

Title: "Two Peoples – One Way" (Part 2)

Passage: Galatians 2:16

Theme: Paul's Central Point: Justification by Faith

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{{Read Passage}}

[i] Galatians 2:16 may be the key verse to the entire letter:

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.

[ii] Key word here is “justification”

I wonder how someone with a minimal knowledge of Christianity or biblical words like “justification” would understand that word.

I fear that even many within Evang. CH's would stutter at giving a def.

Yet, most everyone – even t/most pagan – have a rudimentary idea of what “saved” means.

[iii] 2004 saw a movie hit the theaters by that title: “Saved!”

Movie about a girl who becomes pregn. while attending a Xn H.S. When her pregn. becomes public she is ostracized & her friends turn against her.

While I've not seen t/film I presume it's sort of a modern day “Scarlet Letter” set in comedy. // that it didn't do a very good job at accur. rep. what it means to be a Xn – esp. in t/context of dealing graciously & biblically w/issues of sin.

But t/title alone (again I can only presume in a mocking way) demonstrates that t/world has some idea of what Xns mean they they talk about being “saved.”

If t/title of t/movie had been “justified” no one would a clue.

But if a sinner talks about having been saved, that's a close parallel to saying “I have been justified.” No exactly. Word group of salvation has to do with rescue / deliverance; word group of justification has to do w/being declared righteous or vindicated.

[iv] We have to understand that different words mean different things and that context is key

Salvation isn't the same thing as justification; Expiation / propitiation; election / regeneration; sanctification / glorification.

Even t/same word can carry a different nuance depending on context.

Romans 5:1 **THEREFORE having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,**

James 2:21**Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?**

James 2:24 **You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone.**

Romans 3:28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

Romans 4:2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God. cf. James 2:21

Difference between vindiction / necessity of works & justification which is apart from works.

Calvin: “Faith alone saves but the faith that saves is never alone.”

[v] Bring it back to verse 16?

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

I would argue that Paul's use of justification here is the same as his use in Romans chaps. 3-5 – forensic justification. Declared righteous.

There are some who would read this as saying that a man is not shown to be a Xn by works of the Law, but through faith in Jesus Christ.

[vi] Brings us back to the NPP

[vii] New + Perspective + About TAP

Specifically, what Paul taught as it relates to justification by faith over against t/works of t/law.

NP advocates claim t/CH (Protestants / Evangelicals) has misunderstood Paul's teaching on salv. (prim. as expressed Rom. & Gal) because we have misunderstood t/context of 1st c. Jewish thot (2d Temple Judaism).

Luther and the reformers read too much into Paul and the law. They read it in the context of RCC / works righteousness of medieval Rome.

Jewish rel. of Paul day wasn't legalistic / works-righteousness system. Rather, God was merciful to His people Israel & they were in right standing w/God by virtue of their being in t/Covt. Grace, faith, mercy. T/Jews kept t/law to remain in t/covt.

When Paul speaks of justification as opposed to works / law, he's not talking about an individual sinner being declared righteous b4 God, he's talking about Gentiles being accepted as Xns by t/Jews.

It's more about acceptance in t/CH than it is about acceptance b4 God.

Cf. "Table fellowship" in Galatians.

Paul is not opposing good works (even as contributors to final salvation). He's opposing a form of Jewish Xnty (Judaizers) required Gentiles to keep t/Law in order to be part of God's covt. people.

Law / Justification related to who was in covt. relationship w/God & how they stayed in. IOW – As a Jew you kept t/Law out of faithfulness (not out of legalism) & your works/law keeping would be a basis of your final justification at t/resurrection & judgment.

Most NPP advocates would say that for t/CH, for Xns, our works contribute to our salv. We have to stay faithful & believing to stay in t/New covt. Our good deeds will also be required when we stand b4 God at t/final judgment.

NPP is about who's in, who stays in, and who is finally & forever in (at t/final judgment).

[viii] As we mentioned 2 weeks ago – the biggest popularizer of this NP is the Anglican scholar NT Wright

Wright has brought t/issue from the academic world to t/pulpit & pew.

Pub. many books on t/pop. level. 1 of which “What St. Paul Really Said” (title). Published in t/1997 it's been subsequently revised.

Quotes:

“Despite a long tradition to the contrary, the problem Paul addresses in Galatians is not the question of how precisely someone becomes a Christian or attains to a relationship with God. (I’m not even sure how Paul would express, in Greek, the notion of ‘relationship with God’, but we’ll leave that aside.) The problem he addresses is: should ex-pagan converts be circumcised or not? . . . On anyone’s reading, but especially within its first-century context, [the problem] has to do, quite obviously, with the question of how you define the people of God. Are they to be defined by the badges of the Jewish race, or in some other way?” [page 120]

“Justification” in the first century was not about how someone might establish a relationship with God. It was about God’s eschatological definition, both future and present, of who was, in fact, a member of his people. In Sanders’ terms, it was not so much about “getting in,” or indeed about “staying in,” as about “how you could tell who was in.” In standard Christian theological language, it wasn’t so much about soteriology as about ecclesiology; not so much about salvation as about the church.” [page 119]

