

PASSAGE: “We who are Jews by birth and not sinful Gentiles 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.”

- Galatians 2:15–16 NIV

THEME STATEMENT: Justification by faith today provides hope for tomorrow.

I. INTRO - We have just finished our advent series and celebrated Christmas, the wonderful time focused around the birth of Jesus, but Jesus’ birth is just another stepping stone to us being able to be redeemed and justified by faith in Jesus Christ. .

II. BACKGROUND - Paul is writing to the church of Galatia to help correct and prevent them from falling victim to false teachers and turning away from the true Gospel. There were Jewish Christian missionaries coming to Galatia who were teaching the Gentiles in Galatia that they had to be circumcised in order to be incorporated into the people of God.

A. Paul address that there are false teachers in Galatia

1. “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.” - Galatians 1:6–7

B. Paul rebukes Peter for separating himself from the Gentiles and was not following the Gospel

1. “For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, “You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?” - Galatians 2:12–14

2. This is what Paul was trying to stop in his letter to Galatia and with his statement in 2:15-16

III. PAUL’S REBUKE - Paul reminds them that Salvation comes from faith alone

A. Paul first reminds them that he is also a Jew.

1. It cannot be forgotten that Paul was a prestige Jew before his conversion

2. He reminds the Galatians of this with his use of “We who are Jews by birth” in 2:15

a) The Jews who were pushing the Gentiles to follow the Jewish customs were not just looking trying to teach them that justification came from following the law but they still regarded that the Jews were different than the Gentiles.

B. Paul gives the correct answer

1. Paul provides the Galatians the correct means to justification, correcting the false teachers

a) Repeats the concept of justification by faith 3 times

b) Highlighting the importance like a teacher stomping their foot for an answer on the test

2. Justification by faith is a concept Paul focuses on throughout his epistles

- b) Highlighting the importance like a teacher stomping their foot for an answer on the test
- 2. Justification by faith is a concept Paul focuses on throughout his epistles especially in Romans
 - a) “This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.” Romans 3:22–24
 - b) “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.” Romans 5:1–2
 - c) “What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ 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.” Philippians 3:8–10

III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRIST’S DEATH AND RESURRECTION - It is only because of Christ’s death and resurrection that this justification through faith in Christ is able to be obtained (Christ’s birth that we just celebrated is great but that was just another step to the fulfillment)

A. The True Gospel that Paul speaks of is centered on the death and resurrection of Christ

1. Paul throughout his epistles gives means by which we can live with Christ and be in union with Him, but this can only be accomplished because of Christ’s death and resurrection, without this how can there be faith in Christ?
2. Faith represents a new mode of existence that has been given with Christ's advent; it "comes" with the coming of the fullness of the time (Gal. 3: 23; 4: 4), and with the manifestation of the grace of God in the death and resurrection of Christ. Then it is disclosed that Christ is the end of the law unto justification for everyone who believes (Rom. 10: 4); likewise the insufficiency, indeed the folly, of trusting in the law is understood, the consciousness of one's own imperfection and guilt is born (Phil. 3: 4-8), and the Old Testament evidences are discovered. It is this sequence, and not the reverse, which is able to give us the proper insight into the true nature both of faith and of the grace of God in connection with justification. - Ridderbos, Herman. *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (p. 162). Eerdmans Publishing Co - A. Kindle Edition.
3. Cannot forget through all this that it is only because of the works of God that all this has been accomplished and never from an act from the believer or work of the law

B. If justification was through the Law

1. “For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. 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. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!” - Galatians 2:19–21
 - a) If justification could be obtained from the law why then did God provide us his Son?
 - b) What was the meaning then of Christ’s death?
 - c) The answer is what Paul has already provided, justification is through faith in Jesus Christ
 - d) A person’s death to the law means that that person ceases to have

- through faith in Jesus Christ
 - d) A person's death to the law means that that person ceases to have any relation to the law, so that the law has no further claim or control over that person, it does not justify him
 - e) Instead he now lives by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me, justification by faith
- C. The hope and joy that justification through faith provides
1. Since justification through faith means that justification is not based on following the law
 2. It is not based on merits from the individual
 3. It is from God alone that we receive justification
 - a) It means that we do not need to "get right with the Lord" before coming to Him

V. APPLYING THE WORD

- A. It is not easy to fully trust and place our faith in God for our salvation. We want to know we deserve it.
1. Gospel +1 individual act makes us deserve it
 2. It was happening in Galatia
 3. It was happening during the Reformation period
 4. It is happening now
 5. What might we be holding on to that makes us feel like we have earned our salvation?
 - a) I know I struggle as I study the Word more that I want to rely on my intellect to know what to say, believe, and have earned my salvation
- B. It is human nature to want to be in control
1. When I drive I like to be the one behind the wheel.
 2. It is much harder for me to sit in a car especially a taxi and depend on someone else to get me to my location
 3. Are we trusting in God to get us where we should be going?
 4. Another example with buying the house here in Annapolis
 - a) Not sure if Lauren would get an extension
 - b) Could be on the hook supporting 2 houses
 - c) Neighbor who is a relator told us we were insane and he would never do what we were planning/did
 - d) We had hope it would work out because we placed our faith in Christ and heard him calling us to stay
 5. Not saying do what you want since God is in control, or even don't do good works because faith is all that matters. Just look at a book called James. Instead knowing that we cannot accomplish the task of justification and instead it has already been accomplished and provided through Christ should give us great hope in tomorrow. No matter what happens we will still be united with Christ tomorrow.
- C. What day to day actions do you do to place your faith in Christ, do you make a conscious decision to place your faith in him?
1. Daily surrender your control
 2. God is sovereign
 3. Remember that God sent His Son to us for our sins
 4. We cannot forget in this passage the Galatians were believers in the true Gospel, justification by faith, and then were starting to be lead astray by false teachers. Paul wrote to them to remind them of the Gospel.
- D. Do we see that since it is not under our own merits there is never anything we can have done in our past to prevent us from being justified through faith by God
1. We do not have to be good and follow the law before telling God we believe in Him
 2. Come see the elders if you want to know more on accepting Christ into your life
- E. All these should provide us hope because it is not up to us for our salvation. We

2. Come see the elders if you want to know more on accepting Christ into your life

E. All these should provide us hope because it is not up to us for our salvation. We continue to place our faith in Jesus Christ and live a life with Christ

1. What better way to remember and reaffirm our faith in Christ then coming to the Lord's table

Communion

Benediction - "So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
(Galatians 3:26-29)