

Title: Two Peoples – One Way (Part 1)

Text: Galatians 2:15-16

Central Idea: Paul's Central Point: Justification by Faith

Number: 1124Ga2.15-16(15)

Date: November 10, 2024

[i] Scripture Reading and Prayer

15 We [are] Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles. 16 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. 17 But if while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be! 18 For if I rebuild what I once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor. 19 For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ – 20 and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. 21 I do not nullify the grace of God: for if righteousness [comes] through the Law, then Christ died for no purpose.

[ii] Our last message in Galatians served as an introduction to this section

We noted t/transitional nature of these 7 vv. which flow almost imperceptibly from Paul's rebuke of Peter in v. 11 to t/great doctrine of JBF.

It is in these vv. where we are introduced to t/key elements as it pertains to the Gospel

[iii] 2:16 is central in that regard:

16 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.

[iv] Key word: “justified” (δικαιοω)

Talked about that word B4 & how when it’s used in t/context of our hope of salv, it means “to be declared righteous.”

[v] Don’t misunderstand — the word can be used other ways (context is king in Bible study)

Same word can carry a completely diff. meaning depending on t/context in which it’s used.

“Semantic range” (words aren’t monolithic in meaning).

Looking at t/word δικαιοω (“justified”) for example ==>

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

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

Judicial - “declared righteous.”

We are justified by what we believe, not what we do.

Note the same word used in a different context ==>

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

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

Wait! We just read Rom. 4:2 [^] Contradiction?

Very imp. to get this. RCs (others who contend that works are a part of justification) use James to prove their point.

James is using t/word a different way.

He's using t/word t/way it's used of Jesus in Matt. 11:19 =>

Matthew 11:19b . . . wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

Word “vindicated” is t/Gk. v. δικαιωω — to be justified.

ESV translates as “justified”

“Wisdom is ‘justified’ by her deeds (works).

Tru wisdom is demonstrated in one's life.

Faith (James) is justified (vindicated) by works.

Tru faith is demonstrated (justified) by one's life.

True faith works. As it's been said, James & Paul don't stand face-to-face w/swords drawn against ea. other; rather, they stand back-to-back fighting different enemies.

Paul fights against legalism (works save you); James fights against antinomianism (that you can possess saving faith apart from a changed life).

Faith that saves is apart from works (faith alone saves) but saving faith will be accompanied by, vindicated by, a changed life.

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

Context is king.

[vi] Bring it back to verse 16

16a . . . we know that a man is not justified by works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ. . . .

Argue that Paul's use of justif. here is t/same as his use in Rom. chaps. 3-5 – forensic justification. Declared righteous. This is at the heart of t/Gospel.

[vii] When we talk about the Gospel what are we talking about?

Word εὐαγγέλιον = “Good news.” {expand}

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

As far as “Essential Elements” are concerned, these aren’t the only aspects that are key to t/Good News of JC, but they are central to this passage.

A. The Universal Nature of Sin (v. 15-16a)

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

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

Sounds like Paul is saying to Peter (context):

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

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

To t/Jew there were 2 races: T/Jew & everyone else. (Jews & Gentiles). Was assumed that if you were a Gentile you were a pagan.

(1) True of the church in the 1st c. Roman context

If you weren't a Xn you were a pagan. Increasingly true in t/West today. We could say that there are 2 classes of people: 1) True Xns; 2) Not. (Saints / aints; Saints / aint yet)

See this distinction in t/NT (example) ==>

1 Cor. 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? (saints/Xns & unrighteous/aints)

(3) History of missions in the Christian church has resulted in bringing civilization to pagans

When t/CH has been successful, t/gospel has resulted in changed lives (born again).

Resulted in cultures w/more CH's, objective morality, healthy marriages & families, greater literacy, lower crime.

(4) Paganism is back on the rise

As we've retreated to a post-Xn culture in t/West, t/marks of paganism have been evident: instead of new lives in X we have old lives steeped in depravity. Instead of healthy marriages & families we have dysfunctional marriages (decrease in marriage). Even t/def. of marriage is pagan. Morality is no longer grounded in an absolute (Bible) so we are now subject to morality by shifting consensus.

“Values vs morals”

Our culture is like a balloon w/o a tether.