For those w/i t/NPP camp, justification is not about God declaring us righteous in X, it's about believers declaring who's in or out of t/CH regardless of ethnicity. ==>

“What Paul means by justification ... is not ‘how you become a Christian’, so much as ‘how you can tell who is a member of the covenant family.’ ... [Justification] is the doctrine which insists that all who share faith in Christ belong at the same table, no matter what their racial differences.” [page 122]

Ecumenism ==>

“Paul’s doctrine of justification by faith impels the churches, in their current fragmented state, into the ecumenical task. It cannot be right that the very doctrine which declares that all who believe in Jesus belong at the same table (Galatians 2) should be used as a way of saying that some, who define the doctrine of justification differently, belong at a different table. The doctrine of justification, in other words, is not merely a doctrine in which Catholic and Protestant might just be able to agree on, as a result of hard ecumenical endeavour. It is itself the ecumenical doctrine, the doctrine that rebukes all our petty and often culture-bound church groupings, and which declares that all who believe in Jesus belong together in the one family... . The doctrine of justification is in fact the great ecumenical doctrine.” [page 158]

That quote comes under a heading in t/book “The Ecumenical Task”

Unity is imp. but not at t/expense of t/Gospel. (Jesus & Nic.; Paul & Judaizers – 1:8-9).

[ix] As for justification, it certainly does relate to our standing before

God (salvation issue)

Romans 3:24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

Romans 4:6–8 6 just as David also speaks of the blessing upon the man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works: 7 “BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.8 “BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT.”

Romans 4:25 He who was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.

Romans 5:9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

Imputation (Romans 4) but also 2 Corinthians 5:21:

[God] made [Christ,] who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

[x] As it relates to Galatians

Yes, we have t/context of table fellowship (v. 12), but that stands w/i a greater context of t/Gospel (v. 14).

Doesn't have to be an either/or sort of thing. Yes it relates to fellowship w/i t/CH – but that fellowship is also grounded in t/reality of eschatological salvation.

Paul uses the same verb to rebuke Peter (“compel”) that t/pseudo-brethren used to push circumcision (t/Law) as necessary for salv. (cf. 2:3 with 2:14).

“By not having lunch with the Gentiles Peter communicated to them inadvertently that they did not belong to the people of God. So, Wright rightly sees ecclesiological dimensions to what happened at Antioch, but the ecclesiology is tied to and dependent upon soteriology.” [Thomas R. Schreiner, JETS 54:1 “The Saving Righteousness of Jesus Christ”]

Old Perspective on Paul fits t/me and t/Bible just fine.

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

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

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

Have to understand that Paul is using “sinners” here as it relates to t/Gentiles in typ. Jewish fashion (o/s t/covt.; w/o t/Law & promises).

a. False claim of NPP – 1st c. Jewish religion wasn't about self-righteousness

Seems that they give more authority to mostly liberal scholars than to t/NT itself.

There were a large segment of t/1st c. Jews who were self-righteous & who trusted in their law-keeping & Jewishness as a means to salvation.

As 1 writer puts it ==>

“Scripture clearly teaches that their central error was that they trusted too much in their own righteousness rather than resting their faith in the Old Testament truth that God would cover them with the garment of His own righteousness.” [Phil Johnson, “What's Wrong With Wright: Examining the New Perspective on Paul” www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/whats-wrong-wright-examining-new-perspective-paul]

Rom 10:3: They [Jews] being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

Jesus who constantly criticized the Pharisees for their self-righteousness. Rem t/parable of t/Pharisee & the Publican?

Luke 18:9 And He also told this parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt:

TAP's own test. in Phil. 3 {turn there}

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

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.*"

Univ. nature of sin also seen 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.

2d essential element of t/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. Romans 4 – Abraham justified by faith b4 t/Law / circumcision.

Law had its purposes, one of which was to prepare God's people-Jews and Gentiles-for the coming Savior. See that in chapter 3.

Verse 16 brings us 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.

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

a. Justified (used 3x)

(1) δικαιώω – Verb: “To declare as righteous”

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

(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”

(3) The heart of the Gospel

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.’

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.

1 Peter 1:3-9.

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

a. Justified (used 3x)

b. Works of the law = έργα νομου – 0x in 1:1-2:14; 3x in 2:16; 3x in the rest of the letter

Expression Paul uses 8x in his letters. 2x in Rom. 3; 6x in Gal.

In every case it's used in t/context of justification or what it means to receive t/HS. It is also used used in contrast to faith (IOW – not by WOL but by F).

a. See 3:2,5,10

b. 3:10 -Works of the Law = Requirements of the entire Mosaic Law

Those things that t/faithful Jew must obey under t/Old Covenant.

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

(1) Righteousness does not come by works of law

So far, so good. But commentators quibble about t/exact meaning of that phrase $\epsilon\rho\gamma\alpha$ νομου.

(2) Three main views:

(1) legalism; (2) the social boundary markers of the law; or (3) the deeds commanded by the law.

(a) Legalistic view contends that the phrase “works of the Law” refers to a legalistic self-righteous attempt to merit salvation

I think this view is close, but not quite accurate.

