

Title: "Two Peoples – One Way" (Part 1)

Passage: Galatians 2:15-16a

Theme: Paul's Central Point: Justification by Faith

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{{Read Passage}}

[i] Last week was an introduction to this section we've just read  
1 of t/things we noted was t/transitional nature of vv. 15-21.

These vv. almost imperceptibly move from Paul's rebuke of Peter (going back to v. 11). {cite vv. 11-14}

[ii] Debate as to how far the quotation marks go

RSV; ESV; NET = through v. 14.

NIV; NKJV; NASB = all the way to the end of the chapter.

The theological thrust of his presentation is seen in the fact that the historical narrative flows almost imperceptibly into his theological exposition. [George, 105]

Not only do vv. 15-21 connect further back to chapter 2 – these 7 vv. also set the stage for chapters 3-4.

[iii] It is in these verses where we are introduced to the key elements as it pertains to the Gospel

Up to this point Paul has used the word "gospel" 9x.

2x he uses the phrase "truth of the Gospel" (2:5,14).

Doesn't state what t/gospel is – what are t/central elements?

1. Here is where those elements are introduced – specifically ==>

No one can be justified by the “works of the law” (an issue he will tackle in greater depth later in 3:6–29).

Justification is possible only “by faith in Christ” (a topic that comes up repeatedly in chapt. 3).

Implicit in these 2 points is t/fact that Jews & Gents are equally under sin // cannot be saved by keeping t/law // can only be justified by faith in X (that assumes we know what saving faith is & who JC is).

*"Two Peoples – One Way"*

[iv] Last week we covered a boatload (70 minute message)

Very imp. Seemed to be quite a few missing last week & if you were I'd encourage you to get a copy of t/message, if possible.

*I. Establishing the Context*

*II. Examining Key Concepts*

*I. Establishing the Context*

*A. The Context Within the Chapter*

*B. Verses 15 – 21 Are Transitional (Like a Pie Diagram)*

*C. Important Contrasts in Verses 15-21*

- “Jews by birth” contrasted to “Gentile sinners” (v. 15)
- Justification “by the works of the law” is contrasted to justification “by faith in Jesus Christ” (v. 16)
- Rebuilding old structures of the Mosaic Law contrasted to its annulment by the new covenant gospel (vv. 17-21)
- “Dying to the law” contrasted to “living for God” (v. 19)
- Being crucified with Christ contrasted with Christ living in the believer (v. 20)

## II. Examining Key Concepts

### A. Key Words

How many of these key words 1<sup>st</sup> appear here in vv. 15-21.

νομος – used 6x here; 27x in the rest of the letter

εργον νομος 3x here; 3x in the rest of the letter

πιστις – 3x here; 18x in the rest of the letter

δικαιοω – 4x here; 4x in the rest of the letter

ζαω – 5x here; 3x in the rest of the letter

### B. Key Terms

#### 1. Union with Christ (cf. Galatians 2:19-21)

#### 2. Justification by Faith

#### 3. New Perspective on Paul

This AM we're not going to get as technical & we can't afford to go as long. But we'll be spending several weeks in these 7 vv. so time is on our side.

Two races under sin have one hope of salvation (faith in Christ apart from works of the Law)

### I. Essential Elements of the Gospel in Galatians (vv. 15-21)

What's the Gospel? {define}

Romans 1:16–17 16 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. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.”

## **I. Essential Elements of the Gospel in Galatians (vv. 15-21)**

(looking at t/G. broadly-speaking). Not to say these are t/only elements. We'll only touch on first 2 this AM

### **A. The Universal Nature of Sin (v. 15)**

**We [are] Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles.**

#### **1. At first glance this doesn't sound so universal**

“We're Jews; not sinners like Gentiles.”

#### **2. Paul is using the word “sinner” (ἁμαρτωλός) in typical Jewish fashion**

To t/Jew there were 2 races: Jew and everyone else (Jew/Gentile). It was assumed that if you were a Gentile you were a pagan.

In that sense, we could say that there are only 2 classes of people today: 1) Genuine believers; 2) Not.

1 Corinthians 6:1 **DOES any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?**

History of t/Xn CH has centered (not always successfully) on bring civilization to pagans. Spec., where t/CH has been successful, is when t/gospel is brot to pagans. Resulted in changed lives which extends to other areas, healthier families/marriages, greater literacy, lower crime.

