

“Consequences”
Romans 4:14-16
(Preached at Trinity, January 20, 2008)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Paul has been arguing persuasively since **Chapter 1** that all of us have sinned and all of us are justly under God’s condemnation and that all of us are in need of God’s salvation. In this chapter Paul has continued his argument from **Chapter 3** that this salvation can only come by faith alone. Our actions do absolutely nothing to merit God’s favor. We are not saved through our good works, or by some external deed, our through the keeping of the law.
2. It would seem natural that if we find ourselves condemned for doing something wrong we should try to make it right. If we have done something wrong against God we should try to do something to gain His forgiveness. People have done this for thousands of years. We must be clear – we cannot earn something from God. It can only be received. (We must be careful not to teach merit or works to our children)
3. Paul has been teaching that this is what the Scriptures have taught from the beginning. **Romans 4:3** – “For what saith the scripture?”
4. God has always had but one plan for the redemption of mankind. FAITH by GRACE
 - A. Paul uses the example of Abraham in **Verses 1-5**. His righteousness was imputed by faith, not through the keeping of the Law.
 - B. In **Verses 6-8** Paul quotes David who stated, “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.”
5. Salvation comes only through faith in God’s promise to save men through the death of His Son. Your understanding of this is the difference between life and death, heaven and hell. We must understand that there is nothing we can do. Salvation is God’s work; it is not our work. Only He can justify.
6. In **Verses 14-16** Paul gives us some consequences of seeking salvation by works and some consequences of seeking salvation by faith alone. This morning I want to look at these consequences.
 - I. The consequences of seeking salvation through works
 - A. Seeking salvation through works nullifies faith
Verse 14 – “For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void”
 1. Justification by faith is God’s wonderful plan for our redemption
 - a. It involves denying any merit of our own and casting ourselves fully upon the grace and mercy of God.
 - b. It involves trusting and resting upon Christ’s perfect atoning sacrifice
 - c. Faith is the means through which Christ’s righteousness is imputed to the sinner
 2. When a person denies the perfect work of Christ and insists on trusting on his own merit faith is destroyed.

3. Faith and law are opposites. If a person chooses one he must reject the other.
 - a. If a person is trusting in his merit he is rejecting the merit of Christ. If you are accepted by God through something that you do there is no room for faith. The works of the Law become the object of your hope.
 - b. If a person is trusting Christ alone by faith he is denying the value of his own works. Christ received by faith becomes the object of your hope.
 4. Even if you trust in your own works just a little you nullify faith.
 - a. This is what the Judaizers were doing.
 - b. They were teaching that you must have faith in Christ but you must also be circumcised.
 - c. Paul called this another Gospel for it denied justification by faith alone
Galatians 1:8 – “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”
 - d. Paul stated the one true Gospel
Galatians 2:16 – “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”
 5. If you are trusting in your own works you do not possess genuine faith. Christ must be the focus – He is the jewel, our King
- B. Seeking salvation through works cancels the promise
Verse 14 – “the promise is made of none effect”
1. If you say that God’s promise to Abraham was on condition that he obeyed the law then the promise could have never been fulfilled.
 2. This is because no one has ever been able to keep the law
 - a. No one can meet the Law’s demands
 - b. This is why Paul is so adamant in saying “all have sinned.” “There is none righteous, no not one.”
 - c. If we had to purchase God’s promise we would all come up short. Even after a lifetime of effort we could never even begin to satisfy our infinite debt.
 3. Martyn Lloyd-Jones – “The Law means failure. Therefore, if the promise had been made through the medium of the Law, what God was giving with His right hand, He would have been taking back with his right hand.”
 3. God might as well have never made the promise at all for it would have applied to no man. The Law would make God’s promise of none effect.
- C. Seeking salvation through works kindles God’s wrath
Verse 15 – “Because the law worketh wrath”
1. The Law can only bring wrath and judgment
 This is because all have broken it and are condemned by it
Galatians 3:10 – “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”

2. Everyone will get exactly what he deserves.
Each of us will receive what justice requires
Psalm 5:4-6 – “For thou *art* not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. ⁵ The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. ⁶ Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.”
3. Paul stated this clearly in **Chapter 1**
Romans 1:18 – “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. . . .”
 - a. What is unrighteousness? It means transgression of the Law
 - b. All of us have transgressed the Law – all have broken it.
 - c. No amount of obedience can change this.
4. When we get to **Chapter 7** we will see that although the Law is holy and pure we are sinful and lust to disobey it. When the Law tells us not to do a thing our sinful nature creates a desire to do it. So the very Law that prohibits sin in a sense causes us to do it.
Romans 7:5 – “For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.”
Romans 7:7-9 – “What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. ⁸ But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin *was* dead. ⁹ For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.”
5. The Law can only bring wrath.

