

Life Group Greek

Lesson 14 – The Genitive Case and the Faith of Christ

INTRODUCTION

The Faith of Christ

In the fall of 1980, I sat under Dr. Harvey Floyd for Greek class at David Lipscomb College (now University). His knowledge of Greek was unsurpassed on campus and in much of the scholastic world.

In addition to Greek, I had Dr. Floyd for a number of other Bible classes. Dr. Floyd was a remarkable professor. Back then, the Bible Department at Lipscomb was different than it is now. The Bible professors were instructed to teach out of either the King James Version or the American Standard Version. Students, on the other hand, were welcome to use whatever version they chose. Dr. Floyd always avoided any controversy of versions by having students read the verses being studied. That way if Dr. Floyd liked the translation of the NIV better on some certain passage, he could call on a student with an NIV to read it. Should Dr. Floyd wish to make a point made by the Revised Standard, he would call on a student with that version.

I still remember when one student challenged Dr. Floyd because Dr. Floyd read a Romans passage from his own Bible and the words did not precisely follow either the King James or the American Standard. The student proudly produced both versions and demanded Dr. Floyd answer his question, “Dr. Floyd, are you violating school policy? Just what version are you teaching from?”

Dr. Floyd replied, “Ah, that is not such a simple question to answer. Perhaps you could help here. Why don’t you come up before this class and tell them the version I am using. Yes, I think that would be most helpful. You come answer your own question for me!”

The student marched up to the podium, flipped open the now closed Bible and with a puzzled look on his face, began trying to figure out how to answer his own question. For Dr. Floyd, in the years I knew him, never read nor taught from any translation of the New Testament. Dr. Floyd always used only the Greek. As the student finally muttered, “Uh, I guess this is the Greek,” Dr. Floyd looked out to

the class and said, “Yes, I guess we should say I am using Paul’s version. Would that be okay with you? Are you okay if we teach with Paul’s version?”

This experience likely prompted me to think of teaching this series. It allows us to enjoy looking into our versions a bit more deeply to better discern insights available only when considering Paul’s version.

THE ISSUE

Our agenda for this class centers on a phrase Paul used over and over again. Seven times in six verses Paul writes about the “faith of Christ.” Does Paul mean our faith *in* Christ or does he mean the faith that Christ has? Greek scholars and theologians around the globe are debating this issue. We join that debate today!

GREEK LESSON

Dr. Floyd knew his Greek through and through. So, we go back to Greek class in the fall of 1980. Dr. Floyd was discussing a Greek grammar issue related to the ambiguity of translating certain Greek nouns with “of.” The passage he was explaining was 2 Corinthians 5:14.

For the **love of Christ** controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died.

Look carefully at the phrase I have bolded. What is the “love of Christ” that controls us? Is it my “love for Christ”? I can speak of the “love of Becky” that certainly affects my behavior. Because I love my wife, I treat her differently, and I honor our marriage around others. Or does Paul mean “Christ’s love” for me? In that sense I can write of the “love of Becky” that shows itself in the way she treats me. Because Becky loves me, she treats me in ways she wouldn’t otherwise.

This is an ambiguity in the 2 Corinthians passage. Was Paul’s behavior controlled by Paul’s love for Christ or by Christ’s love for Paul?

Paul used the same phrase in Romans 8:35,

Who shall separate us from the **love of Christ**? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

Here is the ambiguity: Does Paul mean:

1. Who shall separate us from our love for Jesus? Or,
2. Who shall separate us from Jesus' love for us?

The “of” could mean either one. Similarly, I could speak of the revelation *of* Jesus Christ and we could fairly ask whether I am speaking of a revelation that reveals Jesus Christ, like that Paul had on the road to Damascus. Or, I could be speaking of a revelation that comes from Jesus Christ, like that given to John on Patmos.

