

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO GALATIANS
Justification by Faith Alone:
“Justified by Faith Alone, In Christ Alone”
Rev. Charles R. Biggs

^{ESV} **Galatians 2:1** Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. ² I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain. ³ But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. [Titus was a Greek and did not need to be circumcised according to the Law of Moses and he was an example of Paul standing against Christ plus something else!]

⁴ Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in- who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery- ⁵ to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. [“secretly brought in- -who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus,” serpentine language (notice: “false brothers” ...to bring us into slavery)]

⁶ And from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)- those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me. ⁷ On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised ⁸ (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles), ⁹ and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. ¹⁰ Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

¹¹ But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. ¹² For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. ¹³ And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. [See notes and comments below]. ¹⁴ But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

¹⁵ We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; [clean and unclean categories of Mosaic Law] ¹⁶ yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, [Mutually exclusive: justified by faith in Christ vs. works of the Law] because by works of the law no one will be justified. [The Law condemns, it does not save].

¹⁷ But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not!

¹⁸ For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor.

¹⁹ For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who 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 for me. ²¹ I do not nullify the grace of God, for if justification were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose. [Focus of our lives: Crucified with Christ and yet I love in Him versus seeking justification through the Law].

Introduction

Titus and Timothy (half-Jew) were both from Greek background (even if they had been educated somewhat in the Old Covenant). The Judaizers said all Greeks ought to be circumcised according to Law 'and' believe in Jesus in order to be ****fully**** Christian (an early proto-“full gospel movement”!).

Paul was bold in the face of the opposition and possible persecution he would undergo, and Titus stood bravely with him by not being circumcised “though he was a Greek”. So Paul was being brave, courageous and understanding what he would later tell Timothy: “God has not given you the spirit of fear, but of love, power and a sound mind (2 Tim. 1:7).

ESV **Galatians 2:3** But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek.

Now, the reason he opposed Peter publicly is because although he knew Peter affirmed that the Gentiles should not be circumcised (according to Paul's earlier meetings with Peter, and perhaps to the Council of Jerusalem, Acts 15), Peter was afraid or fearful of speaking up.

Peter was not necessarily adding something to the gospel, or approving of what the Judaizers were teaching the Galatian churches, **but neither was he polemically and vigorously opposing them! Why? Because apparently he was scared that his reputation might be tarnished like the Apostle Paul's among the Jews or the circumcision party.**

This was NOT Peter's teaching or doctrine, but he was fearful of standing up to those who were part of the “circumcision party”.

Paul was brave, and Peter was cowardly (again!?).

ESV **Galatians 2:12** For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; **but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party.** ¹³ And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their **hypocrisy.**

“The circumcision” would refer to the Jews usually (see Romans 2), but more specifically here “the circumcision party” within the churches at Galatia, would refer **to those Judaizers who had infiltrated the congregations teaching a “full gospel” that a person was saved by Jesus plus circumcision or law.**

They were a forceful party and as Galatians 2:12 says, Peter was scared of them (frightened of losing reputation, losing honor in the Jewish eyes, perhaps some were friendships he wanted to keep, perhaps he thought Paul had taken his theology a bit too far- -WOW sounds like some ministers of the gospel today!

But Peter was the “Apostle to the Circumcision” as Paul was the “Apostle to the Uncircumcised” and this position was important to set the right example to others, to the people of God, particularly the babes in Christ, the new believers at these churches.

Peter’s position placed him in a position of influence and we see that James as well as Barnabas who helped Paul establish the churches had begun to “play act” or be hypocrites by not eating with Gentiles, and withdrawing because of fear of the Judaizers. So Paul is ****consistent**** with his attitude toward the Judaizers, rebukes Peter to his face and splashes the scalding water of the law in Peter’s face in order to shake him from his hypocritical slumbers:

^{ESV} **Galatians 2:14-19:** But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?" ¹⁵ We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; ¹⁶ yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified. ¹⁷ But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! ¹⁸ For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. ¹⁹ For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God.

Paul’s Doctrine of Justification by Faith Alone in Christ Alone in Context:

Paul rebukes and reminds Peter that he lives in all the freedom of a Gentile (not under Mosaic law) now that he is a Christian (Peter understands theoretically that there is “neither Jew nor Gentile, but all are one in Jesus”). Yet because of fear, he sees the powerful party of the circumcision, and realizes that they not only require for Gentiles to undergo circumcision, but that they also have Mosaic dietary laws they must following (read: kosher) in order to partake in a meal.

Peter goes through the cafeteria line, comes out into the dining hall at Galatia and sees the stern looks of the Judaizers to the left of the kitchen enjoying their Mosaic dietary requirements, not “saving places” for any Gentiles unless they will eat the Old Covenant way (and of course, if you sit at their table, you better be circumcised!). He decides that he will eat with them because he fears the persecution of the Judaizers if he sits to the right with the Gentiles at their table (OK, ‘one in Christ ***sometimes!***’).

Peter thinks: “Well, I’m not endorsing what the Judaizers believe, I just want peace, and not doctrinal conflict.” And then others follow him in his bad example (including the leaders and church planters of these congregations!!), and implicit this undermines the Apostle Paul’s authority because he is taking a stand against this false teaching and calling it “another gospel”, and so he rebukes (almost attacks in Greek!) Peter publicly for this- -just because the gospel “IS” at stake.

He says in essence: “Peter, you’re born and bred a Jew, not a “Gentile sinner” (which is what the Judaizers were calling those who had not followed Mosaic law), yet you know that all people are declared righteous before God based on grace and nothing else- - including being a Jew, or following the law of Moses concerning diet and circumcision!