Now abortion is defined as a key issue only so far as you agree w/it. Noticed that? It's a key issue to me, but not for t/reasons t/pollsters count it. It's become a fact that t/maj. want unrestricted abortion so t/political winds have shifted accordingly.

Last week NY passed more pro-abortion legislation. Prop. 1. After it passed our present Gov. Kathy Hochul: "Abortion is health care, health care is a human right — and that right is finally enshrined in the New York State constitution."

We need some lessons on logic here.

When at least 1 person dies as a result of an abortion, it's not health care.

The elephant in the abortion room is a baby.

Calling abortion health care or women's reproductive rights in an example of a "persuasive definition fallacy." That's when you re-brand something so that it doesn't reflect reality. Abortion has been rebranded & millions w/poor reasoning ability have been brainwashed.

Really doesn't matter if t/majority thinks it's right.

A moral wrong can never be a majority right.

Fact is, in this nation we were never designed to be ruled by t/51% vote. That was t/democracy of ancient Greece.

We were made to a nation of laws w/representatives that would uphold those laws (grounded in biblical absolutes).

"Not under men, but under God and law" [Inscription at the Harvard Law School]

(5) Back to the history of Israel (surrounded by pagan nations)

Gentiles were considered outside t/covt. - hence sinful.

Now unbelievers are considered o/s t/covt. Not t/OC but NC

b. Remember, this is Paul speaking to Peter in Antioch:
15 We [are] Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles.

3. That distinction between Jew and Gentile changed with the coming of Jesus Christ (church)

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.

We are all one people in X.

a. That's the context here in chapter 2

Peter's hypocrisy. Peter who became aloof & separated from his Gentile brethren. And his influence resulted in 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."

(1) We've seen this hypocrisy in our nation's history

As one example, 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/sacrament until after t/white members had been served.

Direct, clear violation of God's Word! (cf. Gal. 3:28).

I think of t/Dred Scott decision whereby SCOTUS in 1857, ruled (7–2) that a slave (Dred Scott) was not entitled to freedom; that African Americans were not and could never be citizens of the United States. In short, they were property w/no rights.

14th Amendment to the Constitution later nullified Dred Scott & granted personhood to African Americans guaranteeing them equal protection under t/law.

Unfortunately, that's not true of everyone today. It's time to grant personhood status to t/unborn. That's a sermon for another day.

We said that this first point was ==>

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

4. Where is that in verse 15?

It's in t/context which flows into v. 16. Note esp. t/first word:

16a **Yet . . .**

NASB Nevertheless . . .

Yet what? Nevertheless what?

16a . . . **we know that a man is not justified by works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ. . . .**

IOW whether we're Jews or Pagans, we are under sin and need to believe in JC in order to be redeemed.

5. The word “man” here is an example of the universal use of *ανθρωπος* (people)

People are not justified (saved from sin) by works of t/Jewish Law (capital “L” - M.L.) or any lowercase “L” laws (rules, regulations, or good intentions). Only by faith in X.

A. The Universal Nature of Sin (v. 15-16a)

All have sinned & fallen short of God's glory. Rom. 3:23.

2d point / 2d "Essential Element of the Gospel in Galatians"

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

1. The Jews had the Law (which was a good thing)

But t/Law could do only what it was designed for. It could not do what it wasn't designed for: forgiveness of sin.

Law could not save //could not reconcile sinners to a holy G. Was always by faith (Romans 4).

2. What Paul is saying is this:

"Peter, we know that t/Gentiles were o/s t/Covt & hopeless B4 G. 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; our only hope is through faith in JC."

Goes back to t/age-old ? of Job 9:1, 'How can a man be just (LXX δίκαιος - righteous) before God?' That's t/? we are all faced with. Reconciliation / forgiveness / Hope of eternity.

3. The Law had its purposes — one of which was to prepare God's people for the coming Savior

a. Turn over to Galatians 3

3:19, 21-22 19 Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.

21 Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. 22 But the Scripture has shut up everyone

under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

3:24-26 24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. 26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Jews & Gentiles comprise 2 groups that can only be justified one way: by faith. Two peoples; one way.

4. Note the grammatical shift in vv. 15-16 ==>

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

16a 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)

That's v. 16. A verse NT scholar Tom Schreiner calls

“. . . one of the most important verses in all of Galatians.”