Can see, as we've retreated to a post-Xn culture, all of those pagan markers are on t/rise: instead of changed lives / depraved // healthier marriages & families / broken – very def. of marriage up in t/air //

Morality is no longer grounded in an absolute (Bible) so we are now subject to morality by shifting consensus.

We're even looking like pagans of old – just take a walk around most any college campus today. Matter of time before we see elongated necks and lips stretched w/plates. Some have so much metal hanging from face & ears they could provide enough fishing tackle for an Alaska expedition!

Worse: plain old nudity (1 benefit of living in a cold winter climate).

This was t/history of Israel surrounded by pagan nations. Certainly, a gentile could become a “God-fearer”, a proselyte to Israel – but that gen. meant moving into t/land / adopting Jewish customs. Not t/norm. Gentiles were considered outside t/covt. - hence sinful.

#### a. Turn over to Ephesians 2:11-16

##### (1) With that in mind, consider the first 5 verses of Psalm 1

Psalm 1:1–5 1 HOW blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.3 And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season, And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.4 The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives away.5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

We might understand this Psalm today, not as Jew vs. Gentile, but elect vs. non-elect (Xn vs. non).

Remember, this is Paul speaking to Peter in Antioch ==>

**We [are] Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles.**

Romans 3:1–2 1 THEN what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? 2 Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.

Romans 9:4–5 4 who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, 5 whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

### 3. But this has changed now that Christ has come

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

#### a. Don't forget the context

Peter's hypocrisy. Peter who became aloof and separated from his Gentile brothers and sisters. And caused others among t/Jewish believers to do t/same!

They were acting as if their non-Jewish Xn brethren were still just “sinners among the Gentiles.”

Example that comes from our own country. I'm thinking of t/Southern Presbyterians prior to t/Civil War. In those days t/elders of t/SPC's would give t/congregants 'tokens,' t/possession of which showed that t/member was eligible for Communion. African Xns, in many of those same CH's, were not given t/customary silver token, but 1 of a base

metal such as tin. They were not allowed to receive t/sacraments until after t/white members had been served.

We said that this first point was ==>

**A. The Universal Nature of Sin (v. 15)**

Where is that in this verse? It's in t/context.

Can look elsewhere – Rom 3:23 comes to mind:

Romans 3:23 **for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,**

But t/universal nature of sin is implied in what Paul has to say in v. 16.

Note esp. t/first word:

**Yet . . .**

NASB **Nevertheless**

Yet what? Nevertheless what?

**Yet we know that a man is not justified by works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ.**

Second point / 2d “Essential Elements of the Gospel in Galatians”

**B. Justification Is by Faith Alone (v. 16)**

The Jews had t/Law. That was a good thing. But t/Law could not save. Law itself could not reconcile sinners to a holy God. That was always by faith.

Law had its purposes, one of which was to prepare God's people-Jews and Gentiles-for the coming Savior.

Cf. 3:19,23-26.

## Two Peoples and Only One Way

Jews and Gentiles are two races that can only be justified one way.

What Paul is saying is this: *“Peter, we know that t/Gentiles were outside the covenant and hopeless before God. But even we as Jews – God’s chosen people – had to realize that we could not be saved by law observance. We are also under sin and our only hope is through faith in JC.”*

For us, this goes back to t/age-old question of Job 9:1, ‘**How can a man be just** (LXX δίκαιος - right) **before God?**’ That’s t/? we are all faced with. Reconciliation / forgiveness / Hope of eternity.

Note the shift in persons that goes on ==>

**We (Peter/Paul) [are] Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles.**

**Yet we (Peter/Paul) know that a man (ἄνθρωπος) is not justified by works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ.**

### ***B. Justification Is by Faith Alone (v. 16)***

Clearly 2:16 is one of the most important verses in all of Galatians. It is packed with some of the most important themes in the letter. Three times Paul asserts that right standing with God does not come by keeping the law but only through faith in Christ. . . . Neither Peter nor anyone else can stand before God on the basis of what they have done. Salvation is of the Lord, and it is received by faith alone. [Schreiner, 167]

Another commentator states that ==>

‘This is the text on which all that follows in the Epistle is commentary’ [Duncan 64–5, cited by Dunn, 134]

We need to unpack this verse

**Yet we know that a man is not justified by works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have believed in Christ Jesus so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the Law, since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.**

**1. Three Key words and phrases: justified / works of the Law / faith in Jesus Christ**

**a. Justified (used 3x)**

**(1) We touched on this last week**

**(2) δικαιωω – Verb: “To declare as righteous”**

Common word in Gal. To no surprise, t/other place where it is often found is in BOR / 15x (Gal = Rom. in miniature).