We are justified, or declared righteous based on Christ and his righteousness alone- -plus nothing, so let us all partake and eat together as Jews and Gentiles, united to Jesus Christ by faith as children of the living God, heirs of the inheritance to Father Abraham, and the True Israel of God (Gal.. 3:26-4:7; 6:16).

- 1) Peter was fearful of standing up for the gospel (“peace over doctrinal conflict”).
- 2) Peter’s hypocrisy was influencing other brothers (because of his great prominence and importance), including Barnabas.
- 3) Paul rebukes Peter because the gospel *is Justification by Christ alone!*

Application: “How far are you willing to go to defend, believe, **and live** the gospel against threats, persecution, loss of reputation, or your very life?”

Paul rebukes Peter because of these reasons, but I don’t think Paul is being inconsistent (although I can see how someone might think that at first glance).

Rather, Paul is rebuking Peter severely for acting like he believes in the gospel of Christ plus nothing, and acting a different way in the face of persecution, slander, or tough times!

Paul did indeed get Timothy (whose mother was Jewish so he was half-Jewish) circumcised in Acts 16:3.

^{ESV} **Acts 16:1-3:** Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. ² He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. ³ Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

Unlike the Judaizer situation in the Province of Galatia this was a not done because of a way of salvation, or to add to what Christ had already done. It was primarily as a means of commending a half-Jew to his Jewish hearers (not to suggest to them that Gentiles must do this and become Jewish first), but for the sake of the gospel and being received.

Paul circumcised Timothy for more of a cultural reason in order to proclaim the gospel (that required nothing added to it, but the Jewish people still lived, moved and had their being in an Old Covenant context or milieu).

Paul here was not being inconsistent because it was not considered a way to be righteous before God, but to enter into the Old Covenant milieu of the Jews through the preaching of God's grace by a half-Jew. Paul insists in Gal. 5-6 that circumcision or uncircumcision counts for anything with regards to salvation.

Let me put it this way for contrast: the situation at Galatia was that the Judaizers said that the Gentiles and those who came from the heathen world must enter into the Old Covenant ritual, Mosaic world of the Jew FIRST in order to be saved. They had to become part of the Old Covenant to receive the good news of the New Covenant if you will (and the Judaizers had not noticed that there was a radical redemptive-historical shift with the coming of Jesus in the fullness of the times, Gal. 4:4).

In contrast to this situation in Galatia, Paul in Acts 16 is taking a half-Jew into the culture-world-milieu of the Old Covenant Jews. He desires a half-Jew named Timothy to be received not as an example of how Gentiles "get saved" but wants to ensure that the gospel is made known to them.

By circumcising Timothy, Paul was accommodating to the redemptive-historical milieu in which these people lived in order for them to know a radical shift had indeed occurred with the coming of Christ and circumcision was just merely a sign that pointed to a greater reality in the gospel and the coming of Christ- -the very circumcision of Christ- - made with out hands, on the cross.

In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ... (Colossians 2:11ff)

**Justification by Faith Alone, “The Truth of the Gospel” for Paul:
Justification by Faith Alone in Context**

**“CHRIST WILL DO ALL FOR YOU, OR NOTHING FOR YOU.”
–J. GRESHAM MACHEN**

^{ESV} **Galatians 2:14-21:** But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?" ¹⁵ We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; ¹⁶ yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified. ¹⁷ But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! ¹⁸ For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. ¹⁹ For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who 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 for me. ²¹ I do not nullify the grace of God, for if justification were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

Pastor John Stott in his Commentary on Galatians writes about the word “justified”: “In these verses an important word occurs for the first time in Galatians. It is central to the message of the Epistle, central to the gospel preached by Paul, and indeed central to Christianity itself. ***Nobody has understood Christianity who does not understand this word (emphasis mine, pg. 58).***

Verb: “To Justify” (v. 16, 3x)

Noun: “Justification” (v. 21)

Martin Luther wrote in his Commentary on Galatians: “This is the truth of the gospel. It is also the principal article of all Christian doctrine, wherein the knowledge of all godliness consists. Most necessary it is, therefore, that we should know this article well, teach it unto others, and beat it into our heads continually.”- pg. 101 (quoted in Stott).

There is no greater truth of Scripture of which all people need to understand and know than the Biblical teaching of justification by faith alone. Yet many in today’s churches, even in Bible-believing Evangelical Churches, Christians have a difficulty defining the gospel, which is the Biblical teaching of justification by faith alone.

This doctrine of Justification by Faith Alone was called the hinge on which the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century turned. For Martin Luther it was literally and seriously the doctrine upon which the Church stands or falls!

Justification by faith alone is the true gospel of the Christian faith that the Apostle Paul explains clearly in Galatians 3 and Romans 4, and we need to make sure that we fully understand it.

It is upon this teaching of justification by faith alone, that the whole Christian life is built!

Test yourself! What is the meaning of justification by faith alone? (Take a moment to answer this for yourself before continuing to read).

Justification by faith alone does NOT mean “to justify one’s sins before God”- - whatever that means! I does NOT mean “clean oneself up and work hard to do well by going to church and being nice to people and God will reward you by justifying you!”

What justification by faith means is that when we believe upon Jesus Christ by faith alone, his perfect merits and works that he earned by loving God with all his heart, soul, mind and strength, are given to us!

God declares us righteous based on Christ’s works alone!

Salvation is by works - -but not the works of sinful man (John 3:11-13; Rom. 3:23; 6:23)...

...Salvation is by the works of Christ alone!