In Greek, as in Latin, there is a way of putting an ending on nouns that tells you how the noun functions in a sentence. In English, we generally accomplish this by word order. We can say the cow ate the cabbage, and by putting “cow” first, we make it the subject doing the eating. The cabbage, after the verb, is the direct object; it is what is eaten. The Greek language did not use word order, but instead accomplished this by adding endings to the words. There was an ending that tells you if the noun is the subject and a different ending if the noun is the direct object. In Greek, the words could go in any order you choose. You could write “cabbage ate cow” and as long as you had the endings right, the reader would understand the cow was the one eating the cabbage.

One of the types of endings for nouns in the Greek is called the “genitive” ending (actually the “genitive case form” is the phrase used). This is the ending that is typically translated as “of.”¹ When one studies Greek, one learns a number of different ways to translate the genitive endings with nouns. The genitive case, as it is called, generally operates to limit a noun. See in English how the nouns are limited by the follow up “genitive nouns” in my examples below:

- Texas Tech beat the University *of Texas*.
- I fell into a burning ring *of fire*.
- Becky is the love *of my life*.

Each bold italicized phrase would be a Greek genitive. It is put into English with “of.” It serves to limit the noun it modifies, so the “University” is limited or defined as the one of Texas. The burning ring is one of fire. The love is the one of my life. Many times, the limiting of the genitive makes the meaning obvious, as in the above examples. Unfortunately, there are also times where we are uncertain of the meaning of the genitive. Consider again the example used earlier:

For the **love of Christ** controls us...

¹ The genitive is used in ways that cannot always be translated with “of.” Sometimes it is used to express a comparison, a purpose, etc. Sometimes the noun is translated with “from” or “in” or “to.”

Do we mean our love for Jesus, or do we mean his love for us? This ambiguity can exist with the genitive case.

Now, we come to our problem of today's class. Paul writes in seven places about the "faith of Christ." In these passages, Paul does not mean just any faith; he limits it to the "faith *of Christ*." "Of Christ" is in the genitive case, meaning it limits or specifies the kind of faith Paul is referencing. The problem is that there is an ambiguity here. Does Paul mean the faith we have of Christ, in other words, faith *in* Christ? Or, does Paul mean Christ's faith, the faith that Christ has?

How does one go about deciding what the meaning is when the genitive case is used? First, scholars apply rules of Greek syntax to attempt to clarify the meaning. Many times, like here, those rules do not provide a final answer. In those times, scholars consider how the particular author uses the phrase or construction in other places. Additionally, scholars will carefully examine the context of the passage for any insight on the meaning. Then finally, the scholars will consider the theology involved to help understand the passage within the broader concepts of Biblical teaching.

Before we explore Paul's teaching on the "faith of Christ," let's see how these approaches help with our example from 2 Corinthians 5,

For the **love of Christ** controls us, because we have concluded this:
that one has died for all, therefore all have died.

First, we look at rules of syntax, but the genitive does not help us here. It leaves us with either option. Second, we consider other usages of Paul. So in our example of the "love of Christ," we find two additional Pauline passages, the Romans 8 passage set out earlier ("Who shall separate us from the **love of Christ**? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?"), and Ephesians 3:19 where Paul prays for the church to know

the **love of Christ** that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled
with all the fullness of God.

One can read these passages and fairly accurately deduce that Paul is speaking of the love that Jesus has. As to the Romans passage, I have found that, left to my own devices, many things can separate me from my love for Jesus. It is Jesus' love for me that nothing can interrupt! Similarly, Paul is not praying that the Ephesians would know their love FOR Jesus that surpasses knowledge, but rather the love Jesus has for them that surpasses knowledge.

We can see within the immediate context of 2 Corinthians 5 a clue that Paul means the love Christ has for us where we read the next phrasing, “because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all die.”

This fits theologically as well because the sacrificial death of Christ is the greatest showing of his love for us. Jesus said,

Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends (Jn. 15:13).

It is the love of Christ that controls us in that it produces in us a reciprocal love. We love him, because he first loved us (1 Jn. 4:19). It is “how we know love,” because “he laid down his life for us” (1 Jn. 3:16). As we love him, we follow his teaching (Jn. 14:15).

