

**GALATIANS - SERMON 8**  
**GALATIANS 2:11-21 — SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH**  
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INTRODUCTION:

Read Galatians 2:11-21

Paul has confronted Peter concerning his hypocrisy in view of the Gentile believers. Peter sinned grievously in this hypocrisy. Having confronted Peter, Paul lays out the scriptural proof as to why Peter was wrong (Galatians 2:15-21). In looking over this passage we will find that it is not only a rebuke of Peter's sin, but a powerful defense of the doctrine of justification alone apart from works of the law. What Peter has fallen into briefly and temporarily, the Judaizers were promoting permanently and willfully. In relating this event regarding Peter, Paul accomplishes two objectives; 1) he proves that he is not a disciple of the apostles and 2) he exposes the false teaching of the Galatian heretics as well.

Paul uses three lines of argument against Peter and thereby, against the Judaizers also.

OUTLINE:

- I FIRST LINE OF ARGUMENT: IF THE JEWS MUST BE SAVED BY FAITH ALONE APART FROM WORKS OF THE LAW, IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE GENTILES MUST BE SAVED IN THE SAME FASHION, vv 15-16.
- II SECOND LINE OF ARGUMENT: ONE MUST ACCUSE CHRIST OF SIN IF ONE IS GOING TO DENY THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE, v 17.
- III THIRD LINE OF ARGUMENT: ALL THE DEMANDS OF THE LAW HAVE BEEN FULLY MET BY CHRIST, vv 19-20
- IV PAUL'S CONCLUSION, v 21

- I FIRST LINE OF ARGUMENT: IF THE JEWS MUST BE SAVED BY FAITH ALONE APART FROM WORKS OF THE LAW, IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE GENTILES MUST BE SAVED IN THE SAME FASHION, vv 15-16.

Galatians 2:15-16

*"We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified."*

Paul's argumentation is that even Jews, standing in the place of special privilege before God having the law and the prophets, have found it necessary to abandon the law and look entirely to Christ for the grounds of our justification. This being the case, is it not absurd to require of the Gentiles that which we have abandoned. That which has proven utterly useless to our salvation is not to be put upon the Gentiles. How is it that we should require of others law keeping for justification when we have given it up for ourselves?

Peter himself had clearly stated this principle earlier at the Jerusalem Council. This is why Paul charges Peter with hypocrisy for he is now requiring of others that which he has not required of himself and of the Jews.

Acts 15:7-11

*And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: "Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they."*

Peter clearly states in this place his conviction that Gentiles are to be saved in exactly the same manner as the Jews. Paul had attended this council and heard Peter utter these words. Law-keeping was an unbearable burden and unsuccessful method of justification for the Jews, why would we put it upon the necks of the Galatian Gentiles.

Galatians 5:1-5

*Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.*

Paul's point is that it is inappropriate to require at the hands of the Gentiles that which we do not require of ourselves with respect to justification.

II SECOND LINE OF ARGUMENT: ONE MUST ACCUSE CHRIST OF SIN IF ONE IS GOING TO DENY THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE, v 17.

Galatians 2:17

*"But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not (God forbid)!"*

The context seems to constrain the interpretation of this passage. If in seeking justification by Christ alone, apart from the works of the law, people account us as sinners for doing so (and in fact the Judaizers did account them as sinners), then those people are saying that Christ is a sinner also. The doctrine of justification by faith alone came directly from the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, if people are going to find us to be sinners for seeking to be justified by Christ alone, then they are going to have to find Christ the promoter of sin as well because justification by faith alone is the essence of His teaching.

*if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners . . . found by who? Christ, as a minister, taught this doctrine and thus He too becomes a minister of sin by such reasoning. The doctrine cannot be attacked without also attacking the Lord Jesus Christ.*

John 6:28-29

*Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."*

In other words, Jesus says in this place that it is not of works but of belief that men are saved.

John 3:16

*"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."*

Christ Himself preached the doctrine of belief or faith as the ground of justification or salvation.

John 3:36

*"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."*

John 6:47

*"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life."*

Galatians 2:18

*"For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor."*

This is a direct but tactful rebuke of Peter (and also the Judaizers). What had Peter destroyed in Acts 15? He destroyed the notion that Jews had to obey the law in order to be saved. The question between verses 17 and 18 is who is the transgressor? The answer is the person trying to re-erect the idea that men are saved by keeping the old covenant law.

### III THIRD LINE OF ARGUMENT: ALL THE DEMANDS OF THE LAW HAVE BEEN FULLY MET BY CHRIST, vv 19-20

Galatians 2:19-20

*"For I through the law died (separated from) to the law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; 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 for me."*

The law requires death for its violation. That is the term set forth by the law. When one died for his sins, he satisfied the just demands of the law for his sins. Through fulfilling the punishment required by law for sin one was then free from any operation of the law upon him. The death of the offender silences the claims of the law.

When one died that one became dead to the law (separated) regarding any further claim the law may have upon him.

How can we fulfill the claim of the law (death) and thus by doing so be forever free from any further claims it may have upon us? The answer is in verse 20.

*“I have been crucified with Christ; 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 for me.”*

It is by means of union with the substitute for our sins, in our place, thereby satisfying the claims of the law, and thereby releasing and discharging us forever from its claims.

The claims against us were not satisfied in or by us, but by means of union with the substitute, verse 20 - *I am crucified with Christ.*

#### THE DOCTRINE OF UNION WITH CHRIST

In eternity past (Ephesians 1:1ff) we were chosen to be *in Christ*. Union in Christ was a matter determined in eternity past. When Christ died on the cross, we were in a spiritual union with Christ so that His death was seen as my death under the penalty of the law. In spite of that union with Christ in His death, I find myself still to be alive - *nevertheless I live* (KJV). Actually it is Christ who lives in me. He indwells and lives in me.

#### 2 Corinthians 5:17

*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

Verse 20 is an explanation of verse 19. Verse 19 has said that I, through the law am now dead to the law. How does that work? Verse 20 says that I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, not I but Christ in me.

Hence we are forever free from the claims of the law in terms of death. We are given the resurrection life of Christ, imparted to us at salvation by means of regeneration. We now live by faith unto God.

#### IV PAUL'S CONCLUSION, v 21

##### Galatians 2:21

*I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.*

*frustrate the grace of God* - means to set aside the grace of God as the operative principle in justification.

*if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain* - means that if there is any other alternate way of justification (e.g. law-keeping) then Christ's death was needless and in vain. The reason He died was in order to give us righteousness, but if there is some other way to get righteousness, then why did Christ die? This is Paul's point, either Christ does everything or He does nothing at all.

When we read the law we need no longer tremble at its threatenings.

Does this mean that the law has nothing more to do with us? Certainly not.

- 1 It is still a marvelous revelation of the glory of God.
- 2 It is still a grand means of drawing sinners to Christ BECAUSE ITS THREATS STILL APPLY TO THEM.

3 It is also still God's guideline to us how we are to live in order to please Him.

It is the motive of love to God which is offered to us as the grounds for obedience. Our Lord asked Peter if he loved Him and added to Peter's affirmative answer - *then do my will (feed My sheep)*.

These are the scriptural arguments offered in this passage in support of justification by faith alone apart from works of the law. There is in this incredible liberty. If you comprehend this you will desire to express your love for Him by keeping His commandments (John 14:15).

Hymn # 403