Justification can be a difficult teaching of the Bible to understand. W. Robert Godfrey has written: “If Paul in his own day was not always understood by his own churches on the doctrine of justification, we should perhaps not be surprised that the churches since that time have so often failed to get it. The true doctrine of justification always strikes some as antinomian, even though it is not. Paul must often have faced the question:

‘Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?’ (Rom. 6:1). A doctrine of justification that does not from time to time evoke that question is not the biblical doctrine of justification.’- Quoted in ‘The Pattern of Sound Doctrine’, edited by VanDrunen, pg. 129.

Although it can be somewhat misunderstood, it is imperative for Christians that we understand this teaching because this *is the gospel!* The good news (and what makes the news really good!) is that in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ in his perfect life, substitutionary death, resurrection, and ascension, we are

justified, or declared righteous before God based on what Christ has done **for us!**

Salvation is not, and never has been by the works of man! Even our best works are unacceptable before a Holy God. Jesus Christ's works for us in his life, death, resurrection and ascension become our perfect works before God in our justification.

We are justified before God, or declared righteous, because in Jesus' resurrection from the dead, he was justified, or vindicated as righteous before the whole world, so that all those who believe in him would be vindicated or justified before God!

GALATIANS 1:14-16: JUSTIFICATION

¹⁴ **But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel,** I said to Cephas before them all, **"If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"**

¹⁵ **We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners;** ¹⁶ **yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.**

- 1) "The Truth of the Gospel" (v. 14- Justification by Faith alone in Christ alone)
- 2) "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and been condemned by the Law" (v. 15, whether Jew or Gentile); as Paul writes in Romans:

The Apostle Paul and "works of the Law" (mutually exclusive categories)

Not full blown "Pelagianism" but 'Semi-Pelagianism'

Judaizers were teaching Semi-Pelagian cooperating with God's grace by doing "works of the Law". "Works of the law" in Paul do not refer simply to Pelagianism or striving to work one's way into heaven apart from God's grace in the covenant (notice how he calls 'Gentile sinners' because they were outside the covenant and outside the teaching and preaching of the law- -which was a gracious situation, or a situation of grace sometimes called "covenantal nomism"). This was not full blown Pelagian-Legalism, but cooperation with grace in the covenant to produce "works of the law".

"Works of the Law" are the attempted obedience to the Law (which the Law is the Mosaic teaching in all its totality).

- 1) Keep the Ten Commandments by loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength in word, thought and deed.
- 2) Obey the ceremonial aspects of the law such as certain dietary laws and circumcision.

Do all these things, cooperating with God's grace, and you will be justified by the "works of the law".

But the Law damns and condemns sinners (whether Jew or Gentile). Whether we have the Law or we do not have the law, we are condemned if we do not keep God's holy and perfect law- perfectly!

^{ESV} **Romans 3:20** For **by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight**, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

^{ESV} **Romans 4:4** Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. ⁵ **And to the one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness...**

^{ESV} **Romans 9:30-33:** What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith; ³¹ but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law. ³² Why? ***Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone,*** ³³ as it is written, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

^{ESV} **Romans 10:1-3:** Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. ² I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. ³ **For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.**

^{ESV} **Romans 11:5-6:** So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. ⁶ **But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.**

^{ESV} **Galatians 2:16** yet we know that a person **is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ**, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be **justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.**

^{ESV} **Galatians 3:2** Let me ask you only this: **Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?**

^{ESV} **Galatians 3:5** Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith-

^{ESV} **Galatians 3:10** For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them."

- 3) A person is NOT justified by works of the law.
- 4) But "through faith" or "by faith" in Jesus.
- 5) NOT by works of the Law

John Calvin (1509-64). To be justified in the sight of God, to be Justified by faith or by works. A man is said to be justified in the sight of God when in the judgment of God he is deemed righteous, and is accepted on account of his righteousness... Thus we simply interpret justification, as the acceptance with which God receives us into his favor as if we were righteous; and we say that this justification consists in the forgiveness of sins and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ (*Institutes*, 3.11.2).

WLC 70 What is justification? A. Justification is an act of God's free grace unto sinners,(1) in which he pardoneth all their sins, accepteth and accounteth their persons righteous in his sight;(2) not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them,(3) but only for the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ, by God imputed to them,(4) and received by faith alone.(5) (1)Rom. 3:22,24,25; Rom. 4:5 (2)2 Cor. 5:19,21; Rom. 3:22,24,25,27,28 (3)Tit. 3:5,7; Eph. 1:7 (4)Rom. 5:17-19; Rom. 4:6-8 (5)Acts 10:43; Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9

"Justification is a judicial act of God, in which He declares, on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, that all the claims of the law are satisfied with respect to the sinner" (L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, p. 513).

Legal Declaration: Justification is Forensic

Justification is the opposite of condemn (cf. Romans 8:31-34).

^{ESV} **Romans 8:31-34:** What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died- more than that, who was raised- who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Condemnation: Pronounced "Guilty" and "Unrighteous"

Justification: Pronounced "Not Guilty" and "Righteous"

“How then can man be righteous before God?” –Job 25:4

John Calvin. To justify therefore, is nothing else than to acquit from the charge of guilt, as if innocence were proved. Hence, when God justifies us through the intercession of Christ, he does not acquit us on a proof of our own innocence, but by an imputation of righteousness, so that though not righteous in ourselves, we are deemed righteous in Christ (*Institutes*, 3.11.3).

Heidelberg Catechism, Q: 60. How are you righteous before God? **A:** Only by true faith in Jesus Christ; that is, although my conscience accuse me, that I have grievously sinned against all the commandments of God, and have never kept any of them, and am still prone always to all evil; yet God without any merit of mine, of mere grace, grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ, as if I had never committed nor had any sin, and had myself accomplished all the obedience which Christ has fulfilled for me; if only I accept such benefit with a believing heart (*Heidelberg Catechism*).

