

Justification

[Galatians 2; mark it] Last week, we were discussing justification, and its importance in relation to baptism and ruling and reigning. In Galatians 6:18, we see that this book is addressed to brethren. It says, “Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.” Matthew 12:50 tells us that “brethren” are those who are doing the will of the father are our brethren; those who are being obedient; those who are serious about entering the Kingdom. That’s who the book of Galatians is written to, but they are erring from the truth. Paul is endeavoring to help them see the error of their way. Those to whom this book was written began in the Spirit of the son; they were able to say, “Abba Father”, just as Jesus was able to do that. When we are praying “Abba Father”, we are saying that we know all things are possible; we’re saying to the father, “you can change anything”. It’s not our wills that is important. That’s the spirit of the book of Galatians. It’s the spirit of an adult son. An adult son has responsibility and accountability. That’s what Paul is dealing with here.

This book confuses many people because they try to apply it to salvation. But, it’s dealing with justification. If we expect to rule and reign, we have to live our lives in such a way that we will hear “well done, thou good and faithful servant”. Salvation will not provide that automatically, despite what some say.

[Galatians 2:16-17] There are three things being talked about: Faith, law, and salvation:

Faith is a lifestyle. It’s not an event. It can be stopped.

Law is a lifestyle. It’s not an event. It can be stopped. There are two sets of laws:

Moral Law – We can live in the moral law. We can not steal, lie, murder, etc. It’s not an event; it’s a lifestyle. We have to be obedient to the commandments.

Ceremonial Law – has to do with the ordinances that God gave Moses on the mountain and were established when the children of Israel set up the tabernacle and the temple in Jerusalem and the people came to offer animal sacrifices.

When we see the word “law”, there’s a distinction: There’s the moral law and there is the ceremonial law. Both can be stopped. The children of Israel didn’t have to go to the temple. A male was required by the law to go down three times per year, and he could simply stop. We don’t live under the ceremonial law today. We don’t have to go down to the temple three times per year and offer animal sacrifices, but we are under the moral law.

Salvation is an event. It either happens, or it doesn’t. You either believe on the Lord Jesus and that he died on the cross for your sins, or you don’t. If you believe, you’re saved; if you don’t, you’re not.

Justification is by faith. “That we might be justified by faith.” Because justification is by faith, and faith is a lifestyle, justification will depend upon your lifestyle. Justification is

not an event; it's a process. The reason it's a process is because it's by faith. Faith is a process. Without faith, it's impossible to please God. We're going to have to please God, if we're going to stand approved. That's what justification is about; it's about standing approved.

[Galatians 3:23] We need to understand this. Faith was not revealed until after the ceremonial law was set aside. According to Hebrews 11, the men who lived by faith, that faith was reckoned unto them. You can find that also in Romans 4 and 5, but before faith came, the nation of Israel, as well as saved Gentiles, were locked into the ceremonial law. After that, faith was revealed.

Paul was asking them, "Don't you know what happens when you try to keep the ceremonial law?" There were Jews who appreciated the coming Kingdom, and they believed they had to keep the ceremonial law (circumcision, going down to the temple, etc.). Paul says, "Don't you know what the law has for you?"

[Galatians 4:30-31] The Scriptures tells us that there are two inheritances: Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael is a type of the bondwoman. They will have an earthly inheritance. In type and picture, that inheritance is outside the land flowing with milk and honey. Ishmael's inheritance was outside the land flowing with milk and honey.

Isaac's inheritance was the land flowing with milk and honey that God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The law will not provide a heavenly inheritance; the ceremonial law will not provide a heavenly home. You'll be saved, no question about that. It's just that your inheritance will be on the earth instead of in heaven. That's what Paul was trying to help them understand.

That's what the law will provide, if you want to live that way. We don't struggle with the ceremonial law today. Today, there is a law according to man that you touch not, taste not, etc. These are the laws of man. People teach that if you obey my laws, you will hear "well done". That's the problem we have today. For instance, man says to really be holy, you can't wear lipstick, jewelry, pants, etc. There are lists of rules that people have, and those rules, people think if you do them, you will be justified or unchargeable. The list goes on: No movies, can't play cards, no sleeveless blouses, no beards, not t-shirts, etc. You don't really hear a lot of that, unless you go to a Bible college. Those things are not necessarily bad, in and of themselves. But, to live a separated life, there are things you need to avoid. You don't want a bad testimony. Don't visit places that when people see you come out, say, "Oh, he approves of bars, strip clubs, etc." You don't need to be doing things such as that.

We need to appreciate the fact that in Paul's day, it had to do with the ceremonial law, and today it has to do with man's law. We'll see that in a little while.

