

Title: "Two Peoples – One Way" (Part 3)

Passage: Galatians 2:16

Theme: Paul's Central Point: Justification by Faith

Number: 0315Ga2.16(19)

Date: March 15, 2015

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{{Read Passage}}

[i] Last week: 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"

Out of that key word flows a key doctrine: JBFA.

This is t/doctrine that made men Xns & CH's evangelical.

Was a doctrine that was nearly extinguished during t/middle ages – up to t/time of t/PR of 16<sup>th</sup> c.

As we've been looking ==>

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

First being ==>

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

Spec. – Jews, while a privileged people, are born in sin & are in need of a Savior every bit as much as t/Gentiles.

This am I want to continue where we left off last week==>

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

### 1. "Justified" (Verb δικαιωω) - used 3x in v. 16

As it relates to our judicial standing before G t/word means "to declare righteous." By JS = where we stand as guilty sinners b4 a holy G who is judge of heaven & earth. B4 t/courtroom of heaven, R default judicial standing is "guilty." That's t/way we're born, in Adam, separated from G by our sin.

### 2. To be justified by faith in X = to have saving faith in Him as my sin bearer & only hope of righteousness before God

When a man/woman/young person, comes to believe in JC as aided by t/H.S. It isn't so much that G declare that person "not guilty" in a neg. sense; it's a pos. declaration that the sinner is now "righteous" in His sight because that person is now "in X".

#### a. Why we call "justification" a "forensic" term, or drawn from the courts of law

When someone comes to humble faith or trust in G's provision of X for his sin, G declares that person just. It's not that G makes us righteous in his declaration, but he declares us righteous because we are now united w/JC and I.D. w/Him in his death/burial/resurrection. See that in Rom 6.

*Was a doctrine that was nearly extinguished during t/middle ages – up to t/time of t/PR of 16<sup>th</sup> c.*

#### b. Why? Why was this essential aspect of the Gospel for the most part missed during the middle ages (broadly speaking)?

There are sev. reasons for this – reasons that go beyond t/scope of our study. But, 1 likely reason is a grammatical one: When we talk about biblical words from t/NT we're speaking Gk. (δικαιοω).

For 1k years, t/Bible that t/CH used (not t/ppl. but t/clergy) was in Latin: Jerome's Latin Vulgate. Back to this in a min.

**c. Go back in history to the 16<sup>th</sup> c when God Providentially raised up two men: Erasmus and Luther**

Desiderius Erasmus - a man who kept 1 foot in t/RCC & t/out; & M.L. who broke w/Rome entirely. They were rivals – partic.. over t/issue of man's will (free or in bondage to sin – Luther's Bondage of the Will). Yet, Erasmus provided t/Greek Text that was essential to t/Reformation.

**(1) Martin Luther was born in 1483 in Eisleben Germany**

He studied law at t/Univ. in Erfurth. Rem. t/story – he was out in a storm & lightening struck at his feet. In a panic he cried out: "Help me Saint Anne! I will become a monk" That's what he did – changing his course of study at Erfurth from law to scholastic theology.

**(2) He became a monk in the Augustinian order**

The more religious he became t/less peace he had. He prayed & fasted; he studied w/i t/confines of his tiny room. He was encouraged to do more works – more meritorious deeds done on behalf of t/CH. Yet he had no assurance.

He went to confession daily – sometimes multiple x ea. day.

According to his friend & mentor, John Staupitz; on 1 one occasion Luther rehearsed t/sins of the previous day for 6 hrs. Staupitz took him aside & said, "Martin, you're getting a little carried away. You need to confess some real sins."

He had no lasting peace. Would leave t/confessional and head straight to his small cell. Then he would remember a sin he had forgotten & fear would rush over his soul all over again.

"Christ seems to me as an angry judge with a sword in his hand." Do I love God? God who judges sinners // who imposes the relentless decrees of his laws upon men's conscience Love God? Sometimes I hate him."

### (3) Luther knew that he could do nothing to remove his sin

Having grace infused to you thru t/sacraments in an effort to somehow become righteous enough 2 merit peace w/G seemed to be as imp. as draining t/Rhine river into a beer mug.

Even our best, as Isaiah declared centuries before X, "are as a filthy garment" They are as a *iddah beged*. *Beged* is t/Heb. word for a garment/covering. *Iddah* is t/Heb. word for menstruation.

Our religiosity / righteousness – apart from faith (ult. X) is as an unclean thing.

### (4) Luther frustration came to a head while on a pilgrimage to Rome

He hoped to find t/richness of true spirituality in Rome. What he found were people driven by perversion, ignorance, & superstition.

Yet, he plunged himself into t/work of t/CH. He officiated over t/mass sev. times. He pondered what was to him a great dilemma: his parents were alive; but if they were dead t/means of their release from could attained while he was there.

#### (a) Pilate's staircase

*Scala Sancta* (holy stairs) = 28 white marble steps within a building in Rome near the Lateran Basilica.

T/stairs lead to the *Sancta Sanctorum* (Holy of Holies), t/chapel of St. Lawrence which was used by Popes of antiquity.