**(a) What does that mean (to declare as righteous)?**

δικαιώω (TDR) is a NT Gk. word that has its bg in t/Heb. word קָדַשׁ which is a word whose meaning relates to “justice” & “righteousness.”

**i. In its active verbal form קָדַשׁ = “to declare righteous”**

We see this in the OT –

Deuteronomy 25:1 speaks of legal disputes where the “judges decide [the] case, and . . . justify the righteous and condemn the wicked”

Tom Schreiner observes: “Judges do not “make” anyone righteous. They pronounce on what is in fact the case—if they are righteous judges. In other words, the verbal form belongs in the forensic realm, and Paul does not use the verbal form to denote a righteousness that transforms us or “makes us” righteous.

God declares those who are sinners to be in the right before him if they trust in Jesus Christ for their salvation. This is extraordinary because such a verdict violates the normal and just procedure for a judge. Judges who declare the guilty to be righteous violate the standards of justice. Paul, of course, does not think God violates any standard of justice, for Christ bears the curse that sinners deserved (3:10–13).”

Timothy George adds: Justification should not be confused with forgiveness, which is the fruit of justification, nor with atonement, which is the basis of justification. Rather it is the favorable verdict of God, the righteous Judge, that one who formerly stood condemned has now been granted a new status at the bar of divine justice.

Question 60 of the Heidelberg Catechism: “How are you righteous before God?” Only by true faith in Jesus Christ. In spite of the fact that my conscience accuses me that I have grievously sinned against all the commandments of God, and have not kept any one of them, and that I am still ever prone to all that is evil, nevertheless, God, without any merit of my own, out of pure grace, grants me the benefits of the perfect expiation of Christ, imputing to me his righteousness and holiness as if I had never committed a single sin or had ever been sinful, having fulfilled myself all the obedience which Christ has carried out for me, if only I accept such favor with a trusting heart.

Thru faith, I am declared to be righteous – t/verdict of sin is reversed & I am clothed w/the white robes of JC my S&L.

### (3) The heart of the Gospel

This essential doctrine of Xnty which has been so misunderstood & perverted is at the heart of t/Gospel. It is all of grace. It refuses all attempts at autosalvation.

Martin Luther said that justification by faith is the ‘most principal and special article of Christian doctrine’. Without it, Christianity is just another religion—an endless effort to get right with God through self-discipline and ritual.

As in Luther's day, t/doctrine of justification by faith alone has been under attack. In our day – NPP.

Men just cannot believe that works or merit or t/role of t/CH do not contribute to our salvation.

G. C. Berkouwer has pointed out, it is well to remember that “many objections to declarative justification are part and parcel with a rejection of the substitutionary suffering and death of Jesus Christ. Terms common to jurisprudence have been used in connection with Christ’s death: satisfaction, sufficiency, payment, purchase, ransom, and punishment. And these terms have made men angry.” [cited in George]

We see t/forensic nature (“forensic” from t/Latin “forum” = “court of law”) in passages like Rom 8:33:

“Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies.”

On the last day all of sin's indictments against t/believer will be dismissed. Why? Because they were themselves righteous? No, because of t/righteousness of Another – that of JC t/righteous.

This goes back t/believer's union with X (vv. 19-21).

Justification is a declarative act by God; it's not a process we ourselves must do. Whenever works are part of the equation, salvation is a process that can be lost but never gained.

It's not something we do; it's something JC does.

Therefore, no Christian is “more justified” than another Christian (Rom. 5:1).

(4) That said – there is an eschatological or future aspect to Justification (our salvation)

Tension – already-not-yet.

Justification is a past-tense declaration (not guilty).

Justification will also be a future-tense declaration (vindicated) - God's public announcement on t/last day that we belong to X.

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Fitting place to stop . . .