With this approach in mind, let us consider the Pauline passages on the “faith of Christ.”

PAUL’S PASSAGES

Because this is not a Greek class, our review of Paul’s seven passages today (actual seven occurrences in six verses) will not focus heavily on the Greek syntax or passages of similar usage. Instead, we will shift most of our focus on the theology and the implications of the various passages. First, let us set out the verses:

- **Romans 3:22 (Young's Literal Translation)** “and the righteousness of God [is] through the *faith of Jesus Christ* to all, and upon all those believing, -- for there is no difference,”
- **Romans 3:26 (Young's Literal Translation)** “For the shewing forth of His righteousness in the present time, for His being righteous, and declaring him righteous who [is] of the *faith of Jesus*.”
- **Galatians 2:16 (Young's Literal Translation)** “having known also that a man is not declared righteous by works of law, if not through the *faith of Jesus Christ*, also we in Christ Jesus did believe, that we might be declared righteous by the *faith of Christ*, and not by works of law, wherefore declared righteous by works of law shall be no flesh.”
- **Galatians 2:20 (King James Version)** “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the *faith of the Son of God*, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

- **Galatians 3:22 (Young's Literal Translation)** “but the Writing did shut up the whole under sin, that the promise by *faith of Jesus Christ* may be given to those believing.”
- **Philippians 3:9 (King James Version)** “And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the *faith of Christ*, the righteousness which is of God by faith:”

A related passage is found in Ephesians 3:12, “In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the *faith of him* [Jesus].”

You will notice that I have carefully put the various translations down for each passage. That is because these translations allow the reader to discern the way the genitive is used. Many other translations make that choice for you. Consider this verse in Young’s Literal Translation versus the English Standard Version and the New International Version (2011). You will see the choice made by the translators:

Romans 3:22		
Young's Literal Translation	English Standard Version	New International Version
“and the righteousness of God [is] through the <i>faith of Jesus Christ</i> to all, and upon all those believing, -- for there is no difference,”	“the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction:”	“This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile,”

In the Greek passages, there are three possible meanings behind Paul’s writing the “faith of Christ.” Paul could mean:

1. The believers faith *in* Christ (the “objective genitive”), which is the choice made by the translators of the ESV and NIV,
2. Christ’s perfect faith (the “subjective genitive”), or
3. Christ’s faithfulness (also a “subjective genitive”).

How do scholars, and how do we, determine what is the right meaning behind Paul? As mentioned earlier, the first step is analysis of the Greek syntax and writing style of Paul. This analysis is best left to serious Greek scholars. If one should want to read on this topic, a number of excellent Greek resources are available that come down on each side.²

² Consider as a principal source for the “subjective genitive” Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, (Zondervan 1996), at 114-116.

The review of Greek does not answer this question,³ so we are pressed to consider the context of the scriptures and the theology of the broader implications. On the context of the scriptures, we leave that, in this class, to everyone's self study. We suggest that some passages seem to make a bit more sense meaning faith *in* Christ while others make more sense as Christ's faithfulness/faith. Here, we must be careful which translations we use. Because, as we noted earlier, some do not even leave the reader the choice! Consider in this vein,

Romans 3:22 (King James Version) "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:"

Romans 3:22 (New International Version) "This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference,"

The King James Version allows the reader to decide if it is the righteousness of God which is by Christ's faith/faithfulness upon all who are themselves with faith or whether it is a redundancy or extra emphatic message that the righteousness of God is by faith in Jesus to all who have faith in Jesus. The NIV has decided it is the latter and does not give the reader the choice of the former.

Following our suggestion that the context is not determinative of this issue, we suggest the final course of action is the theological consideration. Here, we consider the three different possible meanings likely from Paul's writing.