Justification as a forensic or legal category is rejected by the mind of modern man and even many evangelicals.

Why? Because God is often thought of as a loving Father **before He is considered our judge before the Law.** God as Father rather than first God as Judge is given the priority.

What happens perhaps unintentionally for some is that not only is justification and sanctification confused in today’s teaching and preaching (Roman Catholicism and Evangelicalism), but our adoption is focused upon before our justification.

Professor J. Gresham Machen states this eloquently in the 1930s: “The reason why the forensic aspect of salvation is so distasteful to the ‘modern mind’ is perfectly plain. It is distasteful because it involves a profound view of sin as transgression of the law of God. Men no longer believe today in a law of God; the only law that they will recognize is a law that a man imposes on himself.

Sin they regard—if they are willing to use at all the antiquated word—as merely imperfection. They will have nothing to do with the idea of guilt. It is no wonder that they will not think of God as Judge.” –pg. 146.

But understanding the biblical view of law as the means through which we are to realize we are sinners, condemned before God’s throne (Romans 3:20ff; Galatians 3:19ff), is how we come to look somewhere else- -rather to SOMEONE ELSE for our righteousness and salvation.

In fact, it was Martin Luther's high regard for God's holiness and the great and impossible demands of God's Law for sinners to achieve, that kept Luther tossing in his bed at night, frightened by the reality that his sins would damn him! It was Martin Luther's revelation from Scripture that even our best works are tainted by sin and therefore cannot be meritorious before God's Holy Tribunal! But then by God's grace, Luther realized that Christ the Judge was also Christ the Savior!

As a Roman Catholic priest, Luther knew that all the cooperation with God that he could muster would only end up damning him! Luther studied the Book of Romans and realized that a righteousness **apart from him, found in Christ alone**, received by faith alone, was his only hope to be saved and declared righteous!

In the Reformation of the 16th century, Roman Catholic theology was essentially the same way of salvation as the first century Israelite. Martin Luther was taught by the Roman Catholic Church that men were saved "by grace", but this "grace" was understood as man's cooperation with God in order to achieve salvation ("synergism")- -it was not grace received by faith alone in what God has done fully in Christ. Martin Luther's struggle to find God's grace and to have his wrath appeased in the Person of Christ, led to a reformation of the Church and rediscovery of the gospel!

Luther: "Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that 'the just shall live by faith.' Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith.

Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on new meaning, and whereas the 'justice of God' had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in great love. This passage became to me the gate of heaven." *—Here I Stand*, Roland Bainton

For Luther, God had declared him righteous (extrinsically, or outside of himself) rather than what he had been taught in Medieval Catholicism that a person was made "just" or "righteous" (intrinsically), then justified by God.

It is important to consider that Roman Catholics (during the Reformation and today!) would have disagreed that salvation-justification was by grace alone, received by faith alone! (This is still the great problem today and why Evangelicals and Catholics need to be truly honest with one another rather than merely uniting without any consideration of this important doctrine!).

Calvin: "Man is not made righteous in justification, but is accepted as righteous, not on account of his own righteousness, but on account of the righteousness of Christ located outside of man." Quote from McGrath's *Iustitia Dei*, 2:36.

David says in Psalm 32:1-2- “Happy is he whose fault is taken away, whose sin is covered. Happy the man to whom the LORD imputes not guilt.”

Not Transformative, or *being made righteous*.

Legal declaration of *righteousness received by faith*.

To be continued next week!

Part II: Imputation of Christ's Righteousness and Faith Alone

Quotations on the Importance of Understanding Justification

Evangelicals have all but forgotten the importance of the Reformation, and particularly the doctrine of Justification by faith alone which was the article upon which the Church stands or falls (Luther). Dr. Michael Horton wrote: "The evangelistic energy of evangelical Protestants has added to the tendency to bury concern over the actual content of the evangel ("good news"). One might say that in all of the activity, evangelism is too busy to be troubled with the evangel.

In his broadly representative crusades, the Reverend Billy Graham was simply following in the footsteps of an earlier generation of evangelicals whose missionary and evangelistic zeal encouraged them to play down doctrinal issues when founding the World Council of Churches. Reverend Graham recently reasserted his view of Roman Catholicism: 'I have found that my beliefs are essentially the same as those of orthodox Roman Catholics.'- Quoted in 'Faith Alone' by R. C. Sproul, pg. 11 (Graham quote from magazine 'Berean Call', Sept. 1994).

WHAT DOES THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACH CONCERNING JUSTIFICATION? HEAR THIS CLEARLY FROM THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CATECHISM (THEY ARE STILL UPHOLDING THEIR JUDGMENT AGAINST THE REFORMERS FROM THE COUNCIL OF TRENT):

CANON IX.-If any one saith, that by faith alone the impious is justified; in such wise as to mean, that nothing else is required to co-operate in order to the obtaining the grace of Justification, and that it is not in any way necessary, that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will; let him be anathema.

CANON XI.-If any one saith, that men are justified, either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ, or by the sole remission of sins, to the exclusion of the grace and the charity which is poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, and is inherent in them (remains in them); or even that the grace, whereby we are justified, is only the favour (good will) of God; let him be anathema.

Yet Evangelicals and Catholics are getting together in our time because they are (1) Ignorant of the differences, (2) Do not think the differences amount to that much at all, or (3) They are both Semi-Pelagian in their belief systems and are closer to one another than one would like to imagine!

