

## GALATIANS 2:15-21 – Justified by Faith, Living by Grace

**1. We are justified, not by WORKS of the LAW, but by FAITH in CHRIST.** Justification is the act of MAKING or PRONOUNCING someone righteous, RIGHT with & ACCEPTABLE to God.

### 3 Facts about Justification

- i) Justification is an ACT not a PROCESS (Rom 5:1).
  - \* An instant & immediate TRANSACTION between a BELIEVING SINNER & God.
- ii) Justification is an ACT of GOD (Rom 8:33, 2 Cor 5:21).
  - \* When Jesus took our place on the cross, He was DECLARED GUILTY & we were declared INNOCENT. He took our UNRIGHTEOUSNESS & we were MADE RIGHTEOUS.
- iii) Justification is by FAITH not WORKS, GRACE not LAW (Gal 2:15-16, 3:24).
  - \* LAW can't do it ... Excellence of CHARACTER can't do it ... GOOD WORKS can't do it. The ONLY WAY you can be justified is through FAITH in Christ.

→ *"Justification by faith, not works is very good news. All that striving for acceptance ... All that sweating to be good enough ... All that guilt & shame caused by our own inadequacy ... All those futile attempts to earn God's favour ... should now be firmly assigned to past. This is what Paul means by free." Discuss!*

Justified is a POSITION in which you now stand in Christ: Nothing can CHANGE that. You no longer need to attempt to EARN it. You can't become any more RIGHTEOUS than you already are.  
→ *"You can't become any more righteous than you already are." Discuss!*

### 2. "I have been CRUCIFIED with Christ"

- \* The LAW-LIVER has died; the GRACE-RECEIVER is now alive.
  - \* Before we can REALLY LIVE, a whole lot has to DIE.
- *Are you a 'law-liver' or 'grace-receiver?' What's the difference? What are the dangers of being a 'law-liver' and the benefits of being a 'grace-receiver?' How can you tell which of the two someone else is?*

What had Paul died to?

- a) The LAW as a way of being SAVED (v16b, Gal 3:24).
  - b) Law's inevitable CONDEMNATION (Rom 8:1).
  - c) ANYTHING that wasn't God's WILL for him (Matt 16:24, Gal 5:24-25)
  - d) The TEMPTATION to resort back to LEGALISM.
- *Which of those have you died to? Which are still kicking & screaming!?*  
→ *Why is dying to some of those things painful? What could happen if you really did?*

→ *What forms of legalism are you still tempted by? What rules still look attractive & why?*

→ *Joyce Meyer wrote, "We cannot mix law & grace & ever enjoy the kind of life Jesus died to give us." Do you agree?*

### 3. "It is no longer I that liveth, but CHRIST that liveth IN ME."

- \* The Transition: True life is not based on what I CAN DO: the RULES I can keep, what I can do in MY OWN STRENGTH, but on the fact that CHRIST now lives IN ME.
  - \* We need to DIE to LAW & COME ALIVE to GRACE.
- *Why is the transition from legalism to grace such a tricky one?*
- \* Human nature LOVES laws & rules, because we intrinsically think good things must be DESERVED. We've been taught all our lives that we must WORK HARD & EARN what we get.
  - \* We give ourselves laws to follow & feel PROUD when we SUCCEED & GUILTY when we FAIL.
  - \* That's called LEGALISM & inevitably leads to a repeated cycle of DISAPPOINTMENT, INADEQUACY & FRUSTRATION.
- *What kind of rules do we think we need to be a 'good Christian?' Are they true? What's the difference between faithful devotion and legalism? Why is it so easy to slip between the two?*  
→ *What are the inevitable consequences of a legalistic life? By contrast, what could a grace-ruled life look like?*  
→ *What are the things we can still be tricked into thinking we have to earn or deserve? Love? Acceptance? Favour? Answered prayer?*
- \* The beauty of God grace is that it ISN'T & indeed NEVER COULD be EARNED. It's RECEIVED by FAITH.
  - \* The life you now live isn't to be lived IN YOUR STRENGTH. You have been CRUCIFIED with Christ & that part of you is supposed to DIE. Instead, Christ lives IN YOU.
  - \* The invitation is to ALL THE GRACE YOU NEED, when you REALLY NEED IT (Heb 4:16) ... Full access to His STRENGTH, ABILITY & POWER.
- *What is grace? How does it work? How do we receive it? What does it do?*

### RESPONSE QUESTIONS

1. Are there any RULES you've given yourself that you need to let go of right now?
2. What would a step away from LEGALISM & into GRACE look like for you today?
3. Have you been justified? Is it your day to get off rollercoaster of religion & take that step of faith to invite Jesus into your life by faith?