind of death but to a new life as well. This life is not only a matter of interior transformation and changed relationship with God but also a life visibly lived out in the material and social spheres. This visible transformation can be seen in the outlines of the new life that Paul presents as the "fruit of the Spirit" in Galatians 5:22–24, a crop that grows in those who have "crucified the flesh." This new life in the Spirit is lived within a framework of communal unity that transcends ethnic, social, and even gender divisions (Gal. 3:27–28, a baptismal formula). These are the ways of living that, for Paul, are implied in being "crucified to the world."

The new has come. What Paul means by "new creation" can be seen in more detail in 2 Corinthians 5:14–17. For all the complexity of this passage, Paul's fundamental realization is that out of sheer love, "one died for all." From this he concludes, first, that "all have died"—it is as if everyone has died in the death of the Messiah. Second, having thus "died," the people who do in fact go on living, do so not for themselves alone but for the one who died and was raised for them. The same kind of things Paul says about himself being "crucified to the world" in Galatians he now applies in 2 Corinthians to all human beings. They live—we live—but in a way that has been transformed because of the death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah.

In this transformed life it is no longer possible to know, regard, or understand anyone in the old manner—the manner of the world to which we, like Paul, have been crucified. Paul uses a number of terms to refer to that world. In 2 Corinthians 5:16 he uses the Greek word *sarx*, literally "flesh." Bible translations today, seeking to avoid misunderstanding, often translate *sarx* in terms of a "human" or "worldly" point of view. This is a good reminder that when Paul says "flesh," he is not just talking about the body. Consider the "works of the flesh" that are opposed to the "fruit of the Spirit" in Galatians 5:16–24—not many of the actions listed in verses 19–21 are directly connected to the body. Rather, Paul uses "the flesh" as a metaphor for the self-centeredness and resistance to love for God and other people in which human beings and human societies are inclined to live. Therefore "flesh" and sin (not just particular sinful acts, but sin as a force in human life) are closely connected in Romans 7. In Romans 8 and Galatians 5, "flesh" is contrasted with the Spirit, so that the two ideas become two powers that bring about actions that are either opposed or conformed to the will of God.

According to 2 Corinthians 5:16, Paul had once evaluated even Christ in accordance with the worldview of "the flesh." By ordinary human standards, Jesus had failed. What could be a bigger failure than crucifixion for one who was supposed to be the Messiah, the liberator of God's people from such oppression? When Paul converted to the belief that the crucified Jesus of Nazareth actually was the Messiah, then everything went up for grabs. A whole new system of values and expectations, including expectations about God and God's purposes, came into play. The crucified Messiah could no longer

be understood according to the ordinary human value system that puts self-interest ahead of everything else. God's values, it now seems, are grounded in a love so unreserved that it is willing to put the good of others, even of enemies, ahead of one's own well-being, even one's own survival. Now nothing and no one can ever be looked at in the same way again.

The entire "fleshly," self-centered, and self-preserving way of life is gone; a new world has come into existence. It is not just that individuals are "born again." Many Bible translations still render 2 Corinthians 5:17 in terms of one person becoming a "new creature." But Paul has something much larger in view here: the transformation

of a new heaven and a new earth, inhabited by a human race renewed in the image of God.

When the first Christians proclaimed Jesus as Messiah (an eschatological title), they were continuing this vision but also transforming it. Their message implied that the reign of God had begun and that changed forms of human life were to be expected as a result. But if a crucified man was the Messiah, the triumphalism of eschatological hope was being turned upside-down. The Christian claims that the Messiah had come, and that resurrection, the outpouring of the Spirit, and ethical renewal had happened fit in with traditional eschatological expectation. The initiation of all this by the crucifixion and resurrection of the

Messiah did not. Paul (and others) realized that belief in the crucified Messiah gave a different complexion to the entire eschatological vision. It was not just about victory and prosperity for the faithful but about suffering for the sake

The vision of the "end times" was . . . a vision of a new heaven and a new earth, inhabited by a human race renewed in the image of God.

of the whole world, starting with Christian believers. The translations in the NRSV ("there is a new creation") and in *Today's New International Version* (TNIV) ("the new creation has come") capture this well. In the new creation, old social barriers are thrust aside (Gal. 3:27–28) and old patterns of living are abandoned in favor of the Spirit's impulses toward love (Gal. 5:16–24).