"The gospel teaches that what could not be found in us and was to be sought in another, could be found nowhere else than in Christ, the God-man (*theanthropos, Gk.*); who taking upon himself the office of surety most fully satisfied the justice of God by his perfect obedience and thus brought to us an everlasting righteousness by which alone we can be justified before God; in order

that covered and clothed with that garment as though it were of our first-born (like Jacob), we may obtain under it the eternal blessing of our heavenly Father." - **Francis Turretin, 'Institutes of Elenctic Theology'**

Declaration/Imputation of righteousness NOW- - not merely at the end of the Age. The righteousness of God, the justification of people, making them right in their standing before God has appeared now in Christ!

Imputation vs. Infusion

Let us learn two important theological terms that Christians should know with regard to justification by faith alone. The two terms are **imputed and infused**.

Definition: What is Imputation? - Simply put: "A Declaration, or reckoning of Righteousness". Imputation is that God gives to the ungodly, spiritually dead, sinful person who believes the perfect righteousness of Christ! We are in a right standing before God based on Christ's works for us. Paul says Abraham was reckoned/declared/considered (*logizomai*- Greek) *justified based on faith alone*. Paul uses the term "*logizomai*" 12 times in this passage in Romans 4 to make the point crystal clear.

As believers, we are clothed in Christ's righteousness, and we are reckoned/declared/considered righteous as was Abraham. We receive an "alien righteousness" from God, the righteousness that was earned by Jesus Christ and **is imputed to us**. This is a monergistic work of grace (meaning "no cooperation" between God and sinners), where God clothes us in Christ's righteousness and this is received by faith alone!

Definition: What is Infusion? - Simply put: "To become righteous". This is a synergistic work, or cooperation between God and sinful man! What the first century Israelite, the modern Roman Catholic, and some who are misguided who call themselves "Christians" claim, is that we become righteous- - then we are justified. Now this makes the eternal difference between heaven and hell.

It is true that once a person is united to Jesus Christ by faith alone in their justification, then that person does become righteous or Christ-like; this is called "sanctification". But we must make sure that justification by faith alone because of God's grace alone must **precede our sanctification**.

God justifies the ungodly sinner by faith alone. He does not justify or declare righteous those who are already righteous by virtue of having "tried hard" to be good, or those who merely have gone through the motions in the visible church, going to church, listening to the Word, and participating in the sacraments, or those who have tried to work hard in any way cooperating with God's grace in order to be justified!

Those who have worked hard have not worked hard enough (and never will!)- in fact they are condemned before God's Holy Tribunal! Why? Because they fall short of God's glory and can never match the perfect and complete work of Jesus Christ!

Only in Christ are we justified! When we believe and rest in Christ's righteous work for us, God imputes to us the righteous works achieved by Christ!

The Reformed Pastor John Calvin in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans wrote concerning the good news of justification by faith alone:

"When...we come to Christ, we first find in Him the exact righteousness of the law, and this also becomes ours by imputation."

"Therefore, we explain justification simply as the acceptance with which God receives us into his favor as righteous men. And we say that it consists in the remission of sins and the imputation of Christ's righteousness."- Institutes in the Christian Religion, Calvin, 3.11.2.

Professor John Murray wrote concerning justification by faith alone:

"It is our Lord's whole work of obedience in every phase and period that is described as active and passive, and we must avoid the mistake of thinking that the active obedience applies to the obedience of his life and the passive to the obedience of his final sufferings and death. The real use and purpose of the formula is to emphasize the two distinct aspects of our Lord's vicarious obedience. The truth expressed rests upon the recognition that the law of God has both penal sanctions and positive demands....Christ's obedience was vicarious in the bearing of full judgment of God upon sin, and it was vicarious in the full discharge of the demands of righteousness.

[Christ's] obedience becomes the ground of the remission of sin and of actual justification."- *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, pgs. 21-22.

"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 the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith, which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God"

- WCF Ch 11

“By Faith Alone”

“By faith”, not on “account of faith!” Big difference!

Faith is the instrument whereby we receive the righteousness of God in Christ.

Martin Luther: “Wherefore Christ apprehended by faith, and dwelling in the heart, it the true Christian righteousness, for the which God counts us righteous and gives us eternal life.” (Commentary on Galatians, pg. 135).

Heidelberg Catechism (1563), Q: 21. What is true faith? **A:** True faith is not only a certain knowledge whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in His Word; but also a hearty trust, which the Holy Spirit works in me by the Gospel, that not only to others, but to me also, forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness and salvation are freely given by God, merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits (*Heidelberg Catechism*).

- A. Faith is **NOT a work, or any kind of cooperation with God that achieves merit!** This separates the “men from the boys theologically” - - not only that, this makes the difference of heaven and hell, so it is not theological nit-picking!
- B. Faith is a **fruit of regeneration- - a gift** as Ephesians 2 teaches.
- C. Faith is “empty hands” humbly held out to receive what God has provided for one in a right relational standing before God, found only in the righteousness of Christ that is revealed in the gospel!

The one word “alone” in the phrase “saved by grace alone” (Eph. 2:8-10) separates us not only from our Roman Catholic friends today, but any other person who believes in a “cooperative” or “synergistic” way of God and man working together to achieve salvation.

The Reformed teaching (and Biblical teaching, I might add) is that we are saved by a monergistic work of God (*monergistic*: mono= “one”, ergo= “work”). This means that God alone works in us to achieve our salvation and we are saved not by cooperating with God (even with our faith!), but by believing that God has fully accomplished in the Person and Work of Christ our salvation- - and this is believed by faith alone - -which is not our work, but a gift of God!