Justification is defined in Romans 8:33 which says, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth". Justification means to stand unchargeable. Notice that it is God who justifieth. That's a present, active, participle.

What that means is that it's an ongoing process. Present tense, you draw a line. It's not an event; it's an ongoing process. That ongoing process is sinning. When we sin, we are chargeable. When we confess that sin, what happens? We are not chargeable.

Did you know that there are some sins in our lives that we will not repent of and we will not confess? Do you know what that means? When you stand in his presence, you will be chargeable for that sin of lawlessness.

1 John 1:9 tells us, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness". If we do not confess our sins, he is faithful and just to charge us with unconfessed sin, and we will have to deal with that at the Judgment Seat.

[Galatians 2:16a; knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law] The word "justified" is present, passive. In other words, it is the works of the law acting on us. It is a continuous process. This justification is on the basis faith, which is also a continuous process. You and I both can make shipwreck of the faith. We can depart from living by faith. If we depart from faith, the justification process comes to a screeching halt. Why? Because we are not pleasing God. That's what justification is all about, hearing, "Well done thou good and faithful servant".

Then, notice what Paul says, "Even we have believed in Jesus Christ". This word "believed" is in the aorist tense. Paul says, "We have been saved". "That we might be justified by faith." The word "might" is included. The implication is that we might not. The implication is that we might make shipwreck of the faith. We might stop pleasing God, and then, we become chargeable. We might be justified by faith, pleasing God, by a lifestyle that does not fail.

"And not by works of the law, for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. 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." I included verse 17 because of the word "seek". We are seeking to be justified. "Seek" is in the present tense. It's something we need to be doing always. We need to be seeking to please God all the time.

We do that by being faithful to him. Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him". Faith is the essential ingredient for us to please God. Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen". Faith (that which pleases God) gives substance to things that we hope for. What is the hope of a Christian? Do you hope that you are saved? The hope of a Christian is to have a heavenly inheritance; it's to have glory and honor in his coming Kingdom. What faith does is that it gives substance to that inheritance and to that glory, and because it gives substance to good things that are coming, because Jesus Christ is our high priest of good things to come, according to Hebrews 9:11, it will produce evidence in our lives. Faith will produce evidence. What kind of evidence?

Obedience. A lifestyle of obedience is the evidence that it should produce of things not seen, yet hoped for. In order for us to have a heavenly inheritance, we need to live by faith, and that would be the evidenced in our lifestyle.

[Galatians 3] Emphasizing that justification is a process: [Galatians 3:8; would justify – is justifying; present, active, indicative]. God is in the process of justifying those of us who are willing to live by faith. This is a continuing process.

[Acts 13:39; believe – present, active; justified – present, passive] In other words, we do our part, and God does his part in forgiving, and cleansing, and restoring our fellowship with him. That’s the passive part of justification. Once again, being justified is not an event; it’s an ongoing process. Those who believe in the present tense (those who are faithful) are the ones who are being justified.

[Galatians 3:11; justified – present, passive; law – ceremonial law; just – saved, yet obedient] Obedient to what? They are obedient to the moral law. When God did away with the law, it was the ceremonial law that he did away with, not the moral law. It’s the just who live by faith. If you’re not obedient to the moral law, you can’t live by faith. If you’re living in sin, you can’t please God. Romans 14:23 tells us that whatsoever is not of faith is what? Sin.

[Galatians 3:12a; and the law is not of faith] The ceremonial law (even the moral law) is not of faith. [Galatians 3:12b-13] We have been redeemed from the curse of the law. What is the curse of the law to those of us who know about a heavenly inheritance? The curse of the law is to have an earthly inheritance, and Jesus Christ has redeemed us from that curse!

What has he redeemed us unto? A heavenly inheritance. He has made it possible for those of us who are saved to please him and have honor and glory in his coming Kingdom! I want to hear him say, “Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord”. The reward of the faithful is to rule and reign with him in his coming Kingdom, not piles of gold and crowns and things that have no authority! The reward of the faithful is the authority of ruling and reigning, and that’s the blessing.

If you have been called unto his Kingdom and glory and have missed it, and you find yourself here on the earth, not reigning, but being reigned over, that’s a curse! What’s the curse of the nation of Israel today? It’s not living in the land flowing with milk and honey. They have been scattered over the Earth. Of course, that is because they rebelled against God. Therefore, the curse that God gave Moses for the children of Israel, “if you rebel against me, I’ll scatter you over the whole Earth”. God was faithful and just to that promise. They’re coming back. That hasn’t been completed yet, but it will be one day.

The curse for us is to want to be in the heavenly land, or the land flowing with milk and honey, and being denied it. But, Jesus Christ has redeemed us from that curse, and we can enjoy that heavenly inheritance.