1. Faith in Christ

The view that this passage is an objective genitive, and that it should be translated as "faith in Christ" was the dominant view, and almost the sole view, since Luther's reformation until the last 50 years.⁴ One reason this view reigned supreme for so long is its natural fit with the cry of Luther and other reformers in *sola fide* ("faith alone").⁵

Gordon D. Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Hendrikson Publishers, Inc. 2007).

³ I agree here with Cambridge scholar Morna Hooker in her Presidential Address of 1988, "the question is one which cannot be settled on the basis of appeals to grammatical construction alone." M. Hooker, ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ, *New Testament Studies*, vol. 35, 1989, p. 321.

⁴ *Ibid.* at 322.

⁵ See my lectures on Luther on the class website at www.biblical-literacy.com.

If we consider the passages themselves, and apply the genitive as one that is talking about the human's faith in Christ, then we can readily see why this view is consistent with most orthodoxy. In fact, many prominently used translations actually make this choice and translate the passages accordingly as we set out before with the Romans 3:22 passage. Consider the other passages. In each, the ESV and NIV have determined that Paul wrote of faith *in* Christ:

Romans 3:26

Young's Literal Translation

"For the showing forth of His righteousness in the present time, for His being righteous, and declaring him righteous who [is] of the *faith of Jesus*."

English Standard Version

"It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."

New International Version

"he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus."

Galatians 2:16

Young's Literal Translation

"having known also that a man is not declared righteous by works of law, if not through the *faith of Jesus Christ*, also we in Christ Jesus did believe, that we might be declared righteous by the *faith of Christ*, and not by works of law, wherefore declared righteous by works of law shall be no flesh."

English Standard Version

"know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified."

New International Version

"yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified."

Galatians 2:20

Young's Literal Translation

"with Christ I have been crucified, and live no more do I, and Christ doth live in me; and that which I now live in the flesh — in the faith I live of the Son of God, who did love me and did give himself for me;"

English Standard Version

"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. "

New International Version

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Galatians 3:22

Young's Literal Translation

"but the Writing did shut up the whole under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ may be given to those believing."

English Standard Version

"But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe."

New International Version

"But Scripture has locked up everything under the control of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe."

Philippians 3:9

Young's Literal Translation

"not having my righteousness, which [is] of law, but that which [is] through faith of Christ — the righteousness that is of God by the faith,"

English Standard Version

"and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—"

New International Version

"and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith."

From a theological perspective, such a view is certainly justified and consistent with Paul's statements in other places that, "For by grace you have been saved through faith" (Eph. 2:8).

In fact, some of these same verses at issue also make the point clear in follow-up phrases. Consider in this regard Romans 3:22, Paul says, "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe."

The phrasing “unto all and upon all them that believe” makes the same point as the objective genitive (“faith in Christ”). This is more clear when we remember that the Greek word being translated “faith” is simply the noun form of the Greek verb translated “believe.” In other words, Paul is saying that God’s righteousness is “by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them” that “exercise faith” or “believe.” This argument is advanced by some as a reason to consider the first reference by Paul to “faith of Christ” as referring to Christ’s faith/faithfulness. It removes the redundancy that exists if one believes Paul means, “faith in Christ to all who have faith.”

So, we are on safe ground theologically if we consider Paul to mean that one is to have faith *in* Christ. But what of the other options?

2. *Christ’s faith*

Over the last 50 years, more and more scholars have come to the conclusion that Paul is writing about Christ’s faith or Christ’s faithfulness. Either of these concepts are acceptable translations if one believes that Paul is using the genitive in a subjective sense, meaning the genitive noun (Christ) is the subject of the faith as opposed to the object in which one has faith. This is so much so that one scholar has written, “The correctness of the translation of πιστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as the ‘faith or faithfulness *of* Jesus Christ’ has by now been too well established to need any further support.”⁶ While I am not so sure Gaston is right about the “too well established” argument, I do see a dearth of modern scholarship arguing the propriety of the subjective genitive. So, we rightly address the view of “Christ’s faith/faithfulness,” but we do so in two pieces, first examining “Christ’s faith.”