Faith receives God’s grace held out in Christ, but faith is not a work in any way that is meritorious before God!

Professor J. Gresham Machen wrote: "...If a man has faith in Jesus to help the works of the law out, he can be justified by the works of the law after all; it would mean that, while a man is not justified by works alone, he is justified by works and faith together. **Thus faith would become merely the means by which a man's works become effective for salvation.**" (emphasis mine, pg. 147).

Faith is a gift- -not a work, let faith itself becomes a 'work of the law'.

Canons of Dort (1619). Rejection of Errors Second Head: Paragraph 4. [We reject those:] Who teach: That the new covenant of grace, which God the Father, through the mediation of the death of Christ, made with man, does not herein consist that we by faith, in as much as it accepts the merits of Christ, are justified before God and saved, but in the fact that God, having revoked the demand of perfect obedience of faith, regards faith itself and the obedience of faith, although imperfect, as the perfect obedience of the law, and does esteem it worthy of the reward of eternal life through grace. For these contradict the Scriptures, being: "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood (Rom 3:24-25)." And these proclaim, as did the wicked Socinus, a new and strange justification of man before God, against the consensus of the whole Church.

You see, this is the Apostle Paul's point in Ephesians 2:1-10: Dead men, separated from God and following the prince of the power of the air will not and cannot believe, unless God in his mercy makes us alive and gives us the gift of faith. That is why Paul contrasts the gift of faith with our works! He says:

Ephesians 2:1-10: And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience- ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ- by grace you have been saved- ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Robert Traill on "by faith": "Faith in Jesus Christ...in the office of justification, is neither condition nor qualification...but in its very act a renouncing of all such pretences."

The very act of faith by which we receive Christ is an act of utter renunciation of all our own works and righteousness as a condition or ground of salvation.

Horatius Bonar profoundly remarks: "Faith is not work, nor merit, nor effort; but the cessation from all these, and the acceptance in place of them of what another has done—done completely, and forever."

John Girardeau notes, "Faith is emptiness filled with Christ's fulness; impotency lying down upon Christ's strength."

B. B. Warfield appropriately summarizes: "It is from its object [Jesus Christ] that faith derives its value.... The saving power of faith resides thus not in itself, but in the Almighty Savior on whom it rests....It is not faith that saves, but faith in Jesus Christ....It is not strictly speaking, even faith in Christ that saves, but Christ that saves through faith."

"Strictly speaking, the true Christian church does not teach justification by faith. It teaches justification by Christ. Where does the faith come in? It is simply the uniting with, becoming one with, the Lord Jesus Christ. Being married to Christ, all that is His becomes His bride's, the believer's...that is the meaning of the word 'reckons' or imputes or credits. The justified one 'does not work, but trusts God who justifies the wicked'(Rom. 4:5)."- **John Gerstner, 'Justification by Faith Alone'**

Calvin concludes his sermon on Galatians 2:15-16 with these words: "Let us, therefore, understand that there is no salvation whatsoever outside of Jesus Christ, for he is the beginning and the end of faith, and he is all in all. Let us continue in humility, knowing that we can only bring condemnation upon ourselves; therefore, we need to find all that pertains to salvation in the pure and free mercy of God. We must be able to say that we are saved through faith. God the Father has appointed his Son the Lord Jesus Christ that he might be both the author and finisher of our salvation. We are to deny ourselves and give ourselves to him wholly and completely, that all the praise might belong to him.

Now let us fall before the majesty of our great God, acknowledging our sins, and asking that he would make us increasingly aware of them, that we may hate them more and more, and grow in repentance (a grace that we need to exercise all our lives). May we learn so to magnify his grace, as it is shown to us in the Lord Jesus Christ, that we might be completely taken up with it; and may we not only do so with our lips, but place our entire trust in him. May we grow in that trust until we are gathered up into our eternal home, where we shall receive faith's reward. May he not only grant this grace to us, but to all peoples, etc."
http://www.the-highway.com/Calvin_Gal2a.html

Paul quotes Psalm 143:2 (Galatians 1:16):

ESV Psalm 143:2 Enter not into judgment with your servant, for no one living is righteous before you.

¹⁷ But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! ¹⁸ For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. ¹⁹ For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. **²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who 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 for me.** ²¹ I do not nullify the grace of God, for if justification were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

Does Paul's doctrine of free grace in Justification by faith alone encourage sin and sinful behavior?

"Is Christ a minister of sin?" (Gal. 1:17)

Judaizers apparently were saying that Christ was an agent who showed in his life the way a Jew should live and uphold the Law in an exemplary way. Some were challenging Paul saying that this "Agent of Law-Keeping" had now become an "Agent of sin". Paul is saying our life and hope is found "in Christ" (in union with Jesus Christ by faith, see below).

Fung's Galatians Commentary helps our understanding of what Paul is saying here in Galatians 1:17 (pg.119-20): "...To seek to be justified in Christ is to abandon the law (premise 1); to abandon the law is to become a sinner (premise 2); then Christ abets or serves sin (conclusion)...."

"...Although it is true that in order to be justified in Christ it is necessary to abandon faith in the law as a means of salvation (premise 1) and hence to become sinners in the sense of being reduced to the level of the 'Gentiles and sinners' of v. 15 (premise 2), the conclusion does not follow that Christ thereby becomes an agent of sin (in the sense of a promoter of actual wrongdoing), support for this statement being given in vv. 18-20."