[Romans 3:20; Therefore by the deeds of the law [deeds alone; moral law, established in verses 11-18] there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge [epignosis] of sin.] Obedience to the law alone will not permit you to rule and to reign; it will not justify you, by itself. The just are those who live by the moral law, and they are the ones who can live by faith. If you live in disobedience, you cannot live by faith.

[Romans 3:31; moral law, not ceremonial] We're not establishing the ceremonial law. The ceremonial law has been set aside. Jesus is the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. It's the blood of Jesus Christ on the mercy seat in the heavenly tabernacle, which is sufficient for us.

[1 Timothy] gives us some insight into the moral law. [1 Timothy 1:8-9a; But we know that the law *is* good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous just man.] If you are a just man, you are not under the law. It's only when you begin to break the law that you're under it. When you exceed the speed limit, you're under the law.

[1 Timothy 1:9] The moral law has been established and we need to abide by it.

[Galatians 3:24] The OT is a picture to help us appreciate the significance of living by faith in the NT, so we can have a better inheritance. All we have to do is read in the OT how Reuben, Gad, Ammon, Manassah, Moab, Ishmael, Esau, etc. All these people who were descendents of Shem had the God who is referred to as "the God of Shem". They all had inheritances outside the land flowing with milk and honey. They were still in the land of promise, which extends from the Nile to the Euphrates, as we are told in Genesis 15:18. The other nine tribes had inheritances in the land flowing with milk and honey.

"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." This is not dealing with salvation; it's dealing with justification. "That we might be justified by faith."

[Romans 3] Being justified by grace applies in [Romans 3:24; justified – present, active; redemption – from the ceremonial law, which we've already read]. This justification is by grace, and we know you cannot have grace if you don't have what? Faith. You cannot have grace apart from faith. We access this grace by faith. (Romans 5:2)

[Romans 3:26; "believeth" should be "of faith"] He is the justifier; present, active; it's a continuous process.

[Romans 3:27] Did you know that there is the law of faith? What is the law of faith?

James 2:18 says, "you say you have faith and have not works? I'll show you my faith by my works." The law of faith says that faith is dead if works are not included. "You say you have faith? Where's the evidence?" Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." The hope that those things are real

is our lifestyle of pleasing God. The law of faith is necessary. Our faith has to have works, or evidence, of the fact that we do have hope.

[Romans 3:28; without – in addition] The word “without” can be translated as “apart from” or “in addition to”. You find that in [2 Corinthians 11:28; beside – same word]. This is true! A man cannot be justified without being obedient to the moral law. You cannot be justified by faith if you do not obey the moral law. Obeying the moral law means to be just.

To conclude, I want us to look at two or three verses. [Hebrews 10:38] You can be just; you can be obedient to the moral law, living by faith, and pleasing God, and then you can draw back. You can make shipwreck of the faith. You can make shipwreck of pleasing God. The Lord says, “If you do that, my soul will have no pleasure in you”. If you do that, you will not be justified.

[Hebrews 10:39; perdition – ruin] The saving of the soul is an expression given in the NT that has to do with ruling and reigning with Christ.

You find that in [1 Peter 1:8-9; love – present, active; believing – present, active]. This is not getting saved in the sense of believing on the Lord Jesus, as it says in Acts 16:31; this saving of the soul has to do with life in the coming Kingdom age. It’s in the present tense. It’s talking about works. “If you love me (present, active), you will keep my commandments.” That makes you just.

[Colossians 2] We talked about the law today, and I want us to conclude with that. [Colossians 2:20-22] If you try to do all these things, you will get tired of them pretty quick. They are after the doctrines and commandment of whom? Men. They are so-called pious men who try to tell you how to live. This book right here is the only book to tell you how to live. You don’t have to listen to what man thinks you ought to do. This [the Bible] is what you ought to be doing. There are those who say, “You’re eating meat? Shame on you! You’re not living like Adam and Eve! Eat those veggies! Adam and Eve ate fruit and vegetables and they were really close to God, and if you eat meat, you’re not there!”

Shame on them for pointing their finger! That’s the weak and beggarly elements. There *is* a show of wisdom and humility in willful worship, and there are certain times that we need to refuse our body certain things. Paul says, “I keep my body under subjection so that I don’t slip off into some sin that would disqualify me.” [Colossians 3:23] There’s no honor in this for you, all it does is satisfy your flesh. [Not only does it satisfy your flesh, but also it satisfies mine, if I can make you do what I want you to do.]

We’re not under that bondage! We’re not under the ceremonial law, nor under the laws of man. We’re not under any of man’s ordinances. I desire to stand approved and to be justified; justification is a process. I want to stand approved and be justified, and I want to hear, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord”.