A basic tenant of Christian orthodoxy is that Jesus lived a perfect sinless life. This concept extends to the precept that Christ’s righteousness in life, his perfection, is credited to the believer in faith. Writing in the early 1980’s, Australian Robert D. Brinsmead considered the implications to believers today. Brinsmead did not do a verse by verse consideration of these passages, but took as his key a different passage of Paul’s, Romans 1:16-17:

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. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

Brinsmead was asking the question, how much faith must one have to reach a threshold of “saving faith?” Brinsmead answered his question asserting that no

⁶ L Gaston, *Paul and the Torah* (Wipf & Stock Publishers 2006) at 12.

human, save Jesus, ever had perfect faith and trust in God. Brinsmead believed passages like the Romans one above taught that Christ had perfect faith and that human imperfect faith was never a problem. The perfect faith of Christ was given or attributed to the believer just as all other aspects of Christ's perfection were. This is the meaning Brinsmead argued for the Romans passage where Paul said, "the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith." Paul was saying, he asserts, that from the faith of Christ to the believer's faith.

Another way of understanding these passages as speaking of Christ's faith is in the sense that Christ became the "second Adam" as Paul taught. Adam was sinful; Jesus was righteous. Adam was untrusting (lacking faith); Jesus trusted fully (had perfect faith). This emphasis is not so much Brinsmead's view of the need for Christ's perfect faith to be attributed to imperfect believers. Rather, it is an effort to highlight Paul's doctrine that Christ was perfect in all measures before God.

3. Christ's faithfulness

Another aspect to understanding of the subjective genitive view is that Paul is writing about Christ's faithfulness. Paul makes the point in other places that Christ, as God, was and remains faithful to his word and promise. In 2 Timothy 2:13, Paul quotes a "trustworthy saying" that "if we are faithless, he remains faithful – for he cannot deny himself."

WHAT ARE THE THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE SUBJECTIVE GENITIVE?

Before drawing final conclusions on the passages, we should ask, why are some scholars so uneasy accepting that Paul may have meant Christ's faithfulness? Why the hesitancy to allow for that in the translations? What are the theological arguments against meaning Christ's faith/faithfulness? Hooker offers three reasons:

1. A perception that the translation "Christ's faith" undermines the basic Reformation teaching on faith.
2. A belief that while faith is an appropriate action for the believer, it is inappropriate for the Messiah. Some perceive the idea of "faith" indicates Jesus was something less than fully God.
3. Some scholars dislike the idea that believers are to imitate the earthly Jesus in his ministry (where Jesus lived faithfully), asserting that such takes away from the proper emphasis of imitating Jesus in his death and resurrection.

These three arguments do not seem to give full credit to the theology behind accepting that Paul could have meant Christ's faith. Consider the first argument, that it undermines justification through human faith. Such is not even remotely true. As I have already noted, one reason for accepting that Paul intends to include Christ's faith as a meaning is that the verses are otherwise redundant. Verses like Romans 3:22 add phrases or other contextual information to make it clear that Christ's faithfulness is for those who themselves have faith. The two are not mutually exclusive.

The second argument, that faith is inappropriate for Christ, I also find without merit. First, it seems to miss the concept that Christ was faithful in going to the cross. Who can read the Gethsemane story and not appreciate that Christ was faithful? If we also consider Paul's teachings that Christ died out of God's faithfulness to his promise to Abraham and other Old Testament people (Rom. 3:25), we certainly see that God's faithfulness to God's promises is squarely in line with orthodoxy. If we speak of God's faithfulness, how can we not speak of Jesus' faithfulness?

The third argument also loses merit in most of the Christian world. Most Christians already believe and understand that we are to follow Christ in his life as well as his death and resurrection. Most Christians who accept the gospel accounts of the life of Christ see the model life of Christ as making the sacrifice of Christ properly atoning. In other words, because Jesus lived a perfect life (hence one worthy of following in all matters) Jesus' death can substitute for that of other sinners. It does not have to cover his own sins for he had none. It also means, especially taught in Hebrews, that Jesus could then offer his own perfect human life to God as the sin offering for all time. This sin-offering would never need supplementing and would never need repeating, because it gave God what he had always wanted from human beings – a faithful human life.