Acc. to trad. these r t/same steps that lead up to t/praetorium of Pontius Pilate in Jerus. – t/steps upon which JC walked on his way to trial.

Medieval legends claim that t/*Scala Sancta* were brot from Jerus. to Rome about 326 by St. Helena, mother of Constantine t/Great.

Pilgrims were encouraged to ascend t/stairway on their knees while praying at each step. In doing so one could get an indulgence. Luther, like so many before / after him, ascended t/stone steps. 1 by 1, on his knees, praying as he went.

Charles Dickens, after visiting the *Scala Sancta* in 1845, wrote: "I never, in my life, saw anything at once so ridiculous and so unpleasant as this sight." He described the scene of pilgrims ascending the staircase on their knees as a "dangerous reliance on outward observances".

Luther reaches t/top, stands & says: "Who knows whether it is so?"  
What does this have to do w/having my sins forgiven & gaining eternal life? Voice thunders in his heart, "The just shall live by faith!"

That was it! That's t/message of t/OT prophet cited by TAP in Rom. 1:17 - t/passage that ignited a flame in Luther's heart!

(b) Not only shall t/just live by faith—it is by faith that they are just  
Romans 3:22-24 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

(c) The word in verse 24 "justified" is from the verb δικαιῶ  
Same word we see used 3x in Gal. 2:16.

#### i. Brings us back to Erasmus and the Latin Vulgate

Word for righteousness or justification in Latin is *iustificari* which means "to make righteous."

δικαιῶ means "to declare righteous."

#### ii. What's the big deal?

Imp. diff. – diff. between imputed & infused righteousness.

To be made righteous means that U have to become holy enough to merit heaven. To do that, U must have holiness infused to U which comes by way of good works done in keeping w/the grace of t/CH. Makes CH sacraments – esp. t/mass essential for any hope of heaven.

But there's still a problem. You can lose that infused righteousness. It can be forfeited altogether through mortal sin.

It's like climbing a ladder rung by rung hoping to somehow get to t/top. Ladder is broken.

Danger of hell always lurks & realistically your best hope for heaven comes by way of a lengthy time of suffering in purgatory.

So much for *iustificari* & infused righteousness.

Bad way to get your sins forgiven; great way for a CH to retain power over t/masses (no pun). Superb way to fill t/CH coffers (indulgences).

### iii. Repentance vs Penance

Biblical doctrine of repentance was perverted by t/Vulgate which rendered t/concept of 'repentance' w/the idea of “doing penance.”

From Erasmus' Gk. N.T. Luther recognized the error and wrote, “*When our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, said ‘Repent,’ he meant that the entire life of believers should be one of repentance.*”

Gospel isn't about acts of penance; it's a radical change of mind-set and an equally deep transformation of life. Luther would later write to John Staupitz about this glowing discovery: “*I venture to say they are wrong who make more of the act in Latin than of the change of heart in Greek!*” (Sinclair Ferguson, “Medieval Mistakes”).

Man doesn't need heart surgery // a new heart // religion / regeneration. We don't need imperfect, man-centered infused righteousness.

From t/law or otherwise. ==> Philippians 3:9

... found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,

**(5) As Luther began to study the Greek text –**

he came to t/realization that when the Bible talks about justification, it's not talking about our being 'made righteous,' it's talking about our being 'declared righteous.'

**(a) We've said it before ==>**

When a judge pronounces condemnation on a criminal, he doesn't make him guilty of t/offense of which he is condemned, he simply recognizes that he is guilty & passes judgment. ISW when a judge pronounces somebody just, he doesn't make him just (*justificari*), he declares him to be just before t/law.

In fact, you could have an evil man standing trial for a crime he didn't commit. Just because he's found not guilty of that crime doesn't mean he's a righteous man.

If you ask, "Well, how can we who are guilty be found "just" before God's high court?"

Answer is that G justifies us solely by His grace thru our faith in JC. Based on X's perfect righteousness. The believer's sin was imputed to Him on t/cross; His righteousness is imputed to us by faith.

“A Christian is not someone who has no sin or feels no sin; he is someone to whom, because of his faith in Christ, God does not impute his sin.” [Luther, Galatians]

Psalm 32:2 **How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity . . .**

“Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

**. . . 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.**

**LBCF Paragraph 1.** Those whom God effectually calls, he also freely justifies, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing Christ's active obedience unto the whole law, and passive obedience in his death for their whole and sole righteousness by faith, which faith they have not of themselves; it is the gift of God.

Paragraph 2. Faith thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification; yet is not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but works by love.

Paragraph 3. Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those who are justified; and did, by the sacrifice of himself in the blood of his cross, undergoing in their stead the penalty due to them, make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice in their behalf; yet, in as much as he was given by the Father for them, and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead, and both freely, not for anything in them, their justification is only of free grace, that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.

Last week we asked the question: *“Were the Reformers right in their application of passages like Galatians 2:16 to their struggle against t/works-based system of medieval Rome?”*

Absolutely!

Justification by faith was no innovation; it was a renovation.

Is it important that we know these things?