He goes on: “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 writer states of v. 16 ==>

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

This is *sola fide* — Reformational truth. Transformational...

That is a reformation/transform. that continues:

5. We're not done . . . need to unpack this long verse

16 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.

a. One key word and two key phrases

Justified. Works of the Law. Faith in Jesus Christ.

(1) Justified (used 3x)

Verb δικαιωω – “To declare as righteous” (touched on this). Common word in Gal. To no surprise, t/other place where it is often found is in BOR / 15x (Gal = Rom. in miniature).

(a) We're going to move our discussion from Greek to Hebrew

This Grk. word (δικαιωω) & its noun form find their counterpart in t/OT Heb. word קָדַשׁ.

קָדַשׁ is a word whose meaning relates to “justice” & “righteousness.” In its active verbal form קָדַשׁ = “to declare as just or innocent.”

We see this in the OT –

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

But human judges can't declare anyone to be righteous.

(b) On that point Tom Schreiner has this to say:

“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.

[Idea that we need to be “made” R. is t/terminal error of RC theology which holds to infused R. (thru CH, sacra & works)]

“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.

[IOW an earthly magistrate pronounces an innocent person not guilty; he doesn’t pronounce that person pos. righteous]

“Paul, of course, does not think God violates any standard of justice, for Christ bears the curse that sinners deserved (3:10–13).”

God in Christ, in contrast to human judges, declares us to be more than just “not guilty” — He declares us pos. righteous.

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.”

Note t/picture. We have a prosecuting atty; defendant; judge.

Question 60 of the 1563 Heidelberg Catechism ==>

Q “How are you righteous before God?” **A** 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 – the verdict of sin is reversed and I am clothed with the white robes of Jesus Christ my Savior and Lord.

[c] On the last day all of sin's indictments against the believer will be dismissed

Why? Because they were themselves righteous? No, because of t/righteousness of Another – that of JC t/righteous.

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 Xn is “more justified” than another Xn.

My 12 yo daughter told me t/other day that I was more Xn than someone else. I told her, “No honey, there are no degrees of Xn.” It’s all about t/same Jesus . . .

2 Cor. 5:21: [God] made [Christ,] who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become t/righteousness of God in Him.

(d) 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 t/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).

(e) The heart of the Gospel

It is all of grace. It refuses all attempts at self-salvation. 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.”

i. Under attack

There’s no doubt that sinful ppl. apart from t/work of t/HS hate it; certainly t/demons of hell hate it.

Tru t/o history. Tru in Luther’s day, before t/16th c. Today. 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]

Last month liberation theologian Gustavo Guitierrez died at age 96. He is considered t/father of L.T. which is another attack against t/gospel & t/doctrine of JBFA.

L.T. grew out of t/1960s unrest & redefined salv. as t/deliverance of t/oppresed from their oppressors.

Really has more in common w/Marxism than Xnty.

L.T. has fit well w/modern liberal Xnty. We see this corrupt theol. in recent movts. like BLM, t/woke agenda, t/sexual rev It's all about delivering those who are deemed oppressed from their oppressors (usu. def. as white Xn capitalists).

I think most who hold L.T. would applaud t/destruction of statues & changing Columbus Day (deeming C.C. a colonialist oppressor) to Indigenous PPls. Day (t/oppressed).

Former Pres. B. Obama & VP K. Harris both have attended L.T. CHs. They have also moved t/needle in American politics toward Marxism. (note schools / universities).

ii. The Gospel is under attack

Will you join me in “Sanctified Stubbornness” against these attacks & for t/truth of Just. by faith alone apart from works, no matter how unpopular?

That's our key word ==>

(1) *Justified*

Our 1st of 2 key phrases is ==>

(2) Works of the Law (εργα νομου, t/Gen. from νομος)

16a **Yet we know that a man is not justified by works of the Law . . .**

(a) We noted that this phrase refers to the requirements of the Mosaic Law

T/laws a faithful Jew was to obey under t/Old Covt.

(b) Righteousness does not come by these works of law

So far, so good. But commentators quibble about t/exact meaning of that phrase εργα νομου.