This leaves us with very good reasons to appreciate our salvation by grace through our faith in one who himself was perfect in faith and was/is faithful to us.

SO WHAT?

Certainly, we can safely assume that both faith in Christ and Christ being faithful are theologically sound renderings of the passages. What shall we make of this? Shall we write this off as the confusing Greek of Paul?

TIME OUT! Look at my last sentence – “Shall we write this off as the confusing Greek of Paul?” I have used an ambiguous genitive! Do I mean the Greek language was ambiguous or that Paul's usage of the Greek was ambiguous? Actually, I meant to ask the question with both meanings! I am asking whether

Greek itself is so ambiguous or whether Greek as used by Paul was so ambiguous.

I did so intentionally to illustrate a point. I think it likely that Paul knew he was writing in a way that opened up two facets to fully understand his point. Both facets are true and both are valid. Both make sense grammatically and both make sense theologically. We can embrace both and get a full serving of thought!

So we plug in both to our verses and we see:

- **Romans 3:22 (Young's Literal Translation)** “and the righteousness of God [is] through the *faith of Jesus Christ* to all, and upon all those believing, -- for there is no difference,”

God’s righteousness comes to believers through the faithfulness and faith of Christ himself. Because Christ was faithful to his word, and because Jesus trusted fully and perfectly in God, all believers have the righteousness of God.

- **Romans 3:26 (Young's Literal Translation)** “For the shewing forth of His righteousness in the present time, for His being righteous, and declaring him righteous who [is] of the *faith of Jesus*.”

Those who are “of the faith of Jesus” could mean both those with faith *in* Jesus and those belonging to the faithful Jesus. Karl Barth takes the latter view of this passage in his Romans commentary and translates the verse as, “for the shewing, I say, of his righteousness at this present time: that he might be just, and the justifier of him that is grounded upon the faithfulness which abides in Christ.”⁷ Barth believes Paul is emphasizing that the “atonement occurs only through the faithfulness of God.”⁸

- **Galatians 2:16 (Young's Literal Translation)** “having known also that a man is not declared righteous by works of law, if not through the *faith of Jesus Christ*, also we in Christ Jesus did believe, that we might be declared righteous by the *faith of Christ*, and not by works of law, wherefore declared righteous by works of law shall be no flesh.”

This passage applies Paul’s plain language to those who believe. But the genitives at issue allow for the construction also of the faithfulness of Christ extending to those who believe. Richard Longenecker translates the passage to get this

⁷ Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, (Oxford 1968 ed.) trans. by E. C. Hoskyns.

⁸ *Ibid.* at 105.

emphasis, “and who know that a person is not justified by the works of the law but only by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ.”⁹ Longenecker emphasizes that it is not works of law that save, but rather the faithfulness of Christ in dying in our stead.

- **Galatians 2:20 (King James Version)** “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the *faith of the Son of God*, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

As before we see the sense of this both as an objective genitive, Paul saying he lived by faith *in* the Son of God, and the subjective, emphasizing the more active role of Christ in speaking of his faithfulness in loving and giving himself up.

- **Galatians 3:22 (Young's Literal Translation)** “but the Writing did shut up the whole under sin, that the promise by *faith of Jesus Christ* may be given to those believing.”

Here again, we see Paul making the clear point that his passage applies to the believer, “to those believing,” but he adds the genitive of “faith in Christ” so that we can also understand that the promise was based on one who was faithful, who would live up to the promise. Hence, Longenecker translates this passage, “so that the promise that is based on the faithfulness of Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.”¹⁰

- **Philippians 3:9 (King James Version)** “And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the *faith of Christ*, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”

This passage is another one where Paul writes of the “faith of Christ” and then separately emphasizes that the righteousness comes “by faith.” So, we have the classical understanding present that Paul contrasts righteousness by works and law with righteousness credited to the believer’s faith.