"The old has gone, the new is here!" (2 Cor. 5:17b, TNIV): this declaration goes to the heart of Paul's understanding of what Christianity is, of what Christian faith implies. It is new creation, the realization (at least in a preliminary form) of God's long-held desire for the world and especially its human inhabitants. This is one aspect of what theologians call "eschatology," teaching about the "end times" or the "last things." This terminology can be a bit misleading. In ancient Jewish thought, as adopted by the early Christians, this "eschatology" was not just about an end but about a new beginning. The expectation was that God would intervene in the world not only to save Israel from its enemies but to begin a new age of justice and righteousness, people living in accordance with God's desires. This is what Jesus meant by the "kingdom" or the "reign of God." The vision of the "end times" was not one of worldwide collapse and destruction, nor one of rapture to an eternity in the skies; rather, it was a vision

of others, giving up one's own interests to secure other people's good: it was about love.

The love of Christ urges us on . . . one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died so that those who live might live no longer for themselves. . . . We regard no one from a human point of view . . . in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! (2 Cor. 5:14–17)

The way of the cross, for Paul, is the way of new creation, a way of death that is a way of life, a way of life that is one of living and dying for others. Christ's love, grounded in God's love, is the root of it all; and the fruit is the believers' love for others.

The Mystery of God

In 1 Corinthians 2, Paul is reminding the Corinthians about the nature of the gospel message he had preached to them. It was, he says, "the mystery of God." A "mystery" was something secret, oftentimes a Greek religious cult that involved special initiations into rituals and teachings that were not to be disclosed to outsiders. The Jewish sect that produced the Dead Sea Scrolls also spoke of the "mysteries of God" with reference to the secrets of destiny and the sect's own teachings.

In speaking of “mystery,” Paul emphasizes God’s hidden wisdom, something that is not open and obvious to ordinary human sight and insight, something initially known only to God. Now, however (and in stark contrast to the Greek and Essene mysteries), this mystery has been openly revealed by God’s own Spirit and is being further revealed by the gospel proclamation. What is this hidden wisdom of God, so inaccessible to ordinary human thinking? It is identical with the one thing that Paul says he kept in his awareness as he preached: “Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2). The possibility of a crucified Messiah was certainly something that had not crossed people’s minds before. The very fact that it goes against the grain of human thinking and expectation is what makes it clear that the crucified and risen Christ is a revelation of God’s mysterious wisdom.

Toward the end of 1 Corinthians 2, Paul speaks of “spiritual things” and “spiritual people.” “Spirituality” is a hot topic today, and this seems to be the first place in Christian literature where the word “spiritual” is used. But what does Paul mean? Most basically, by “spiritual” he means something that is associated with God’s Spirit. Hence “spiritual things” can be understood only by those who are “spiritual” (in the sense of being connected with the Spirit themselves), because these things are taught by the Spirit. To “have the mind of Christ” (2:16) is to have learned what the Holy Spirit teaches. And this brings us back around to the beginning of 1 Corinthians 2, for the mind of Christ is the mind of the crucified Christ. That is why “spiritual things” are not comprehensible to ordinary human wisdom, why they seem foolish to those who lack this Spirit, this Mind. (We will see more about the connection of wisdom and folly to the cross in the next session.) For Paul, “spirituality” is rooted in what the Holy Spirit teaches. The gifts of this Spirit are part of the eschatological activity unleashed by the sending of

God’s Messiah. Therefore what the Spirit teaches and brings about in the Christian community will always be in accord with the crucified Messiah. Paul’s spirituality is always a spirituality of the cross.

Conclusion

The crucifixion of the Messiah represents something new and radically different from standard social and cultural wisdom. It represents a whole new system of values and a whole new way of living. For Paul, Christianity is never “that old time-religion” or a timeless ethical or spiritual philosophy. It is new creation, brought into being by the unprecedented act of God in the crucified Messiah. With the coming of the Messiah, the end times have begun; but with the crucifixion of the Messiah, those end times and the new world that they usher in have taken an unexpected turn. The justice and righteousness that God has always desired from human beings comes into new focus through the lens of self-giving love, laying down one’s life for the sake of the one who laid down his life for us and for the sake of the human race that he loved so much. To walk the way of the cross is to live in this brand-new world.

About the Writer

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Endnote

1. I use the Hebrew word “Torah” rather than “law” because the issue is not simply legalism or obedience to a set of rules. “Torah” means “teaching,” and the Torah is, so to speak, the owner’s manual for relationship with God under the covenant graciously given by God to the Jewish people. Torah defines what it means to live within that relationship. The applicability of this definition to non-Jews who converted to the new Jewish sect called “Christianity” was the issue that Paul was debating.