Leon Morris wrote in his commentary on this passage: "If sinners can do nothing to bring about their salvation, if they simply trust Christ to put away their sin, then, some apparently reasoned, does it not follow that sin does not matter? Will not Christ do what is necessary? May not Christ's people then live sinful lives? But no sooner does Paul raise this possibility than he dismisses it emphatically, *By no means.*" - Galatians, pgs. 87-88.

Burton wrote: "The vice of legalism is that it comes between the soul and God, interposing law in place of God," commenting on Paul's comment of "dying to the Law" in Galatians 1:19.

Union with Christ: "God forbid" that Christ is a servant of sin

We live in union with Christ as new creations in a new position before God's holy tribunal and throne. Why would we rebuild the partition of Law that has separated Jews from "Gentile sinners" when the whole world's hope (both Jew and Gentile) is in Christ alone! If I rebuild, or go back in redemptive-historical time, I become a transgressor! Paul speaks about this partition in Ephesians 2:

Ephesians 2:11-16: Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands- ¹² remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

We are "in Christ" (Gal. 1:17)- Justification is a benefit of being united to Jesus Christ by faith. As the Westminster Larger Catechism teaches:

***"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who 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 for me. ²¹ I do not nullify the grace of God, for if justification were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose."* –Galatians 1:20-21**

Paul says: "I have been crucified with Christ." He wants the believer to know that it is all of grace that one is saved in union with Jesus Christ. "We were there being crucified with Christ" when Christ was crucified just as truly as the two other thieves crucified "with Christ" on the hill of Golgotha. In Romans 6, the Apostle Paul states the same reality and truth:

^{ESV} **Romans 6:5-11:** For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷ For one who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰ For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. ¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

WLC 69 *What is the communion in grace which the members of the invisible church have with Christ?* A. The communion in grace which the members of the invisible church have with Christ, is their partaking of the virtue of

his mediation, in their justification,(1) adoption,(2) sanctification, and whatever else, in this life, manifests their union with him.(3) (1)Rom. 8:30 (2)Eph. 1:5 (3)1 Cor. 1:30

“Crucified with Christ” (Gal. 1:19-20)- Something that happened in the past that is still a present-tense powerful reality!

“Loved me, and gave himself for me...” (Gal. 1:20). Notice the personal focus of Paul’s knowledge of Christ- -it was more than “God so loved the world”, but that God loved me in Christ, and “loved me, and gave himself for me.”

Nullification of Christ’s Work

What does “nullify” “render void” mean? Two important definitions for us to consider:

1. to render or declare legally void or inoperative: to nullify a contract.
2. to deprive (something) of value or effectiveness; make futile or of no consequence.

Professor Richard Longnecker (quoted in Morris, pg. 91) sees this summary statement of Paul in Galatians 1:21 (concerning “nullification of Christ’s work”) in a very interesting and helpful way. He says that Paul is dealing with ‘legalism’ (the attempt to gain favor with God by means of Torah observance) and ‘nomism’ (the response of faith to a god who has acted on one’s behalf by living a life governed by Torah). The whole of the Christian’s life from beginning to end is due to the grace of god, not human merit or achievement.”

*“All claims that salvation is through belief in Jesus Christ plus something else are blasphemous, satanic lies. There can be no effective or acceptable human addition to Christ’s work.” -John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Galatians*, Moody Press, 1987, page 57*

Dr. Michael Horton reminds us all of our hope that we have in the teaching of justification by faith alone:

“...It is good to know--especially when facing the next world--that for every time we have failed to conform to God's will in thought, word, and deed, by actively sinning or failing to conform to his revealed will, his Son has fulfilled the obedience that we owe. By never once giving in to the lust, pride, sloth, greed, selfishness, and malice that are so often allowed space in our overcrowded hearts, Jesus Christ becomes our Savior not only in his atoning death but throughout his life. In this way, every day of his life was as necessary for our salvation as that dark afternoon on Golgotha. He was the only "fully surrendered, victorious, sold-out," Christian who ever lived! Our surrender is halfhearted and partial; our victories seem always to be sullied by pride. Even if we could live the

"higher life," could God not smell our smugness? Wouldn't our best works be sabotaged by our own depravity? These good works would be corrupt enough to condemn us on the last day, so what we require is the obedience of someone else to stand in for us. It is not only Christ's atoning death, but his saving life during the thirty-three years of his conformity to the Father's will that shelters us from God's just sentence. "This is why," wrote Charles Hodge, "the believer, when arrayed in this righteousness, need fear neither death nor hell. This is the reason why Paul challenges the universe to lay anything to the charge of God's elect."- Michael Horton, ['A Dying Man's Consolation'](#), Modern Reformation, 1996.

In conclusion, because I believe this teaching of justification by faith alone is greatly misunderstood by modern, well-meaning Christians, I am going to do something that I normally do not do (Don't try this at home in other words!).

I do not much care for the use of acrostics for summing up Biblical truth. I believe that acrostics can overly simplify and trivialize the Biblical message many times, and I remember the wise words of Marshall McLuan: "The medium is the message". This aphorism means that how we communicate something in form can undermine or trivialize the content (For example, watch how the television-form undermines the worship of God when you watch it on TV!).

So, I am going against my better judgment and even the advice of Marshall McLuan (and Neil Postman!), but I think it is good in this case to make an exception IF it will aid Christians in more precisely understanding the important Biblical teaching of justification by faith alone. So, here is my acrostic taken from Romans 4, offered by faith to you, with hopes that it will help you to know more precisely this teaching and that it will be a reality in your own life!

It is the acrostic C-H-R-I-S-T:

C- Christ Alone in His active and passive obedience, in his life and death, is sinful man's only hope (Romans 3:23-26).