II. The consequences of seeking salvation through faith alone

- A. Seeking salvation through faith alone establishes grace
Verse 16 – “Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace”
 1. What is of faith? It’s God’s promise to Abraham. What is the promise? It is salvation. “Salvation is of faith, that it might be by grace.”
 2. The Law commands us what to do but supplies no power to do it. Grace comes along and grants faith to trust the righteousness of another
 3. What is grace? Grace is favor that is given without merit. Grace is kindness given to someone who does not deserve it. Grace is a free gift.
 4. Faith and grace go naturally together.
Faith comes as a gift from God
Ephesians 2:8-9 – “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: ⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast.”
 5. When you think of works of the Law you do not think of grace – Works only think of merit. You are earning something through your actions and you receive your wages. There is no grace in it.
Grace and works are opposite

Romans 11:6 – “And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.”

6. When you think of faith you can only think of grace.
 - a. This is because faith tells us we have nothing to offer. Faith is resting on a merit that is not our own.
 - b. Even the faith is not something we have of ourselves. It is given to us by grace.
 7. The promise given by faith is a gift – Gifts cannot be purchased, only received. God does everything by His power and wisdom.
- B. Seeking salvation through faith alone gives confidence in salvation
- Verse 16** – “to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed”
- NAS – “that the promise may be certain”
1. The Law can never give confidence
 2. This is why assurance of salvation only belongs to evangelical Christianity
The other religions of the world teach you must do something to receive something.
 3. If salvation is based on your works how can you ever be sure you have done enough?
 - a. If it is based upon your zeal how do you know you have been zealous enough?
 - b. If it is based on your faithfulness, how can you be sure you have been faithful enough?
 - c. If it is base on your sincerity, how can you know you have been sincere enough?
 4. And if your salvation is based on works and you’ve had a good day today, how can you be sure what tomorrow will bring, or next month, or next year, or 10 years from now?
 5. But if your salvation is based on what Christ has done then it is finished. It is accomplished. *We have been* justified. He will keep us.
 6. The covenant of grace was not ultimately with us but between the Father and the Son. We are not the ones who keep it. Christ kept it.
 - a. God pledged to give the elect to His Son. The Son came in obedience to redeem them. No one will be lost.
John 6:39-40 – “And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. ⁴⁰ And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”
 - b. Salvation is given to those who simply rest in Christ. These will find rest for their soul that is the same today, tomorrow, and forever – “to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.”

- C. Seeking salvation through faith alone opens salvation to all
Verse 16 – “not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all”
1. We saw this earlier – the comprehensive nature of salvation – it is for all
 That “which is of the law” refers to the Jews
 Those who believe share equally as heirs of Abraham.
 2. If any man will follow Christ, denying himself and trusting fully in Him he will be saved.
 3. Abraham is the father of all who believe. All who receive the promise by faith.

Conclusion:

1. Which are you trusting in?
 - A. If you are trusting in your own works then faith is destroyed and the promise becomes null and void. You face nothing but the wrath of God.
 - B. If you are trusting in Christ by faith then grace is established and the promise becomes sure.
2. This is so important because when we sin we often try to return to confidence in our works. We pledge to do better and try to place our confidence in this hope of improvement. When we fail, and we surely will, we slide into the pit of doubt and fear.
3. Our hope must be in Christ alone
1 John 2:1-2 1 – “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: ² And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world.*”
4. In Christ, we find peace and joy. We find peace in His love and joy in service and obedience. Even when we fall into sin, though we grieve and mourn, yet we have confidence in our Savior.
1 John 1:9 – “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”