

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. 17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, *is* therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. 18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. 19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. 20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. 21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. Gal. 2:16-21

As I summarized last week: Peter and the men from Jerusalem were living a pretense, not walking according to the truth of the gospel. Peter lived like a Gentile until certain men had come from James in Jerusalem, upon which he separated himself from those who were not circumcised, and refused to eat with them, to have the most common Christian fellowship. Eat, does not mean the Lord’s Supper here, but means to dine, to have fellowship. Peter did not treat them as equals, but along with Barnabas, put a wall between him and those who were not circumcised

As I said before, Paul’s rebuke is of the sternest order. Let me paraphrase:

”Peter, you live like a Gentile, and do not follow the Law of Moses. I know that, you know that, the whole world knows that. So you are not acting honestly, but are putting on a pretense for the sake of the people from Jerusalem. You are acting from fear, not from faith. All of us Jews who have come to believe the Gospel know that the law could not save us. We believed in Jesus Christ simply because we knew that there was no real righteousness that could be achieved by the law. So why are you compelling the Gentiles to do what you do not do yourself?”

- I. “I am crucified with Christ.” The first thing I want to say is that Jesus came to save sinners. Those who refuse to admit that they are sinners can have no part with Jesus Christ. I mentioned last week that this was a stumbling block to the Jews. How was it possible that they who were chosen by God and so privileged before God, partakers of His covenant and blessings, would be required to confess that they were no better than the Gentiles in order to benefit from the coming of Messiah? Paul’s answer is that this is the whole purpose of the law: to reveal sin. Its purpose is to make itself null and void. It is through the law that we become dead to the law because it brings us to Christ.
  - a. It reveals to me my sin and misery, so that I abandon all hope of salvation through doing good things. I come to Jesus Christ, who is given to me for salvation and hope.
  - b. This is not the law’s fault; it is my own fault. In believing the Gospel, I have agreed with the verdict that God issued when He sent His son into the world to suffer and die: there is no other way for man to be saved; his state is hopeless and helpless, and salvation cannot arise from man’s work: it must be God’s work that saves men. This is what believing the Gospel means. It means to consent to God’s diagnosis: that I cannot save myself, but I need Jesus.
  - c. I am crucified with Christ: I believe that Jesus’ death was my death—He died for me, and took my blame. His suffering on the cross was punishment for my sins.
- II. “Nevertheless I live.” In my connection to Jesus Christ, I have a new and living principle of life within me that the world cannot understand. Christ liveth in me. This is the great mystery of the Gospel. This is why those who belong to Christ must bring forth good works: Christ lives in them.

- a. This is the result of the Spirit of adoption that Paul speaks of in Romans 8:

And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: --Romans 8:10-16

- b. This is the reason for our predestination: that we be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ: Romans 8:29. The Holy Spirit works in us to make us a new creation, not in the image of the first Adam, but in the image of the Last Adam, Jesus Christ.
- c. As Calvin says, we are animated by the secret power of Christ, for He works in us by His Spirit. Christ lives in us in two ways:
- i. He justifies us: making us partaker of His righteousness, so that we are accepted of God.
  - ii. He governs us by His Spirit, so that all our actions are controlled by Him.
- d. The physical life no longer defines the Christian. We live in the flesh, and eat and drink like others, but this is not the definition of our life. We have a source of life that is not visible to the ordinary eye nor can it be understood by those who do not have it. As Calvin says, this is often referred to in Bible:
- i. Eph. 2:6 “He has made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”
  - ii. Eph. 2:19: “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God”
  - iii. Phil. 3:23: “Our conversation is in heaven.”
  - iv. John 14:23: “Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” In a mysterious and wonderful way, the holy Triune God makes Home in our souls. He will come to dwell with us. He takes up residence. Not in order to deify us—not to make us gods; but to fellowship with us by His Word and Spirit.
  - v. John 15:4: Because He has promised to abide in us, we are called to abide in Him. “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.” In a mysterious way, we are called to take up our residence in God, just as He has taken residence in us. This is by His word and spirit. It does not mean that we become gods, or incarnate in any way; but it does mean that there is a work of the Word and Spirit that energizes our lives and causes us to bring forth fruit to the glory of God.
  - vi. Phil. 1:3-6: “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ:
  - vii. Phil. 2:12,13: Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

- e. This life is attained by faith only, and not by the works of the law. As Calvin again says: “The life, therefore, which we attain by faith, is not visible to the bodily eye, but is inwardly perceived in the conscience by the power of the Spirit; so that the bodily life does not prevent us from enjoying, by faith, a heavenly life.”
- III. This is because of the love of Christ. This life is the result of Christ’s love for me, which brought Him to the earth to fulfill all the requirements of the law for me. These requirements were two-fold:
- a. The transgressions of the law must be punished. A law without penalty is null and void and cannot be enforced. The penalty for transgression of the law is death: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. But Christ died for me. The weight of the law had fallen upon Him. Is. 53:3-6. “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all”
  - b. The promises of the law must be gained by obedience: What the first Adam failed to do for you and for me, the Last Adam did perfectly. He earned eternal life and the favor of God so that all the rewards of the law are mine by faith in Jesus Christ. Not only in His sufferings, but in His perfect obedience, Christ earned for me what I could never and can never earn for myself: all the rewards of righteousness. Amen and Amen.
  - c. “For me” These words are emphatic, and you must make them emphatic when you read them: Jesus Christ died for ME. This is the heart of the Gospel, the good news: Jesus Christ gave Himself for ME. Not that I loved God, but that He loved me. As John says so emphatically:

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. I John 4:10

John is saying: You want to talk about love? Let me tell you about love. Let me tell you when love was put on display. Let me tell you when love was introduced to the world: It had nothing to do with us loving God. It had to do with Him loving us. It had nothing to do with gushy mushy sentiment. It was displayed in the most stupendous act—the most awe-inspiring event in the history of the world.

This is love: “Not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sin.”

Now that is love. World terrorism got our attention on Sept. 11, but God got the world’s attention on that central cross on Mt. Golgotha over two thousand years ago. Look at love. Look Jesus Christ. This is what transforms the world and transforms you and me.

May God bless you.