Alister McGrath quotes t/early 20<sup>th</sup> c. theologian Paul Tillich:

*“Protestantism was born out of the struggle for the doctrine of justification by faith. This doctrine is strange to the man of today, and even to Protestant people in the churches; indeed, as I have over and over again had the opportunity to learn, it is so strange to the modern man that there is scarcely any way of making it intelligible to him.”*

[Alister McGrath, *Justification by Faith*, 9]

Sounds more like t/man who was asked do define the difference between ignorance and apathy: “I don't know and I don't care!”

“The doctrine of justification by faith is like Atlas: it bears a world on its shoulders, the entire evangelical knowledge of saving grace.” Packer went on to say what happens “when Protestants let the thought of justification drop out of their minds: the true knowledge of salvation drops out with it, and cannot be restored till the truth of justification is back in its proper place. When Atlas falls, everything that rested on his shoulders comes crashing down too.” [J.I. Packer, cited in Ryken, 66]

**3. This Begs the Question: If God declares us righteous thru faith alone – if works don't save us or contribute to our salvation – why do them?**

Someone might even ask: Why live a changed life if that's not necessary?

Of course, that's t/wrong ?

Not about living a changed life it's about having a changed life.

Can't try to live what you don't have & can't not live what you are.

Matthew 7:17–18 **17 “Even so, every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit.18 “A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.**

1. Doesn't mean we don't sin. Does mean that we are different. Something has been radically changed in our spiritual DNA.

**a. Relationship between justification and sanctification**

Between what it means to be forgiven/how that relates to our daily life

First of all, justification occurs when t/elect sinner comes to saving faith in JC. God quickens our hearts (regen), we believe, repent & are spiritually united w/JC.

vv. 19-20 ---

As a result of my union w/X I am declared righteous.

Acquitted of all guilt; t/stain of sin removed; I become a partaker of X's righteousness.

God sees you in X. Clothed w/His righteousness.

Justification happens once. Only once. The elect cannot lose it; the non-elect cannot gain it; it cannot be improved upon. It's not that my justification is better than yours, or holier. How could it be? It's all about JC! If my justification is 100% in Christ how can that be improved upon? Can X improve upon Himself? Is He divided and gives to one 80% of Himself and to another 100%.

While that occurs apart from works that doesn't mean that justified sinners go on living as they did before they were justified.

Whenever a sinner is justified, that same one is also sanctified and put on the road to sanctification.

When someone is born again they receive the fulness of t/H.S., they are New Creations in X, partakers of t/New Covt., adopted as children of God & God ensures that His children walk worthy before Him. Our spiritual DNA has been changed, so we can't live like we did before.

This was t/accusation of Rome against t/Reformers – If you make it all of grace & take away works people will live sinful lives.

That's the same argument Paul dealt w/in Romans 6. After talking about God's rich grace and how grace abounds over sin, he addresses the question, in v. 1: "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" His answer is "may it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it."

That's the point!

"[if works] do not follow, it is a sure sign that there is no faith there; but only an empty thought and dream, which they falsely call faith."  
[Luther]

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

JC is our only hope. Not a church or sacraments or works or purgatory or Mary.

What more can I do but cast myself upon the mercy of JC believing that He died for me that I could live? What more can I do? What more can any sinner do?

“We are justified in no other way than by faith, or, which comes to the same thing. . . . that we are justified by faith alone.” [John Calvin, cited in Ryken, 66]

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Life is preparation for death. May sound morbid . . .

But we do a disservice to t/CH if all our teaching/preaching is centered on this present life w/o consideration for eternity.

Book we've been reading through on Wednesday nights: “Silent Witnesses: Lessons on Theology, Life and the Church from Christians of the Past.”

Past few weeks we've been reading about t/Puritan poet Anne Bradstreet.

Living in 17<sup>th</sup> c. colonial America was to live with death.

The book's author Garry Williams observes that ==>

“For the Puritans, death was an ever present reality, as it is for the greater part of the human race even today.” [136]

In t/course of 5 years Bradstreet saw her granddaughter die at 18 mo.; a fire destroyed her home; a second grand-daughter died at age 3.5; her 28 yo daughter in law died followed by her infant grandson.

In t/midst of her suffering, her thoughts were on an eternal hope.

She wrote in her Contemplations as she reflected on the secret name given to each believer on a white stone in Rev. 2:17:

O Time the fatal wrack of mortal things,  
That draws oblivion's curtains over kings;  
Their sumptuous monuments, men know them not,  
Their names without a record are forgot,  
Their parts, their ports, their pomp's all laid in the dust  
Nor wit nor gold, nor buildings escape times rust  
But he whose name is graved in the white stone  
Shall last and shine when all of these are gone.

Death comes, people are forgotten; eternity looms.

Martin Luther died on February 18, 1546, in Eisleben, Germany (same town where he was born). He was a weary man of 62 years of age.

As death approached, he kept repeating the words of John 3:16: **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only unique Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”**

Dr. Jonas then asked him: “Do you want to die standing firm on Christ and the doctrine you have taught?” Out of his weakness, Luther garnered enough strength to cry out: “Yes!”

A few minutes later he passed into the presence of his Lord and Savior.

Is t/doctrine of justification by faith alone in t/fin. work of JC imp? It must be where we live and where we stand – and where we die.