(c) Three main views:

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

i. Legalistic view

Contends that 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.

Paul dramatically counters that in 5:4 ==>

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

But pure legalism is not spec. what t/phrase “WOTL” 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.

Listen to t/words of this authority ==>

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]

Legalism is close, but not quite there.

ii. Social Boundary Marker view of the NP

This view claims that the “works of the law” refers to boundary markers that differentiate Jews & Gentiles (Sabbath, circumcision, dietary regulations).

This view is really off t/mark in my humble opinion.

* **E.P. Sanders**

We talked last time about how this goes back to a 1977 book by E.P. Sanders. In that book: “Paul & Palestinian Judaism.” Sanders argued that t/Jewish religion of Paul's day was not in any way a legalistic system of works righteousness, but a religion of grace grounded in Gd's covt. “Covenantal nomism.”

G's people became members of the covt by G's grace, & they maintained their place in t/covenant by their obedience. That is not justification acc. to t/N.T.

* **N.T. Wright**

We noted that t/biggest popularizer of this NP is the Anglican scholar NT Wright. Wright has brought t/issue from the academic world to t/pulpit & pew. Written many books on t/pop. level. 1 of which “What St. Paul Really Said” (title) was published in 1997.

In that book he writes ==>

“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. . . . The problem he addresses is: should ex-pagan converts be circumcised or not? . . . [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]

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

I fear that they give more authority to 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.

My friend Phil Johnson wrote this in an article on Ligonier's website ==>

“Scripture clearly teaches that their [the Jews] 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]

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, & seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

Jesus regularly criticized t/Pharisees for their self-right.

Rem t/parable of t/Pharisee & the Publican in Luke 18? Introduced this way ==>

. . . He also told this parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt.

A parable about 2 men who went up into the temple to pray: esteemed Pharisee & a despised tax collector. T/Pharisee stood up & prayed “God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.”

That's self-righteousness, right?

Meanwhile, t/tax collector was unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the sinner!’

Jesus concludes by saying that he was t/1 who was justified.
NP claim that 1st c. Jews were not self-righteousness is false

3d view is t/most accurate ==>

iii. Paul's phrase "works of the Law" means the demands of the Law

Entire Mosaic Law – everything required under that system
Couldn't pick and choose . . .

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 & Law keeping in v. 16 go beyond mere cerem. bound. markers that ID Jews apart from Gntiles.

While t/Law itself was not to be applied legalistically, t/Jews did misuse t/Law in a legalistic fashion.

We see that in Jewish culture of t/time.

Take this 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, t/problem isn't w/the Law, which was good for what it was good for (not good for what it wasn't good for).

*** Is Wright right?**

No, t/Reformers & those who came before them were right to see Justification as referring to indiv. salvation by grace thru faith alone in X.

Eph. 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! More on that at a later date.

Last key phrase ==>

(3) Faith in Jesus Christ

(a) For this one we have only two views

“Faith in Jesus Christ” or “t/faithfulness of Jesus Christ?”

See it transl. that latter way in t/NET Bible:

16b . . . yet we know that no one is justified by the works of the law but by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. . . .

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

In Gk. grammar this is diff. between t/subj. gen. & t/obj. gen.

If you transl. this as a S.G. you get “we are justified by the faithfulness of JC.”

If you transl. this as an O.G. you get “we are justified by faith in JC.”

Could be transl. either way, but far more translations rightly go w/the latter (we are justified by faith in X).

1 argument ==> Nowhere does Paul in speaking of X use t/word “faith” (πίστις) to describe His obedience or His faithfulness.

The issue is the object of faith: Jesus Christ.

Again, biblical faith always has an object behind it.

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

That's t/world's definition. It's your private faith & it doesn't matter what it's connected to.

That's only a faith that condemns; cannot save.

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

A. The Universal Nature of Sin (vv. 15-16a)

B. Justification Is by Faith Alone (v. 16) More to follow.

In t/16th c. Duke George of Saxony said that justification by faith alone is “A great doctrine to die by, but a lousy one to live with!” [cited by George, 197]

I think he meant that salv. by faith alone is a great comfort in death, even tho it's a challenge to live by in t/face of so much persecution.

It's fitting that on this Reformation season we give t/last word to M. 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."