But if we also consider Paul meaning a genitive subjective, then we have a translation like that of Peter O’Brien, “and be found in him, not having my own righteousness which comes from the law, but that righteousness which comes from God through the faithfulness of Christ and which is based on faith.”¹¹ O’Brien

⁹ Richard Longenecker, *Word Biblical Commentary: Galatians* (Word 1990).

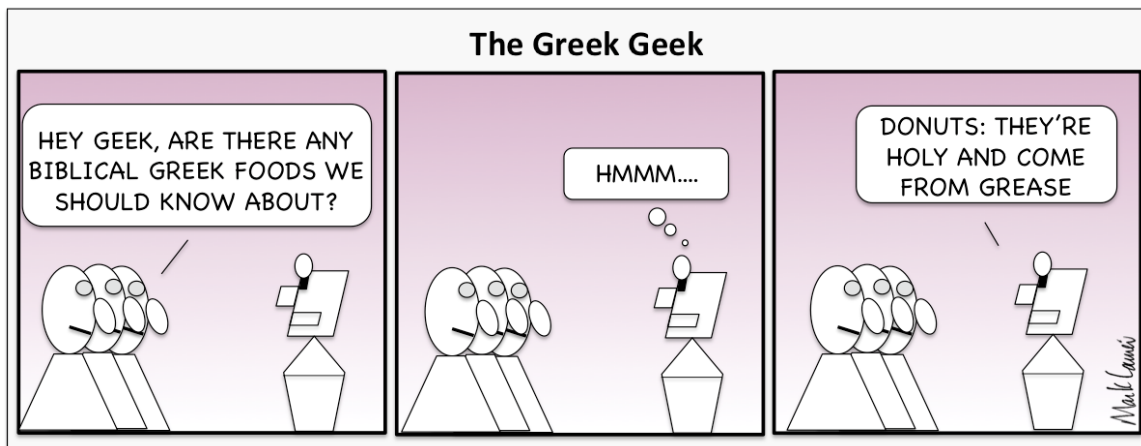
¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ P. T. O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: a Commentary on the Greek Text* (Eerdmans 1991) at 382.

believes the passage shows righteousness: (1) based on Christ's faithfulness; (2) originating from God; and (3) received on the basis of faith.

Much like Brinsmead's interpretation of the Romans passages earlier, O'Brien says:

Instead [of self-righteousness], the righteousness Paul now has...is of a different order: it is that status of being right with God which comes as his gift (cf. Rom. 3:21). Its basis is Christ's faithfulness, that is, his unflinching obedience to the Father's will and to his loving purposes of salvation through suffering and death, and it is appropriated on the basis of faith.¹²



GREEK FOR HOME

1. *"The righteousness of God [is]...to all, and upon all those believing"* (Rom. 3:22).

Paul, and all of Scripture, make clear that no one stands before God on the merit of his or her own merit or good works. No one is sinless. No one merits God's love or mercy. God has appropriated and reckoned his righteousness through faith. This was true for Abraham (Gen 15:6) and it is true for the church (Eph. 2:8-10). To see the merit behind Paul's added focus on the faithfulness of Christ does not diminish this truth one wit. It simply adds depth to it.

2. *"The righteousness of God [is] through the faith of Jesus Christ"* (Rom 3:22).

¹² *Ibid.* at 392.

There is a clear sense in Paul teaching about the faithfulness of God and Christ in passages such as those we have looked at today. We should remember that while God reckons our faith as righteousness, the God who does so is himself reliable and faithful. We trust in one who is trustworthy. We put faith in one who has proven himself faithful. We model our lives after a Lord who lived a model life in all ways.

3. *“Be found in him, [having] that righteousness which comes from God through the faithfulness of Christ”* (Phil. 3:9).

