

Title: Justification By Faith Alone

Text: Galatians 2:15-21

Main Idea: Do not seek to be justified before God by works!

Division Statements:

1. Seeking to be justified before God by works is futile (vv. 15-16).

It's absolutely critical to discuss the meaning of δικαιοσύνη (dikaiosune), which appears five times in these seven verses - translated "righteousness" in verse 21. If ever there was a passage to do an in depth study of this term for the congregation, it is this one.

In verse fifteen and sixteen, Paul makes the impossibility of justification by any human effort crystal clear. σάρξ is the word for "flesh" here and in this particular usage it refers to "all mankind," Jews, Gentiles, whoever. Note this verse torpedoed any dispensationalist idea that the Jews under the Old Covenant were justified by any means other than faith. This will be reinforced later in the letter by the discussion of Abraham's justification and the quotation of Hab. 2:4.

2. Seeking to be justified before God by works is sinful (vv. 17-19).

The Spirit anticipates and answers the potential objection that this doctrine will encourage the abuse of grace in verse 17. Paul then uses his chief besetting sin (Legalism) in verse 18, to show how returning to his prior way of life would in fact be the thing to make him "a transgressor" and ends with the startling statement contained in verse 19. These statements must have had the Judaizers absolutely twisted up in knots and gnashing their teeth. The point of these three verses, is that if Paul went back to legalism as a means of having right standing before God, he would be sinning.

3. Seeking to be justified before God by works is in opposition to a Christ-centered life (v. 20)

Wow ... just wow! Camp out on this verse for the rest of your life. The Christ life isn't about what you can do, but about what God can do in you.

4. Seeking to be justified before God by works denies the necessity of Christ's death (v. 21).

Verse 21 is the nail in the coffin on the whole issue of how one is justified. God will never allow the death of His Son to be viewed as pointless, unnecessary or δωρεάν (i.e. without effect, in vain, to no purpose). If justification is by anything

but faith in Christ, then the cross is denigrated and the glory of God is given to another, two things which God cannot and simply will not allow to happen (Is. 48:11). Paul's logic on this last point is utterly incontrovertible.

Bridging From Text To Sermon

Textual Idea: Paul explains the impossibility of being justified before God by works.

Sermon Proposition: Do not seek to be justified before God by works!

Interrogative: Why can a person not be justified by works?

Transition: The text gives four reasons why you should not seek to be justified by works.

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