H- Humility is our only response as Christians! We were saved by grace plus nothing we did for God (Romans 3:27; 4:1-2).

R- Real Righteousness is given to us, not a "legal fiction", but the real righteousness that was earned by Christ for us, this alien righteous, was given to us and received by faith alone! (Romans 4:3).

I- Imputation is when God imputes, reckons, considers, declares us righteous by giving to ungodly sinners the righteousness of Jesus (Romans 4:5-8).

S- Saved by Christ through Faith. To summarize what the great B. B. Warfield once said: "It is not so much that we are saved by faith. Rather, we are saved by

Christ through faith.” The emphasis is not on our faith, but on Christ who saves through faith! (Romans 4:16-17)

T- Total Confidence on Judgment Day! We stand NOW, and we will stand THEN in Christ alone! We will be justified-vindicated before God’s Throne because of Christ’s justification-vindication! (Romans 4:21-25)

Let us remind ourselves as the people of God how the Heidelberg Catechism in the first question teaches us concerning our hope in Jesus alone! This devotional catechism is excellent for memorization!

Question 1. What is thy only comfort in life and death? Answer: That I with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ; who, with his precious blood, has fully satisfied for all my sins, and delivered me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation, and therefore, by his Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me sincerely willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto him.

How can we subtly nullify the grace of Christ?

- a. Do you do the following?
 1. When you sin, do you seek forgiveness and grace in Christ alone, or do you seek to do a “little work” that might make God favor you?
 2. When you do something sinful do you underestimate the grace of God by believing that God cannot and perhaps will not forgive that one...especially repeatable, “characteristic flesh” Or do you feel pretty good about yourself when you sin and do something according to God’s Word? Both fail to understand the gospel of grace.
 3. Do you see yourself as better than other “sinners”? This is subtle, so be very careful. Our sinful hearts crave attention, respect, and desire to rule over others and to be better because of our insecurity.
 4. Remember: God’s grace is available for when you are tempted, when you sin, and when you confess and ask forgiveness.
 5. Do you live for Christ because of your gratitude for his grace and mercy, or you trying to live for Christ to be better in God’s eyes, to earn a little more approval, or the approval of others?
 6. Have you considered how easy it is to try and NOT DO certain activities, but how difficult it is love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and your neighbor as yourself and all the implications that go along with it?
 7. Are you patient with the sins of others, or are you implicitly saying “I don’t need grace, I have arrived a mature level of Christ-likness”.
 8. Have you understood the gospel as being I am saved by grace and therefore I can sin as I please? (cf. Romans 6:1-14)? Remember, Paul was being frustrated by the Judaizers *just because* they thought he was teaching a gospel without Law.
 9. Do you ask *how far can you go before you break the Law* before you sin? Then you have already broken it and misunderstood it for the Law is for the immature. The mature know that by God’s grace they love and live the Law only in Christ!
 10. Remember: There is only One Mediator between God and Man, it is not the LAW, but it is Christ Jesus the Law-Keeper!
 11. Do you truly meditate upon Galatians 2:20, that Christ *loved me* and gave himself up *for me*?

“CHRIST WILL DO ALL FOR YOU, OR NOTHING FOR YOU.”

–J. GRESHAM MACHEN

- a. Paul was a man with boldness, and honesty in the face of error (1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 6:10-18).
 1. Judaizers had “slipped in” (sneaky, devilish language). You make a public profession of your faith before God and man if you are real, you do not “sneaky-like, tippy-toe in order to slip in unnoticed in order to spy and to deceive!
 2. Fight the good fight: a constant battle to fight for the gospel at whatever place it is being challenged in our time (Gal. 1:8-10; 2:11-15)- -whether it is against Judaizers or the Apostle Peter himself!
 1. Importance of accountability between officers in the Church.
 2. Importance of judging the messenger by the Message, and not the other way around!
 3. Paul recognized the importance of the apostolic office, but the Judaizers were placing the importance of the apostles in them as mere men (Gal. 2:6-10- Judaizers were saying: “How could Paul have the true gospel when great pillars such as James, John and Peter have not authorized him, or sent him?” the Judaizers were saying deceptively.)
- b. A Wise Man who knows when to accommodate, and when not to accommodate.
 1. A matter of faith in the gospel: hard and dead set against any threat.
 2. A matter of weak conscience: loving and allowing concessions in order to make the gospel known.

Martin Luther wrote concerning this: “...As concerning faith we ought to be invincible, and more hard, if it might be, than the adamant stone; but as touching love (charity), we ought to be soft, and more flexible than the reed or leaf that is shaken with the wind, and ready to yield to everything.” –Luther, pg. 112.

Titus is not circumcised because Paul and Titus were preaching to the Gentiles; Paul does circumcise Timothy

(Acts 16) because he was a half-Jew, and they were preaching to the Jews. Paul's priority was always on the gospel: (1) Never add to the gospel in any way (Titus example); (2) Never unnecessarily hinder the gospel in any way (Timothy example).

- c. Paul did not compromise! "No compromise" with half-way gospels which are no gospels at all!
- d. Paul was not a Fearful Man as he proclaimed and made the gospel of Christ known.
 - 1. Peter feared the circumcision party (Gal. 2:11-13), but Paul stood up to Peter and rebuked him to stand firm consistently with the gospel he preached and believed.
 - 2. Importance of having each other to sharpen us, to point out to us when we fail to live out the gospel in our life and doctrine.
- e. Paul was not a Hypocritical Man
 - 1. Sees himself in light of the Law "in Christ"
 - 2. Never forgets from where he was called.
 - 3. Judgmental spirit
 - 4. "Holier than thou"