In Christ we have all blessings. His perfect life, including his perfect faith, is the life that we share. It is the perfection we need. It is why we can stand before the world and acknowledge God as our *Abba* Father.

APPENDIX ONE

The Greek Alphabet

Our main concern is with the lower case letters, although we also give the upper case letters for reference. It is useful to know the letters, their names, and a core pronunciation. We do not know with great precision how the ancients pronounced the letters, however, and it is likely that pronunciation differed in different regions (just as it does in English). The key for anyone is to use a consistent pronunciation.

Notice that the Greek “s” is written as σ, unless it comes at the end of a word. Then it is written as ς. Also note that Greek doesn’t have an “h,” but if a word begins with a vowel, it is assigned a “breathing mark.” The breathing mark looks similar to a comma (facing either forward or backward) placed *above* the vowel. This mark is “rough” (e.g., ᾱ), in which event you add an “h” sound, or it is “smooth” (e.g., ᾰ) which makes it silent.

Lower case	Upper case	Name	English
α	A	Alpha	a
β	B	Beta	b
γ	Γ	Gamma	g
δ	Δ	Delta	d
ϵ	E	Epsilon	e (short)
ζ	Z	Zeta	z
η	H	Eta	e (long)
θ	Θ	Theta	th
ι	I	Iota	i
κ	K	Kappa	k
λ	Λ	Lambda	l
μ	M	Mu	m
ν	N	Nu	n
ξ	Ξ	Xi	x
\omicron	O	Omicron	o (short)
π	Π	Pi	p
ρ	P	Rho	r
σ, ς	Σ	Sigma	s
τ	T	Tau	t
υ	Y	Upsilon	u, y
ϕ	Φ	Phi	ph
χ	X	Chi	ch
ψ	Ψ	Psi	ps
ω	Ω	Omega	o (long)

HOMework

To recap, we are memorizing 1 John this year in the English Standard Version. That amounts to two verses a week. To be current, we need to have memorized 1 John 1:1-4:21. This week we add 1 John 5:1-2. We provide all verses below for your help! (Including the past two week when there was no written lesson.)

1John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— **2** the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— **3** that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. **4** And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

1:5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. **6** If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. **7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. **8** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **10** If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

1John 2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. **2** He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. **3** And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. **4** Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, **5** but whoever

keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: **6** whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. **7** Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. **8** At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. **9** Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. **10** Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. **11** But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

12 I am writing to you, little children,
because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake.

13 I am writing to you, fathers,
because you know him who is from the beginning.
I am writing to you, young men,
because you have overcome the evil one.

I write to you, children,
because you know the Father.

14 I write to you, fathers,
because you know him who is from the beginning.
I write to you, young men,
because you are strong,
and the word of God abides in you,
and you have overcome the evil one.

15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. **16** For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. **17** And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

18 Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. **19** They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. **20** But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. **21** I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth. **22** Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. **23** No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also. **24** Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. **25** And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life.

26 I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. **27** But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him. **28** And now, little children, abide in

him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming. **29** If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

1John 3:1 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. **2** Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. **3** And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. **4** Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. **5** You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. **6** No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. **7** Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. **8** Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. **9** No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. **10** By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

11 For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. **12** We should not be like Cain, who was

of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. **13** Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. **14** We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. **15** Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

16 By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. **17** But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? **18** Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

19 By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; **20** for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. **21** Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; **22** and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. **23** And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. **24** Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

1John 4:1 **1** Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. **2** By this you know the Spirit of God:

every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, **3** and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. **4** Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. **5** They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. **6** We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error. **7** Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. **8** Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. **9** In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. **10** In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. **11** Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. **12** No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. **13** By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. **14** And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. **15** Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. **16** So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. **17** By this is love perfected with us, so that we

may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. **18** There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. **19** We love because he first loved us. **20** If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. **21** And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

1John 5 **1** Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. **2** By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. **3** For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. **4** For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. **5** Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? **6** This is he who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. **7** For there are three that testify: **8** the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree. **9** If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son. **10** Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe

God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son. **11** And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. **12** Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.