

Title: Two Peoples – One Way (Part 2)

Text: Galatians 2:16

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

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**[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.**

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**[ii] Last week we said that verse 16 is central to Galatians T/rest of t/letter, from v. 17 onward, serves as a commentary on this single 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.**

**[iii] Key word here is “justification”**

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

We are justified (saved) by faith alone apart from works.

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

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

*Post Tenebras Lux*

This is t/Gospel that answers t/? "How can sinful people, destined for God's wrath, be forgiven and restored to peace with God so that he may worship and enjoy Him forever?"

With that in mind, we've been looking ==>

**I. Essential Elements of the Gospel in Galatians (vv. 15-21)**  
Particularly 2:15-21.

1st E.E. ==>

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

**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.**

Paul is revisiting his conversation w/Peter in Antioch.  
He's saying ==>

“We are Jews by nature (by birth). We’re not those who were born o/s of t/Covt. w/Israel (Gentiles). Nevertheless, we both know that no one is saved from sin by t/Law; it’s only through faith in JC.”

T/Jews, while a privileged people, are sinners in need of a Savior — every bit as much as t/Gentiles.

This am I want to continue where we left off last week (2d point)==>

## **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 be declared righteous."

#### **a. Judicial**

We stand as guilty sinners b4 a holy G. who is sov. judge of heaven & earth. B4 t/courtroom of heaven, our 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 Christ is to have saving faith in Him as my sin bearer & only hope before God**

#### **a. That’s a positive thing**

When someone comes to believe in JC as Lord & Savior, it isn't so much that G. declares that person “not guilty” in a neg. sense. It’s also a pos. decl. that t/sinner is now seen as “righteous” in God’s sight.

Why?

Because that person is now clothed in t/righteousness of J.C.

X's righteousness has been imputed to t/sinner, even as that person's sin has been imputed to X.

Exchanged life: all that I am for all that X is.

**b. Remember — “justification” is a "forensic" term (judicial)**

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 that declaration, but He declares us righteous because we are now united w/JC & I.D. w/Him in his life/death/burial/resurrection.

This is a central dogma of Xnity.

Yet it was a doctrine that nearly extinguished during t/middle ages – up to t/time of t/PR of 16th c.

**c. Why?**

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

**(1) There are several reasons for this – reasons that go beyond the scope of our study**

But, one key 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.

**d. First — go back with me in history to the 16th c when God Providentially raised up two men: Desiderius Erasmus and Martin Luther**

**(1) Some key differences between these two men**

Erasmus - a man who kept 1 foot in t/RCC & t/out  
AND M.L. who broke w/Rome entirely.

Were rivals – partic.. over t/issue of man's will (free or in bondage to sin – Luther's Bondage of the Will).

**(2) Erasmus gave Luther a key tool that would serve the reformation well**

His Greek translation of t/NT.

**e. As for Martin Luther . . .**

**(1) He was born in 1483 in Eisleben Germany.**

He studied law at t/Univ. in Erfurth. Rem. t/story – he was out in a storm & lightning 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 dear friend John Staupitz: on 1 one occasion Luther rehearsed t/sins of 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 rem. 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 remedy his sin**  
Having grace infused to you thru t/sacraments in an effort to somehow be righteous enough 2 merit peace w/G seemed to be as impossible 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. *Iddah* is t/Heb. word for menstruation.

Menstrual clothes. Vivid picture of something ceremonially unclean. That's t/best mere religion can offer!

It is only thru faith in God's provision (X) that our uncleanness becomes righteousness.

**f. Luther's spiritual depression was so great that his friends didn't know what to do to help him**

**(1) Was suggested that he take a pilgrimage to Rome**

There he would find t/richness of true spirituality.

That wasn't what happened. He was disgusted w/the sinful attitudes & actions of t/clergy.

Beyond that he found masses who were driven by ignorance & superstition.

Undeterred, he plunged himself into works finding no solace for his soul.

**(2) One great feature there is known as Pilate's Staircase (the "Scala Sancta" - holy stairs)**

28 white marble steps within a building near the Lateran Basilica.

Those steps lead to the *Sancta Sanctorum* (Holy of Holies) at t/chapel of St. Lawrence, used by Popes of antiquity.

Acc. to trad. these are 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 legend claims that t/Scala Sancta were brot from Jerus. to Rome about 326 by St. Helena, mother of Constantine t/Great.

Pilgrims to Rome were encouraged to ascend t/stairs on their knees while praying at each step. Doing so could gain an indulgence (forgiveness of sin).

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, like so many before / after him, ascended t/stone steps 1 by 1, on his knees, praying as he went.

Luther reaches t/top, stands & thinks: "Who knows whether it is so?"

What does this have to do with the forgiveness of sin?

**(3) It was subsequent to that when a voice would thunder 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/passagage that ignited a flame in Luther's heart!

**(a) Not only shall the just live by faith—it is by faith that they are just**

Rom. 3:22-24 speaks of "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe." "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

Word in verse 24 "justified" is from the verb δικαιωω (same word we see used 3x in 2:16)

**g. Brings us back to Erasmus and the Latin Vulgate**  
Jerome's L.V. was t/Bible in use for 1000 yrs. That's what everyone who had access to t/Bible (clergy) used. Latin.



