

Theme: God declares us to be righteous, not because of our works, but because of the work of Christ in our behalf, which we receive through faith alone.

## I. Intro – Tetsel Selling Indulgences

- A. Clip from Luther of Tetsel
- B. How are we justified before God? How do we escape hell?
- C. Can we buy or earn salvation? How are we forgiven?

## II. Four Key Words

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 2:16 (ESV)

### A. Justified – legal declaration & restored relationship

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 2:16 (ESV)

1. This is the basic definition of the word
  - a. To take up a legal cause; show justice
  - b. To render a favorable verdict, vindicate
  - c. To cause someone to be released from personal or institutional claims
  - d. For Gal 2:16 - be acquitted, be pronounced and treated as righteous
2. It is the opposite of being condemned, guilty

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood **condemned**. Galatians 2:11 (ESV)

If there is a dispute between men and they come into court and the judges decide between them, acquitting the innocent and condemning the guilty, Deuteronomy 25:1 (ESV)

- a. Rare word for condemned - only 2x OT LXX, 3x NT
- b. Paul has this legal understanding in mind in our text
- c. In Deut 25, legal terms for acquit or condemn

Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who **justifies**.<sup>34</sup> Who is to **condemn**? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Romans 8:33–34 (ESV)

- a. Again note that justify is opposite of legal accusation
- b. Justification is legal acquittal of charges

### 3. Justification - new status before God - acquitted

## B. Works of the law

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 2:16 (ESV)

### 1. Religious works - ceremonial commands

Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept **circumcision**, Christ will be of no advantage to you.<sup>3</sup> I testify again to every man who accepts **circumcision** that he is **obligated to keep the whole law**.<sup>4</sup> You are severed from Christ, you who would be **justified by the law**; you have fallen away from grace. Galatians 5:2–4 (ESV)

- a. Included food laws - which led to conflict with Peter in Galatians 2:12
- b. But to be justified by these must keep whole law!

## 2. Moral works

But if you call yourself a Jew and **rely on the law** and boast in God <sup>18</sup> and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; <sup>19</sup> and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, <sup>20</sup> an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth— <sup>21</sup> you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against **stealing**, do you steal? <sup>22</sup> You who say that one must not commit **adultery**, do you commit adultery? You who abhor **idols**, do you rob temples? <sup>23</sup> **You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law.** <sup>24</sup> For, as it is written, “The name of God is **blasphemed among the Gentiles** because of you.” Romans 2:17–24 (ESV)

- 3. Key idea and question - motive is to earn favor 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 2:16 (ESV)

Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. <sup>3</sup>I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. <sup>4</sup> **You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace.** Galatians 5:2–4 (ESV)

## C. Faith

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1. Justification is not by works, but by faith
2. We are justified, not by what we do, but by faith
3. Faith is the opposite of self-reliance  
But **whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.** <sup>8</sup> Indeed, **I count everything as loss** because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and **count them as rubbish**, in order that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> 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—** Philippians 3:7–9
4. Faith - looking away from myself and my works

## D. Christ

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 2:16 (ESV)

1. Our faith is not in our works - it is in Christ's works
2. Our faith is not in faith - it is in Christ
3. Christ lived for us, died for us, was raised for us!
4. Faith - looking away from ourselves to Christ

5. Faith - empty hands of my works to receive Christ

### III. Justified - By Faith or Works?

A. Clearly we are justified by faith in Christ not our works 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 2:16 (ESV)

1. Paul states 3x that we are justified by faith in Christ
2. Paul states 3x we are not justified by works

B. Justification by faith ALONE

1. The debate in the Reformation - ALONE
2. Are faith and works exclusive ways - or complementary?
3. They are exclusive ways - one or the other! 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... <sup>21</sup> **I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose**. Galatians 2:16, 21 (ESV)

- a. Justified by faith - not works
- b. Not faith and works - faith not works
- c. Works nullifies grace - two exclusive paths

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<sup>3</sup>I testify again to **every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law**. <sup>4</sup> **You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace**. Galatians 5:2–4 (ESV)

- a. Paul says no works - three times!
- b. Christ is of no advantage; severed from Christ
- c. Can't be any stronger - faith apart from works

For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. Romans 3:28

- a. Faith apart from works - faith ALONE
- b. Our works do not play a role in justification!

### IV. Applying the Word

- A. Do you see there are two mutually exclusive paths?
1. Path 1 - personal merit/based on law/through works
  2. Path 2 - Christ's merit/based on grace/through faith
  3. The two paths are in conflict; mutually exclusive
  4. We can not mix them - it is one or the other
- B. Which path are you on?
1. Are you trusting in your own works?
  2. Do you think your works add anything?
  3. Have you forsaken all other hopes than Christ?

Justification By Faith Alone

Galatians 2:15-16  
June 29, 2014  
Communion  
Philippians 1:2

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord  
Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:2

“We who are Jews by birth and not ‘Gentile sinners’<sup>16</sup> know  
that a man is not justified by observing 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  
observing the law, because by observing the law no one will  
be justified. Galatians 2:15–16