True that t/Judaizers were attempting to gain God's favor / forgiveness of sins by way of law-keeping.

5:4 **You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.**

But that's not specifically what t/phrase means. Rem. ML was not designed to be a system of raw legalism. Wasn't God's intent to give t/Law so that men could gain salvation by means of keeping it.

As one scholar observes ==>

The phrase “works of law” does not denote legalism (the desire to gain righteousness on the basis of works performed) in and of itself. “Works of law” refers to the deeds demanded by the law. [Schreiner, see section on pages 154–161]

(b) Second view is really off the mark in my opinion – this view claims that the “works of the law” refers to boundary markers that differentiate Jews and Gentiles (characteristics that define) – NPP

They might paraphrase verse 16 this way ==>

No one is shown to be a Christian by works of the Law like circumcision and food regulations, but only through faith in Jesus Christ.

i. Goes back to a 1977 book by E.P. Sanders who served as Arts and Sciences Professor of Religion at Duke University

In that book: “Paul and Palestinian Judaism” Sanders argued that t/Jewish religion of Paul's day was not a legalistic system of works righteousness, but a religion of grace grounded in God's covenant.

God's people became members of the covenant by God's grace, and they maintained their place in the covenant by their obedience.

ii. Here is where many advocates of the NP bifurcate the Law “Works of the Law” refers not to the entire Mosaic Law but only to the ceremonial aspects: things like circumcision & food regulations. Considered t/laws that divide Jews and Gentiles.

“identity markers” or “boundary markers” for Jews.

Problem w/this view is that it fails to recognize that there were significant strands in t/Jewish religion of Jesus' time that were very much legalistic and self-righteous. See that t/o t/NT (looked at earlier).

(c) “Works of law” = the entire Mosaic Law – all of the works required by the Law (moral, civil, ceremonial)

3:10 For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM.”

5:3 And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law.

We see that justification and Law keeping in v. 16 go beyond mere ceremonial boundary markers that ID Jews apart from Gents.

This would be a claim that t/Judaizers were guilty of a false gospel of Gentile exclusion (bigotry).

No – they were in danger of God's judgment because they taught a system of works-righteousness based on law-keeping.

On that count, God doesn't grade on a curve ==>

5:3 And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law.

While the law itself was not to be applied legalistically, the Jews did misuse the law in a legalistic fashion.

Epitaph from a 1st c. tomb of a Jewish woman ==>

“Here lies Regina . . . She will live again, return to the light again, for she can hope that she will rise to the life promised, as a real assurance, to the worthy and the pious in that she has deserved to possess an abode in the hallowed land. This your piety has assured you, this your chaste life, this your love for your people, this your observance of the Law, your devotion to your wedlock, the glory of which was dear to you. For all these deeds your hope for the future is assured.” [Pieter W. Van Der Horst, “Jewish Funerary Inscriptions,” *Biblical Archeology Review* 18:5 (Sept./Oct.): 55. Cited in Ryken, 62]

Ultimately, the problem isn't with the Law, which was good; the problem is with our lawlessness, our inability to keep the Law perfectly.

(3) Question: Were the Reformers right in their application?

Apply to works in general? “Law” with a little “I”?

(a) Turn to Romans 4:1-11 . . .

Cf. Ephesians 2:8–10 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast.10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

“good works God prepared beforehand” are not works of the ML!

c. Faith in Jesus Christ

(1) For this one we have only two views

faith in Jesus Christ or the faithfulness of Jesus Christ?

NET Bible: yet we know that no one is justified by the works of the law but by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. . . .

(2) πίστις Χριστοῦ (Genitive case) – could be translated either way

Subjective Genitive / Objective Genitive.

produces t/action receives t/action.

Lots of reasons why t/traditional translation (obj. gen) should be retained. Key ==> Nowhere does Paul in speaking of JC use the word “faith” (πίστις) to describe His “obedience.”

The issue is the object of faith: Jesus Christ.

Quote by Eisenhower: America “is founded in a deeply felt religious faith—and I don't care what it is.” [cited by Ryken, 63]

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Plight and Solution . . .

In the sixteenth century Duke George at Saxony protested against justification by faith alone saying, “It’s a great doctrine to die by, but a lousy one to live with!” [cited by George, 197]

Joy . . .

Luther ==>

The article of justification is fragile. Not in itself, of course, but in us. I know how quickly a person can forfeit the joy of the Gospel. I know in what slippery places even those stand who seem to have a good footing in the matters of faith. In the midst of the conflict when we should be consoling ourselves with the Gospel, the Law rears up and begins to rage all over our conscience. I say the Gospel is frail because we are frail. . . . God alone can create and preserve faith in us. God creates faith in us through the Word. He increases, strengthens and confirms faith in us through His Word. Hence the best service that anybody can render God is diligently to hear and read God's Word. . . . Let every believer carefully learn the Gospel. Let him continue in humble prayer. . . . When I first took over the defense of the Gospel, I remembered what Doctor Staupitz said to me. "I like it well," he said, "that the doctrine which you proclaim gives glory to God alone and none to man. For never can too much glory, goodness, and mercy be ascribed unto God."