

Dead to the World

Description

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Colossians 2:16-23

If we are to become the persons God created us to be, the persons we imagine we are must “die.”

Paul was a zealous, self-righteous persecutor of the followers of the crucified Messiah when he met the risen Christ on the Damascus Road (Galatians 1:13-17; Philippians 3:4-6). The old Paul “died” when he realized he, too, was a sinner, just like the pagans he had despised.

“Dead” with Christ, Paul no longer cared about the opinions of his peers. For all practical purposes, he and the world were “dead” to one another (Galatians 6:14; 2:20). The people, ideas, and systems that resisted God’s new creation no longer mattered. So he accepted God’s call to preach the gospel to pagans—what God had created him to do (1:15).

The legal regulations that once maintained strict separation between Jews and non-Jews had been revoked in the cross of Christ. So Paul urged pagan converts not to imagine they could become better Christians by adopting Jewish customs: “These are a shadow . . . ; the reality, however, is found in Christ” (Colossians 2:17).

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