**(1) Word for being righteousness or justified in Latin is *iustificari* = "to make righteous"**

T/Latin "to be made righteous" implies that you have to become holy enough to merit heaven. That's righteousness infused to you thru t/CH & good works.

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.

Was a 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).

**(2) Word repentance was also misunderstood by how it was translated by t/Vulgate as "doing penance."**

Can see how that concept was seized to t/advantage of t/CH.

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 & 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, he needs a new heart // religion, he needs regeneration.

#### **(4) The language of the New Testament is Greek**

It's not doing penance; it's a change of mind & direction.

As for justification: It's not t/Latin *iustificari* (to make righteous); it's t/Greek δικαιωω = "to declare righteous."

This is what Luther so powerfully learned from t/Greek text of Erasmus.

When the Bible talks about justification, it's not talking about our being 'made righteous,' it's talking about our being 'declared righteous.'

##### **(a) It bears repeating ==>**

When a judge sentences a condemned criminal, he doesn't make him guilty of t/offense, he simply pronounces him guilty & passes judgment.

ISW when a judge pronounces somebody just, he doesn't make him just (*iustificari*), he declares him to be just before t/law. That relates to innocence before t/law.

But 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.

G. declares us just/righteous solely on t/imputed righteousness of JC. It's His right., not mine (I have none to offer).

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]

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

Rom 4 “Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

**16b . . . 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 (Chapter 11: Of Justification) addresses this==>  
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 wk we asked t/? "Were t/Reformers right in their applic. of passages like Gal. 2:16 to their struggle against t/works-based system of medieval Rome?" Absolutely!

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

**(5) If we are to be equipped as a church it is essential that you know these things**

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T/late J.I. Packer wrote that “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:**

#### **a. Why think and do the right things**

If God declares us righteous thru faith alone – if works don't save us or contribute to our salvation – why do them?

Because we will if we are truly B.A.

Changed life comes out of, is t/fruit of, being a new creation in X.

Can't truly live what you don't have.

Can't help but live what you really are. Heart issue.

What did Jesus teach in Matthew 7? 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.

#### **b. That doesn't mean we don't sin**

It does mean that we are different.

Something has been radically changed in our spiritual DNA.

**c. This relates to the relationship between justification and sanctification**

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

**(1) Justification occurs when the elect sinner comes to saving faith in Christ**

God quickens t/heart in regeneration resulting in faith & repentance. As a result, we are spiritually united w/JC.

We'll see that in 2:19–20

19 “For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God. 20 “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Thru faith & union w/X you are acquitted of all guilt; t/stain of sin removed; U become a partaker of X's righteousness.

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

**(a) When we speak of justification in this sense it only happens once**

T/elect cannot lose it; the non-elect cannot gain it.

**(b) It cannot be improved upon**

No one is more Christian than anyone else.

A few wks. ago my 12 yo daughter told me 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 . . .

Some are on a further road of sanctification (practical X-likeness than others), but we all share in t/same perfect salv.

My justification is not better than anyone else's. 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%.

**(2) Then there's sanctification (Christian living)**

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

Whenever a sinner is justified, that same one is also sanctified. In contrast to justification, sanctification is a continuous process.

**(b) We have been inexorably transformed**

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.

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]

All of this sums up t/beginning, the process, and the end of our lives as Xns.

**4. All that is this earthly life should be with the focus on preparing for the eternal life come**

We should live our lives to prepare for death.

May sound morbid, but that's t/way t/CH used to view it.



We live in a unique time & place. We don't expect to die until we get older or are struck w/some sudden illness.

That's not true of history. It wasn't long ago & people died at all ages: babies & mothers during childbirth. From young children to those blessed enough to reach old age, death came at will. At t/turn of t/last c. t/avg. age at death was 50!

Even for those of us who have been blessed w/any degree of longevity t/realization sets in that this life goes by fast.

Job 14:1–2 1 “Man, who is born of woman, Is short-lived and full of turmoil. 2 “Like a flower he comes forth and withers. He also flees like a shadow and does not remain.

Psalms 39:5 “Behold, You have made my days as handbreadths, And my lifetime as nothing in Your sight; Surely every man at his best is a mere breath.

James 4:14 . . . you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

We are born into this world under a death sentence. Time and method of execution unknown.

J.C. Ryle ==>

“All things are growing older: the world is growing old; we ourselves are growing older. A few more summers, a few more winters, a few more sicknesses, a few more sorrows, a few more weddings, a few more funerals, a few more meetings and a few more partings, and then—what? Why,

the grass will be growing over our graves!” [J. C. Ryle, Holiness: It's Nature, Hinderances, Difficulties and Roots, electronic ed. based on the Evangelical Press reprinting, with new forward, 1995. (Simpsonville, SC: Christian Classics Foundation, 1999), 95]

**a. Think about sleep as a rehearsal for death**

There will come a day when you will close your eyes for the last time only to open them in t/presence of G.

As kids we used to recite t/prayer, “Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I die before I wake, I pray t/Lord my soul to take.”

Giana had a stuffed animal that played that song. However, they omitted t/part of dying before waking up!

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

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Some time ago I was reading about t/Puritan poet Anne Bradstreet. Living in 17th c. colonial America was to live with death.

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.”

In t/course of 5 years Bradstreet saw her granddaughter die at 18 mo.; a fire destroyed her home; a second granddaughter died at age 3; 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.

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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.